

**DEALING WITH PAST MISTAKES: A PSYCHOANALYSIS OF HARDIN SCOTT
IN THE SEQUEL *AFTER***

Submitted to the English Letters Study Program of Universitas Ma Chung
In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Undergraduate Degree of
English Letters



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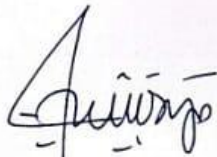
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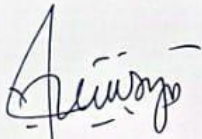
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ABSTRACT

Dealing With Past Mistakes: A Psychoanalysis of Hardin Scott in the Sequel After

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This research examines the psychological transformation of Hardin Scott, the main character in the After-movie sequels, through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. The study focuses on Hardin's internal conflicts as he attempts to confront and resolve his past mistakes, particularly in his romantic relationship with Tessa Young. By applying the concepts of the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mind, this research examines how trauma, guilt, and emotional repression influence Hardin's behaviour and drive his desire for redemption. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study analyses key scenes, dialogue, and visual elements from the five sequels—*After* (2019) to *After Everything* (2023). The findings reveal that Hardin's motivations to change stem not only from rational awareness but also from suppressed emotional wounds rooted in childhood trauma, abandonment, and unresolved guilt. His transformation unfolds through a process of self-reflection, emotional struggle, and eventual acceptance of responsibility. The study also highlights how mise-en-scene elements, such as expressions, gestures, and setting, visually represent Hardin's psychological journey from impulsive and emotionally unstable to mature and self-aware. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of character development in film, especially within the context of male emotional vulnerability and adolescent trauma. It also emphasizes the relevance of psychoanalytic theory in analysing fictional characters whose experiences reflect real psychological challenges faced by young adults in navigating love, identity, and healing.

Keywords: *Character development, past mistakes, redemption.*

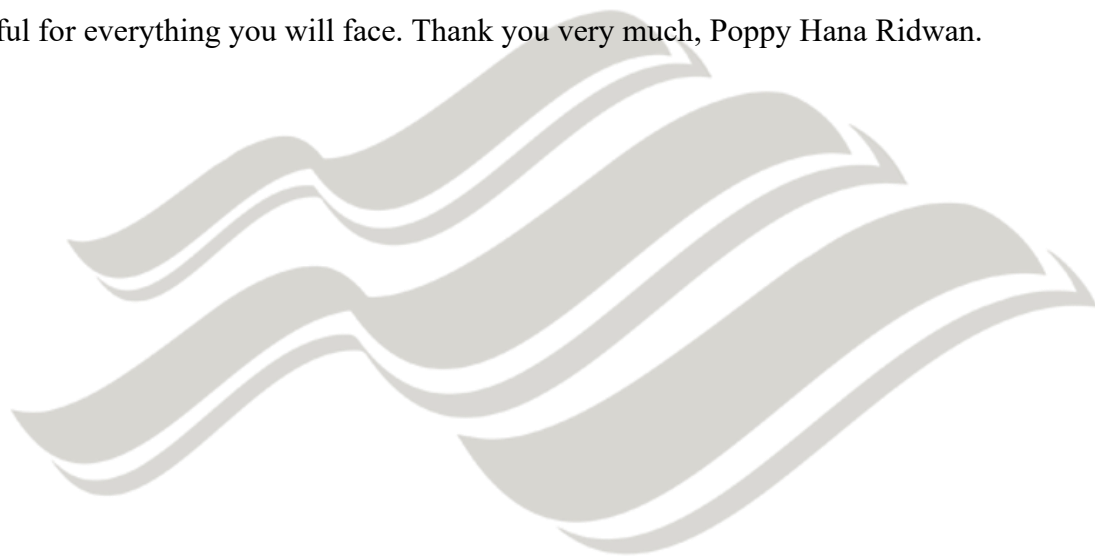
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Movies incorporate various literary elements in their creation and delivery, such as structured narratives that convey traits, experiences, and emotions through characters. Literary exploration in film is crucial because it adds depth and dimension to the narrative. Adapting literary works into films can enrich the story with well-developed characters, compelling conflicts, and more intense themes (Woro Kasih, 2023). Many films adapted from novels or other literary sources feature rich and complex narrative structures. Moreover, characterization plays a vital role in film development, as characters often serve as the main attraction. When characters are given transparent backgrounds, motivations, and development, they create a stronger emotional connection between the film and its audience.

From a psychological perspective, a well-crafted film conveys moral messages and values that foster a connection between the audience's thoughts and emotions and the actions of the characters. It is undeniable that when viewers perceive a film as reflecting aspects of their own lives, they are more likely to experience the emotions portrayed by the characters. To strengthen this connection, psychologists argue that characters leave a lasting impression because their experiences, emotions, and struggles often mirror real-life challenges. According to Nuwer (2013), our responses to fictional characters are closely linked to our capacity for empathy and our ability to connect with others. Feelings of empathy and sympathy are natural responses that occur regularly in everyday social interactions. In other words, audiences can form strong emotional bonds with characters who reflect traits, struggles, or aspirations that align with their own life experiences.

This research analyzes the five sequels of the *After-movie* series, directed by Castille Landon. The film tells the story of young love between Hardin Scott and Tessa Young. Tessa is a first-semester student at Central Washington University, living in a campus dormitory with her roommate, Steph. Initially, Tessa's mother disapproves of her living arrangement, but Tessa reassures her that she can manage independently. After successfully convincing her mother, Tessa begins her semester smoothly—until she meets Hardin Scott, a mysterious student known for his rebellious behavior. Hardin is also a close friend of Steph.

Tessa never imagined that her encounter with Hardin Scott would have such a profound impact on her life, nor did Hardin. Initially, Hardin approached her as part of a prank and a bet, but unexpectedly, he developed genuine feelings for her. However, a single mistake reopened old emotional wounds, and the unresolved traumas of Hardin's past began to haunt him. After meeting Tessa, he gradually found the strength to confront and address these lingering issues. Although the journey was far from easy, Hardin experienced a range of emotional highs and lows throughout his relationship with Tessa. This time, however, he was determined not to lose someone he truly loved due to his emotional immaturity and entrapment in past trauma. Motivated by a desire to change, Hardin set out to make amends, including seeking forgiveness for unresolved romantic mistakes, embarking on a personal journey of healing and redemption.

Through this research, Hardin Scott is analyzed as a male character who initially presents himself as rebellious, troubled, and emotionally unstable. However, beneath his hardened exterior lies a young man yearning for the family he lost. Abandoned by his father at a young age and traumatized by witnessing his mother being assaulted by intruders, Hardin grew up concealing his fears behind stubbornness, emotional volatility, and a defensive tendency to hurt those perceived threats.

This study will further explore Hardin Scott's character—the so-called “bad boy” admired by many women—who, deep down, is simply a man yearning for love and affection.

Hardin Scott's struggles can represent the experiences of teenage boys facing similar challenges, such as the trauma of abandonment, feelings of doubt, a lack of trust from others, and the stigma of being labelled a troublemaker destined to fail. However, through perseverance and personal growth, Hardin embarks on a long journey to prove himself and win back the love of someone who means everything to him.

1.2 Statements of the Problems

Here are the problems to be used in this research:

- 1) What leads Hardin Scott to believe that correcting his past mistakes will help him reconcile with Tessa Young?
- 2) How does Hardin Scott perceive his transformation, and what gives him confidence that he will not repeat his mistakes?

1.3 Objective of the Study

This research aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of Hardin Scott's character in the *After* sequel, focusing on psychological aspects related to trauma, past experiences, and the dynamics of adolescent romance. It seeks to examine how past traumatic events influence Hardin's personality, emotions, and behavior in the present, as well as explore the coping strategies he employs to deal with the emotional impact of his past. These factors shape his behavior in romantic relationships and reflect everyday psychological experiences among teenagers.

By achieving these research objectives, this study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the influence of trauma and psychological dynamics on adolescent behavior, particularly in the context of romantic relationships and emotional development.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

The scope of this psychological analysis of Hardin Scott's character in the *After* sequel is to examine his character development as he confronts past trauma that shapes his personality and influences his romantic relationships during adolescence. The emotional changes Hardin undergoes while dealing with his past trauma will be the central point of analysis.

This study also explores how psychological factors related to adolescence, such as emotional instability, self-discovery, and the impact of trauma on attachment, affect Hardin and Tessa's relationship. The research will focus solely on Hardin Scott's character and will not analyze other characters in depth, except in their interactions with him. Additionally, the study will be limited to relevant psychological theories, including psychodynamics, attachment theory, and trauma theory. The analysis will be based on information from the movie *After Everything* and will not include an in-depth examination of the original novel (*After*) or other movie sequels.

This study will employ a qualitative approach, analyzing fictional characters through psychological observations rather than empirical data or real-life case studies. With this clearly defined scope, the research aims to provide in-depth insights into Hardin Scott's character from a psychological perspective, particularly concerning his trauma and romantic dynamics, while maintaining a focused and structured analysis.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1) Personal Significance

In this research, learning about Hardin Scott's character and how he dealt with past mistakes can inspire individuals struggling with emotional wounds or past mistakes, motivating them to grow and develop into a better version of themselves.

2) Significance For The Audiences

This research can help audiences understand the psychological complexity of Hardin Scott's character, which often profoundly affects viewers' emotions and perceptions, particularly for those who follow the *After* series. In addition, the research can provide insight to viewers about the characteristics of relationships that may be considered unhealthy or toxic, especially among teenagers.

3) Significance of the English Letters Study Program of Universitas Ma Chung

This research can help English Letters of Universitas Ma Chung students analyze literature and film, especially in the context of character and psychology, where students can explore fictional characters in depth, not only in terms of storyline but also in terms of psychology and emotionality. In addition, English Letters of Universitas Ma Chung students can learn about the influence of young audiences' understanding of the dynamics of romance, and can help students develop a critical attitude towards popular trends in media, especially in the genre of teen romance or new adult fiction.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The following are key terms that would be instrumental in the further discussion of the research:

1) Character development

Character development is the change or growth process of a character's personality that represents particular attributes (Hasanah et al., 2018).

2) Past Mistakes

Past mistakes are learning and personal growth opportunities, particularly in high-stakes emotional contexts like romantic relationships. Failures and mistakes are often seen as opportunities for reflection, leading to better future decision-making and emotional resilience (Abergel, 2005).

3) Redemption

Redemption is a powerful and uplifting theme acknowledging the human potential to succeed after failure (Boscaljon, 2009).



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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Literature Review

In this research, the literature review plays a crucial role in understanding the background of the study, particularly in examining the development of previous research related to the topic. It provides insight into existing theories, concepts, and findings, helping to identify aspects that have not yet been explored or have received insufficient attention in prior studies. Through a literature review, researchers can determine the unique contributions their study can make.

According to Suroso (2020), conducting a literature review is essential when exploring a new research topic, following emerging research trends, and understanding the current state of the art in a particular field. It also serves as a reference for future research by analyzing the methodologies used in previous studies and aiding in the selection of appropriate approaches for new research.

Additionally, this research draws on several approaches and theories as a strong foundation, aligning with the central issues being analyzed. The first theory applied is psychoanalytic theory, a psychological approach developed by Sigmund Freud that focuses on the unconscious mind, which is shaped by childhood experiences and instinctual drives that influence human behavior. Key elements of this theory include motivation, emotions, and various aspects of personality, leading to the assumption that personality development begins when internal conflicts arise from these psychological factors (Ardiansyah et al., 2022). In this study, psychoanalytic theory is used to examine Hardin Scott's past experiences, trauma, and unconscious conflicts that shape his behavior and his relationship with Tessa Young.

In addition to psychoanalytic theory, characterization theory is employed to analyze Hardin Scott's character development as he confronts his past mistakes. This theory provides a detailed perspective, as it examines how a character is portrayed both directly and indirectly (Prinada, 2021). By incorporating characterization theory, this research systematically explores Hardin Scott's character growth and connects it to psychoanalytic concepts.

The final theoretical approach is *mise-en-scène* theory, which plays a crucial role in understanding the visual representation of Hardin Scott's character in the film. This theory enhances the psychoanalytic analysis by examining elements such as setting, color, and Hardin's body language or gestures. *Mise-en-scène* refers to cinematic elements that create a specific atmosphere within a scene, influencing how the audience perceives a character's emotions and psychological state (Abdillah et al., 2023). In this research, *mise-en-scène* analysis is essential for linking the film's visual aspects with the psychoanalytic interpretation of Hardin Scott's character, providing a deeper understanding of his struggles, personality changes, and character development throughout the story.

2.1.1 Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytic theory is an approach that explores the nature and development of human personality, emphasizing key elements such as motivation, emotions, and various aspects of personality. It is based on the assumption that personality development begins with internal conflicts within an individual's psychological framework.

In literary research, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory can be applied to analyze characterization in movies, novels, short stories, and other literary works featuring character development. Freud's psychoanalysis divides the human psyche into three structural components: the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious (Umamit et al., 2024).

a) Conscious

The conscious mind consists of thoughts, feelings, and memories that an individual is currently aware of. According to Sigmund Freud, consciousness represents only a small portion of mental life. He compares the relationship between the conscious and unconscious mind to an iceberg, where the visible tip above the water represents consciousness, while the much larger submerged portion symbolizes the unconscious mind (Ardiansyah et al., 2022). Because consciousness constitutes only a tiny fraction of the human mind, most mental activity occurs outside of conscious awareness, within the subconscious.

An individual's consciousness includes everything they focus on at a given moment, encompassing perceptions of the external world, internal thoughts, feelings, and emotions. As Waslam (2015) explains, consciousness plays a relatively minor role in psychoanalytic theory and is defined as the mental components that are always present in awareness, making it the only level of mental life that individuals can directly access. Consequently, consciousness is fluid and continuously changes over time, influenced by an individual's focus, environment, experiences, and emotional state.

An individual's consciousness can be disrupted by various internal and external factors, affecting their mindset, emotions, and interactions with their surroundings. According to Folk (2024), changes in consciousness—such as feeling detached from oneself or reality, experiencing sensations of being in another dimension, or encountering dream-like states and out-of-body experiences—are commonly associated with anxiety disorders. These disruptions can impact an individual's ability to connect with others, leading to feelings of alienation and difficulty in understanding emotions, ultimately resulting in a weakened social connection.

In literature, the structure of consciousness in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory helps shape characters with inner conflicts that reflect the struggle between the id (basic drives), ego (reality), and superego (moral values). Literary works influenced by psychoanalytic theory

often explore the psychological dimensions of individuals, particularly aspects hidden within the subconscious.

Key elements commonly analyzed in such works include trauma, which refers to intense and painful emotional experiences that continue to haunt a character; dreams, which reveal repressed desires and psychological conflicts, often symbolizing hidden fears, hopes, or wishes; and repression, a psychological defense mechanism that suppresses thoughts, memories, or desires deemed unacceptable by the conscious mind. Sigmund Freud's concept of consciousness in psychoanalytic theory serves as the foundation for this research, as Hardin Scott's character in the *After* sequel experiences various psychological conflicts that can be analyzed through Freud's structure of consciousness. His troubled relationship with his parents and deep-seated guilt over past mistakes contribute to his trauma.

According to psychoanalytic theory, trauma stored in the subconscious influences an individual's future behavior. In Hardin's case, this manifests as frequent rudeness and defensiveness toward those around him. Additionally, his persistent feelings of guilt and self-disappointment align with the concept of repression in psychoanalysis, which is expressed through anger, jealousy, and difficulty in managing his emotions. However, over time, Hardin begins to recognize his mistakes and strives for self-improvement by allowing the ego to mediate between his emotional impulses (id) and the demands of morality and reality (superego).

b) Preconscious

The preconscious level is a part of the mind that stores memories and experiences that are not always in conscious awareness but can be easily accessed when needed. As Setyanto et al. (2021) explain, the preconscious, also known as "ready memory," serves as a bridge between the conscious and unconscious mind.

In films and literary works, the preconscious often functions as a narrative device that enhances characterization, internal conflict, and emotional development, particularly for characters struggling with trauma or past mistakes. Additionally, the preconscious can create internal strife, as it contains memories, emotions, and impulses that individuals may not be fully aware of but that still influence their thoughts and actions. For example, feelings of guilt are often fleeting, but in some cases, they can persist for extended periods. As Haryani et al. (2024) note, individuals sometimes overlook minor mistakes, leading them to deny responsibility and justify their actions. These justifications are often driven by an unconscious desire for personal satisfaction.

In fiction and psychological contexts, characters often fear losing someone they love. This fear can stem from childhood experiences of abandonment or separation from significant individuals in their lives, such as parents, family members, or close friends. The loss of a loved one can be deeply traumatic, leaving a lasting emotional impact.

As a result, the preconscious mind can generate significant inner tension, causing emotional distress even when the individual is not fully aware of its source. If left unresolved, this internal conflict can escalate, leading to heightened discomfort or even severe psychological distress if not properly acknowledged and addressed.

In this research, the concept of preconsciousness in psychoanalytic theory is applied to Hardin Scott's character, particularly in relation to how his past mistakes shape his personality and choices. Hardin is not always fully aware of the impact his past actions have on his relationships and emotions. However, memories of these mistakes and the accompanying guilt remain in his subconscious, often resurfacing as anxiety, anger, or a fear of failure.

Additionally, Hardin's attitudes toward love, trust, and emotional intimacy may reflect unresolved traumas or past experiences. Having faced betrayal and abandonment, his

subconscious mind drives him to adopt defensive or even self-destructive behaviors in relationships.

Furthermore, Hardin unknowingly repeats the same patterns of behavior due to unresolved trauma, which becomes embedded in his subconscious and influences how he interacts with others. This lingering trauma causes Hardin to struggle with emotional closeness and a fear of rejection, leading him to create conflict in his relationships, often without realizing it.

For instance, Hardin instinctively pushes people away as a defense mechanism to protect himself from emotional pain. Although this may seem like an effective way to avoid vulnerability, it ultimately results in loneliness and dissatisfaction. In the *After* sequel, Hardin is forced to confront the consequences of his past mistakes, leading to a shift in his personality from a preconscious state to a deeper self-awareness. This transformation signifies that Hardin is beginning to recognize his behavioral patterns and understand how his actions affect both himself and those around him.

Self-reflection is a crucial first step in this process. By examining his past actions and decisions, Hardin begins to understand how his traumatic experiences and insecurities have shaped his current outlook and behavior. This awareness not only helps him recognize his mistakes but also provides an opportunity to learn from them.

Confronting the consequences of his actions is another essential aspect of this journey. This may involve apologizing to those he has hurt, admitting his faults, or making efforts to repair damaged relationships. Such actions demonstrate responsibility, maturity, and a genuine desire for personal growth.

Hardin's character development in this context reflects his attempt to heal from past wounds. By acknowledging his mistakes and their consequences, he seeks not only to mend

his relationships with others but also to rebuild his relationship with himself. This healing process often involves self-acceptance, forgiveness, and a commitment to self-improvement.

Hardin's journey from unconsciousness to self-awareness is central to his character development. It highlights his struggle against past traumas and mistakes while striving to create a healthier and more positive future. As a result, the narrative portrays a deep internal conflict, hope, and the potential for meaningful personal growth.

c) Unconscious

The unconscious is the part of the mind that stores information, memories, emotions, and experiences that are not fully recognized or directly accessible to consciousness. This concept is closely associated with psychology, particularly Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. According to Freud, human life is filled with various pressures and conflicts, and to alleviate them, these experiences and emotions are repressed into the unconscious (Apriansyah et al., 2022). The unconscious holds experiences, memories, and emotions that may not be actively recalled but still influence an individual's behavior and reactions. For example, traumatic experiences or unexpressed emotions may be stored in the subconscious, shaping a person's responses and decisions. Additionally, the unconscious serves as a defense mechanism, protecting individuals from external threats or internal anxieties by distorting reality in various ways (Solihah & Ahmadi, 2022). While this mechanism can help individuals cope with difficult situations, it can also create psychological challenges if unresolved emotions remain unaddressed.

In literature, the unconscious plays a significant role in shaping characters by driving unconscious motivations that influence their actions and decisions. For example, characters in a story are often affected by past experiences, emotions, and memories they are unaware of. In fictional narratives, the unconscious can be a source of deep and complex internal conflicts. These conflicts arise when a character is forced to confront difficult choices, particularly when

multiple possibilities contain underlying motives or causes that drive their actions and thoughts (Diana, 2016). This can result in a character who deeply desires love but is trapped by a fear of rejection, creating tension in their relationships with others. Thus, the unconscious mind adds depth and complexity to character development, enhancing both the emotional impact and thematic richness of the story.

In this research, applying psychoanalytic theory through Sigmund Freud's concept of the unconscious provides a deeper understanding of Hardin Scott's character and how his past experiences shape his present behavior. Identifying past traumas and experiences is crucial in analyzing character development, particularly for a complex figure like Hardin Scott. Hardin's deeply rooted trauma influences his actions, often leading him to make mistakes that hurt those around him. His unconscious mind, filled with fears and past wounds, fosters a deep distrust of love, which manifests in indirect behavioral changes. As a result, Hardin may exhibit aggression or defensiveness as a self-protective mechanism, shielding himself from the emotional pain that could arise from forming deeper relationships.

Moreover, Hardin's mistakes—such as hurting his loved ones—create a recurring pattern of behavior rooted in past experiences. His unconscious mind may drive him to repeat these mistakes, trapping him in a cycle of emotional conflict and unhealthy relationships. According to Rifayanti et al. (2022), toxic relationships can arise between partners, friends, colleagues, and even family members when one party feels unsupported, belittled, attacked, or demeaned. These dynamics can lead to negative behaviors that impact mental health, manifesting as physical, psychological, or emotional aggression. For Hardin, these repeated mistakes ultimately serve as a turning point. As he witnesses the people he loves distancing themselves from him, he begins to recognize the consequences of his actions. This realization marks a crucial stage in his character development, prompting him to reflect on his behavior and seek change.

The three personality concepts in psychoanalytic theory are highly relevant to analyzing Hardin Scott's character as he confronts his past mistakes. The conscious mind encompasses everything an individual is aware of and actively thinks about. In Hardin's case, this analysis offers insight into how he acknowledges and responds to his past mistakes. For example, it examines how he discusses his errors, interacts with others, and attempts to repair damaged relationships. This perspective sheds light on Hardin's self-awareness and his efforts to navigate personal challenges.

Meanwhile, the preconscious level consists of dormant information and memories that can be accessed relatively easily. In this study, we can examine how specific memories or experiences resurface in Hardin's mind when he encounters situations that remind him of past mistakes. This may include moments of reflection on experiences that shaped his perspective, as well as his attempts to recall and learn from those mistakes. Finally, the unconscious serves as a repository of memories, emotions, and experiences that individuals may not consciously recognize but that still influence their behavior and decisions. In Hardin's case, understanding the unconscious is crucial for exploring how past traumas and hidden fears shape his interactions with others and his approach to dealing with past mistakes. For example, a fear of rejection or betrayal may drive him to become defensive or to avoid deeper emotional connections. By applying these three concepts, this research can explore Hardin Scott's process of confronting his past mistakes. It examines how experiences stored in the preconscious and unconscious influence his ability to recognize behavioral patterns, understand their impact on others, and learn from his past. Additionally, it highlights Hardin's efforts to accept his mistakes, forgive himself, and take steps toward healing from guilt—an essential part of his personal growth and emotional development.

The application of psychoanalytic theory in this study allows for a more in-depth and complex exploration of Hardin Scott's character. This approach not only enhances the

understanding of his behaviors and decisions but also provides deeper insight into his emotional journey. As a result, this analysis contributes significantly to both the character's development and the broader themes within the narrative. Overall, examining the concepts of consciousness, preconsciousness, and unconsciousness in Hardin Scott's psychoanalytic analysis is essential for understanding how he confronts his past mistakes. By investigating his emotional dynamics, underlying trauma, and process of transformation, this research offers valuable insight into his character's growth. Additionally, it highlights how Hardin's psychological struggles and development contribute to the overarching themes in the sequel *After*.

2.1.2 Characterization Theory

Characterization theory is a concept used in literature, either in stories or films to create characters or characters in a story that are formed, developed, and displayed to the audience or readers. In depicting this characterization, authors generally use certain techniques to give life to the fictional characters present in literary works (Putri et al., 2023). Thus, strong and complex characters can allow readers or viewers to feel an emotional connection. On the other hand, the characters in a literary work will be the main driver of the plot of a story, through the actions, decisions, and conflicts faced by the characters. Without good characterization, the plot of a story will feel flat and less interesting.

In analyzing characterization in a literary work, for example in a film character. We can involve several steps or systematic approaches, such as dialog, motivation, and character development. Dialogue is a form of conversation or communication contained in a story, which is a means for viewers or spectators to understand information, clarity of facts, or main ideas (Gischa, 2022). Meanwhile, character motivation refers to the reasons underlying a character's behavior to think critically, organize their thoughts, and translate those thoughts into actions based on their wants and needs (Woltmann, 2024). And finally, character development is the

process of creating fictional characters that have the depth and complexity of real-life people (Glatch & Smith, 2024). In the context of characterization research, these three things are very important, because they can deepen the understanding of characterization in films. In addition, these three elements allow the audience to engage with the story, understand the complexity of the characters, and reflect on the themes raised. By analyzing these three aspects, research can provide deeper insights into how characters operate within the context of the story and how they contribute to the overall experience of the film.

In this research, characterisation theory plays a crucial role in analysing Hardin Scott's character development and his struggles with past conflicts. Two primary methods support this analysis: direct characterisation, which explicitly conveys information about Hardin's character through narration or interactions with other characters, and indirect characterisation, which reveals his personality through dialogue, behaviour, thoughts, and emotions. These approaches align closely with psychoanalytic theory, as they help explore Hardin's journey in confronting his past traumas and mistakes throughout each *After* sequel.

2.1.3 Mise En Scene Theory

In cinema and theater, where stories come to life through a seamless blend of visuals, emotions, and narrative, there exists a crucial yet often unspoken artistic concept known as *mise en scène* (Hellerman, 2024). In film analysis, *mise en scène* theory is essential for uncovering the meaning and message conveyed through visual elements, including composition, lighting, costumes, props, actors' expressions, and camera movements. By understanding visual composition, sound and music, editing techniques, symbolism, and metaphors within a film's structure, we can develop a deeper appreciation for cinema's artistry and storytelling capabilities (Padhye, 2024).

Mise en scène elements in film research can significantly support psychoanalytic analysis by visually reflecting, reinforcing, and illustrating deep psychological dynamics at the character, narrative, and audience experience levels. According to Ibad et al. (2023), *mise en scène* elements help explain the transformation of character behavior based on Sigmund Freud's personality theory, thereby strengthening research on *mise en scène* aspects in film. Psychoanalysis, often shaped by the theories of Freud and Lacan, focuses on concepts such as the unconscious, desire, repression, identity, painful experiences, and dreams. The elements of *mise en scène* provide a means to explore how these psychological ideas are represented visually. Several key aspects of *mise en scène* that can support psychoanalytic research in film include:

a) Composition

Composition refers to the organization and arrangement of visual elements within a scene to convey meaning, emotion, and a rich visual experience for the audience. This includes the positioning of characters, objects, and backgrounds and the way characters interact within the frame. In this study, the composition of Hardin Scott's character plays a crucial role in providing deeper insight into his relationships and emotional dynamics with those around him.

For example, when Hardin is depicted alone in a scene, it visually communicates his sense of isolation and emotional distress. Sadness is a natural response to loss, particularly the loss of someone significant, which can result in profound grief and emotional turmoil. Individuals experiencing grief often endure overwhelming feelings of loneliness, hopelessness, and pain, sometimes leading to depression (Rahmi et al., 2024). The deliberate composition of Hardin in solitary settings reinforces these emotions, emphasizing his lingering regrets and his struggle to move beyond his unresolved past. The strategic placement of characters in isolation or with minimal interaction can heighten the sense of emptiness, symbolizing the emotional void that Hardin experiences.

Conversely, when a character is depicted surrounded by friends or supportive individuals, it can signify emotional growth and a willingness to seek help. Emotional support is essential for individuals to feel safe, valued, and understood. It can be provided through active listening, words of encouragement, and positive reinforcement (Agustina et al., 2024). A composition portraying Hardin in the company of caring and compassionate individuals can create a more uplifting atmosphere. This visual arrangement suggests that he is no longer facing his struggles alone and is gradually opening himself up to support from others. Such a composition not only highlights his character development but also symbolizes his progress on the path to healing.

Isolation, grief, and social support are crucial elements in *After*, illustrating how Hardin Scott confronts his past mistakes. Isolation and grief are often part of the human experience, particularly when individuals grapple with regret. In Hardin's case, isolation symbolizes his entrapment in painful memories and guilt, allowing the audience to grasp the emotional weight he carries and how his past continues to shape his identity. Furthermore, isolation serves as a lens through which Hardin's internal conflicts are explored. When he is shown alone, the audience can sense his emotional burden, providing insight into how his past mistakes influence his relationships and efforts to heal. The sadness stemming from isolation becomes a catalyst for self-reflection. From a psychoanalytic perspective, recognizing grief and isolation is the first step toward healing. By incorporating these elements, the film enables the audience to witness Hardin's realization of the consequences of his past actions and his growing motivation to change.

On the other hand, social support plays a crucial role in Hardin's healing process. When he is surrounded by friends or individuals who offer support, it reinforces that he is not facing his struggles alone. Depictions of social support foster a sense of hope and highlight the possibility of redemption, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal relationships in

emotional recovery. From a compositional perspective, social support also reflects shifts in Hardin's relationships with other characters, such as Tessa. As he begins to accept support, it signals his willingness to open up about his past, creating opportunities for character growth and development. The contrast between Hardin's previous isolation and his gradual acceptance of support underscores the theme of change and personal growth.

By presenting this transition—from solitude to connection—the film crafts a compelling narrative of Hardin's emotional journey. This contrast also highlights the significance of relationships in overcoming past mistakes and finding a path to healing. Through the lens of psychoanalysis, examining these elements provides deeper insight into Hardin's internal conflict, his transformation, and the broader themes of regret, self-improvement, and the pursuit of redemption.

b) Expressions and Gestures

Cahyani et al. (2021) explained that expressions serve as a form of language that reflects emotions and functions as a communication tool for exchanging thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Emotions, which often emerge suddenly and are deeply personal, play a crucial role in human relationships. Gestures, on the other hand, are a form of nonverbal communication that utilizes hand movements, facial expressions, and body positioning to convey messages. In theatre, film, and television, gestures help performers express their characters' emotional depth and inner awareness. For example, actors may use specific hand movements or facial expressions to communicate emotions—such as looking upward and dramatically raising their hands to the sky to portray a sense of despair (Davenport, 2023). These nonverbal cues enhance storytelling by allowing audiences to grasp the character's emotions without relying solely on dialogue.

In this research, Hardin Scott's facial expressions serve as a window into his hidden emotional states, often revealing more than his words or actions. Even when he attempts to mask his true feelings, subtle cues can expose his inner turmoil.

A tense face or clenched jaw suggests an effort to suppress emotions such as anger, frustration, or guilt. This may occur when he confronts Tessa or when someone reminds him of his past mistakes. In psychoanalytic terms, this could indicate repression, where he attempts to push down painful emotions rather than confront them.

A blank stare or downward gaze reflects despair, guilt, or an overwhelming emotional burden. Such an expression may follow a heated argument or a moment of realization about the consequences of his actions. Blank stares are often linked to dissociative trauma, representing the mind's attempt to detach from painful realities. A furrowed brow or wrinkled forehead signals anxiety and inner conflict. This expression is likely to appear when Hardin struggles to discuss his past but finds it difficult to articulate his emotions. It suggests that something is deeply troubling him, yet he is not fully ready to confront it. A forced smile or sardonic grin may function as a defense mechanism, masking emotional pain with irony or sarcasm. This often emerges during interactions where Hardin tries to downplay his mistakes or evade serious discussions, revealing his reluctance to face his vulnerabilities. By analyzing these expressions, we gain deeper insight into Hardin's psychological state, reinforcing the idea that his journey is one of internal conflict, repression, and gradual self-awareness.

Hardin Scott's gestures offer valuable insight into how he copes with his past mistakes and navigates internal conflicts. His crossed arms or rigid posture suggest a defensive stance, indicating that he feels threatened or uncomfortable in certain situations. This often occurs when someone confronts him about his past or when he tries to distance himself from Tessa. From a psychoanalytic perspective, such behaviour aligns with emotional inhibition, where an individual resists emotional vulnerability as a way to protect themselves from further pain. Additionally, avoiding eye contact can signal guilt, shame, or fear of facing the consequences of past actions. This gesture is particularly noticeable in scenes where Hardin must apologize or discuss a significant mistake. Avoiding eye contact may function as a self-defence

mechanism, reflecting his instinct to escape an emotionally uncomfortable situation rather than fully confront it. By examining these gestures, we gain a deeper understanding of Hardin's psychological state, emphasizing his struggles with vulnerability, emotional repression, and the challenge of accepting responsibility for his past.

As Hardin's character evolves, his facial expressions and gestures reflect his healing process and gradual acceptance of his past. At the story's beginning, Hardin exhibits a tense face, furrowed brows, and a blank stare, all of which signal emotional distress and internal turmoil. His defensive posture, frequent avoidance of eye contact, and clenched hands or fidgety movements further emphasize his struggle with guilt and unresolved trauma. As he progresses toward self-awareness, his expressions become more reflective, indicating moments of introspection. His movements grow more relaxed, although subtle signs of anxiety—such as occasional hesitation or uncertainty—remain. While he makes more eye contact, it is often accompanied by lingering apprehension, suggesting that he is still navigating his emotions.

In the final stage of acceptance and healing, Hardin's facial expressions appear more relaxed and sincere, reflecting a newfound emotional clarity. His posture becomes more open, signaling a readiness to confront his feelings and move forward. His hand movements stabilize, indicating greater emotional control and inner peace. These mise en scène elements offer profound insight into Hardin's journey, showcasing how he transitions from repression and defense mechanisms to self-acceptance and emotional transformation. Through these visual cues, the audience can witness his growth, reinforcing the film's themes of healing, redemption, and personal evolution.

2.2 Earlier Studies

The study of fictional characters confronting their pasts has been a significant focus in both literary and psychological research. In the *After* movie sequel, the protagonist, Hardin

Scott, embarks on a complex emotional journey as he struggles to come to terms with his past mistakes.

A relevant comparison can be drawn from research by Kurnia & Santyaputri (2024), which analyzes the psychological complexity of the main characters in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022), directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert. Their study explores family conflicts and internal struggles that shape the characters' personalities and mental states. Similarly, Hardin Scott's character in *After* experiences deep psychological turmoil rooted in a violent and unstable family environment. This upbringing leaves Hardin emotionally wounded, making it difficult for him to trust others and regulate his emotions.

As a result, Hardin's relationships, particularly with Tessa, are marked by instability, fueled by lies, jealousy, and misunderstandings. His impulsive and temperamental nature exacerbates these conflicts, leading to repeated arguments and emotional turbulence. The persistent guilt and self-blame he carries only worsen his psychological distress, further complicating his ability to form healthy connections with those around him. By analyzing Hardin's emotional struggles, this research sheds light on how past traumas shape personal relationships and the psychological barriers individuals must overcome to achieve healing and emotional growth.

Furthermore, research by Srikandi et al. (2021) applies Freud's psychoanalytic approach to analyze the film *Equals* (2015), focusing on the character Silas, who suddenly develops emotions that he is forced to suppress from those around him, including the woman he loves. This study also explores Freud's three psychological structures—Id, Ego, and Superego—which are relevant to Hardin Scott's character in the *After* sequel. Hardin harbors deep resentment toward his father, Ken Scott, whom he perceives as irresponsible. Ken's past actions, such as abusing Hardin's mother, consuming alcohol excessively, and abandoning his

family, have caused lasting emotional damage. Hardin's anger and frustration stem from these childhood traumas, leaving him with trust issues and difficulty controlling his emotions.

Additionally, Hardin experiences psychological shock upon learning that his biological father is Christian Vance—a man he had always admired. This revelation leaves him feeling confused and betrayed, as though his identity has been stripped away and his beliefs about family and honour destabilised. These two conflicts—his hatred toward Ken Scott and the revelation about Christian Vance—create a profound internal struggle. Hardin grapples with understanding his identity and how these relationships influence his perspectives on love, trust, and responsibility. Ultimately, Hardin must confront his pain and confusion to find peace and acceptance, making his emotional journey both complex and profoundly transformative.

The final study was conducted by Lawolo et al. (2024) and focuses on the character of Hardin Scott from Anna Todd's novel *After*. The purpose of this research is to analyze the structure of the main character's personality components and the factors that influence their development. Hardin Scott's psychological makeup consists of three key elements. First is the id, which represents his basic drives and desires, such as anger and sexual impulses. These instincts often manifest in his impulsive and aggressive behavior, particularly when he feels threatened or insecure. Second is the ego, which acts as a mediator between the id and reality. Hardin attempts to satisfy his desires in a way that aligns with societal expectations. For instance, while he frequently experiences anger, he sometimes tries to restrain himself and act more rationally, especially in his interactions with Tessa. Lastly is the superego, which reflects the moral and ethical values he has internalized from his environment and life experiences. This often leads to internal conflict, particularly when his actions contradict his sense of right and wrong. These psychological conflicts shape Hardin's character, making him a complex figure with deep emotional turmoil throughout the *After* series.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Studied Material

This study focuses on the psychological analysis of Hardin Scott's character across the five *After* sequel films. The first film, *After*, released in 2019 and directed by Jenny Gage, is an adaptation of Anna Todd's 2014 novel. It follows the story of Tessa Young, a diligent and responsible young woman with a bright future ahead of her as she begins her first year of college. However, her life takes a drastic turn when she meets Hardin Scott, a mysterious man with a troubled reputation.

The second film, *After We Collided*, released in 2020 and directed by Roger Kumble, delves into the complicated love story between Tessa and Hardin. In this sequel, audiences are confronted with themes of trust, jealousy, and past mistakes that continue to haunt their relationship. The third film, *After We Fell*, released in 2021 and directed by Castille Landon, with a screenplay by Sharon Soboil, focuses more on Tessa's journey of self-discovery while Hardin struggles to atone for his past mistakes. The fourth film, *After Ever Happy*, released in 2022, also directed by Castille Landon and written by Sharon Soboil, uncovers long-hidden secrets, including toxic relationships and dysfunctional family dynamics. This harsh reality leads Tessa to decide to distance herself from Hardin. The fifth and final film, *After Everything*, released in 2023 and directed by Castille Landon, follows Hardin on a journey to Portugal in search of self-discovery. Through this journey, he realizes that he must make amends for his past mistakes before he can reunite with Tessa. As a result, this final sequel places significant focus on Hardin's perspective as he fights to redeem himself and win back Tessa's love.

This study applies Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory to examine how Hardin Scott confronts his past mistakes and undergoes emotional development throughout the *After*

film sequels. In psychology, particularly in personality studies, Freud's influence remains significant in shaping psychoanalytic theory, with many of his ideas contributing to modern understandings of human behavior and personality (Ardiansyah, 2022). From a psychoanalytic perspective, as proposed by Freud, Hardin Scott grapples with childhood trauma, emotional repression, and defense mechanisms that often prove detrimental. These traumatic experiences have shaped his personality, leading to internal conflicts and an inability to trust others. His repression of emotional pain manifests as anger and self-destructive behavior. Defense mechanisms such as denial and displacement serve as coping strategies to shield him from pain, yet they also hinder his ability to form healthy relationships, particularly with Tessa. As the story progresses, Hardin begins recognizing the destructive patterns within himself and strives to change. This transformation aligns with Freud's theory on the necessity of confronting trauma by bringing repressed experiences into conscious awareness, allowing individuals to resolve their issues more constructively.

3.2 Study Design

This research employs a qualitative method with the objective of gaining a deep understanding of social phenomena, individual experiences, and the meanings underlying human actions. As stated by Fadli (2021), qualitative research aims to explore individual and community issues in depth, in contrast to quantitative research, which tends to emphasize surface-level aspects. Through this approach, researchers seek to comprehend the meanings individuals attach to particular situations and how these meanings influence their behavior. The study is conducted within a natural setting without altering the existing conditions. Furthermore, descriptive analysis is utilized to provide a comprehensive and nuanced depiction of the phenomenon, experience, or context under investigation. By integrating qualitative methods with a psychoanalytic perspective, this research offers an in-depth analysis of how

Hardin Scott confronts the mistakes of his past, moving beyond the narrative structure to examine the psychological dynamics underlying his character development.

3.3 Data Gathering

This research will collect data from two types of sources: primary and secondary. The primary source will be the *After* movie and its sequels, including *After We Collided*, *After We Fell*, *After Ever Happy*, and *After Everything*. Meanwhile, secondary sources will consist of journals and books discussing Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, as well as previous studies analyzing fictional characters with trauma backgrounds. Additionally, literary studies focusing on the concept of the redemption arc in New Adult Romance novels will be included as relevant secondary sources.

3.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

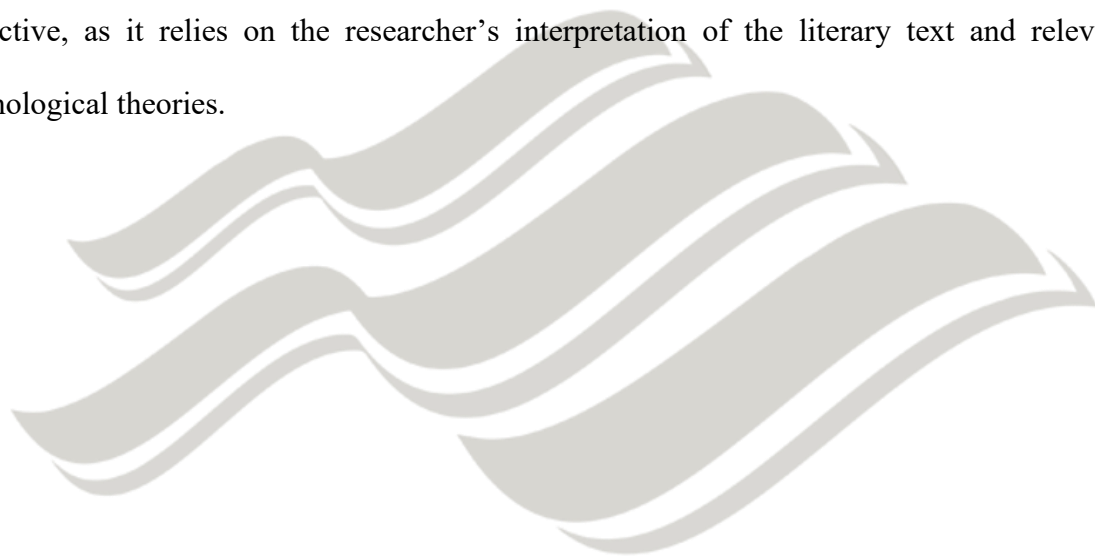
The collected data will be analyzed using text analysis and psychological interpretation through a series of steps. First, scenes, dialogues, and narratives in the film that depict how Hardin confronts his past mistakes will be identified. Next, the data will be categorized based on psychoanalytic concepts, including childhood trauma and its impact on Hardin, identity crisis and self-reflection, and conflicts involving the shadow self and personality integration.

Second, the psychoanalytic analysis will focus on understanding how Hardin's past trauma influences his present behavior. Using Freud's theory of defense mechanisms, this study will examine how Hardin copes with his guilt, as well as his emotional journey toward making amends and redefining his identity.

Finally, interpreting the analyzed data within the framework of psychoanalysis requires a deep understanding of the psychological dynamics that shape an individual. In this case, the findings suggest that Hardin Scott undergoes significant development in confronting his past.

Psychoanalytic theory provides a relevant framework to explain his character transformation, highlighting the role of internal conflicts and defense mechanisms in shaping his behavioral changes.

This research has a specific limitation: it focuses solely on Hardin Scott without an in-depth analysis of other characters. Additionally, the sources are restricted to the *After* movie sequels, excluding adaptations based on the novel series. Furthermore, the analysis is inherently subjective, as it relies on the researcher's interpretation of the literary text and relevant psychological theories.



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CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will analyze the main character, Hardin Scott, in the movie sequel “*After*,” focusing on his psychological development in dealing with past mistakes. This analysis is conducted using Sigmund Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis, specifically emphasizing the structure of the human mind, which is divided into three layers: consciousness, preconsciousness, and unconsciousness. These three aspects function as layers of mental activity that influence a person’s thoughts, actions, and emotional responses.

Consciousness refers to the thoughts and feelings that Hardin is fully aware of, especially those that influence his intentional decisions and behaviours. The pre-conscious includes mental states that are not necessarily conscious but are accessible, such as memories or guilt that arise when he reflects. The unconscious, on the other hand, is deeply embedded drives, fears, and traumatic experiences, often related to childhood, that indirectly shape unconscious motivations and behaviours.

Applying this framework, this chapter aims to answer the two questions in Chapter 1. The discussion is divided into two main sections, each analysing Hardin’s psychological journey of inner conflict, moral struggles, and attempts to change. Textual evidence from dialogue or subtitles in the film supports the interpretation, so the analysis follows the narrative and Freud’s theory.

4.1 Hardin Scott’s Motivation to Correct His Past Mistakes

Hardin Scott’s character in the sequel *After* shows a complex transformation, rooted in internal conflicts and hidden psychological drives. His desire to right the wrongs of the past arises not only from logical consciousness, but also from deeper psychological layers, as Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of the structure of consciousness focuses on the

psychological dynamics that drive Hardin to right the wrongs and the belief that doing so will improve his relationship with Tessa Young.

4.1.1 The Conscious Desire to Reconcile

Hardin Scott's actions and words in *After* (2019) clearly show his desire to reconcile with Tessa Young after the revelation of the lies Hardin had told his friends. This desire is evident when Tessa learns that their relationship began with a cruel challenge. The revelation has a profound emotional impact on Hardin, triggering a change in him, thanks to his admission of guilt and his intention to make amends.

Molly: Remember truth or dare?

Tessa: What?

Hardin: Molly, do not.

Zed: Molly!

(video footage on Molly's cell phone)

Tessa: I am done playing this game.

Jace: I like this girl.

Molly: Looks like Hardin Scott just got his first rejection.

Hardin: You lot do not think I can make it happen?

Molly: Make what happen, Hardin?

Hardin: Here is a dare. Make her fall in love with me. And then, I'll just... turn it off.

(end video record)

Molly: It was all a game.

Hardin: Tessa? Tessa. Tessa, please. You have to believe me. Tessa, that was before everything, before I got to know you.

Tessa: Is that true? And all of you knew?

Hardin: Tessa. Tessa, wait.

[After, 2019, Jenny Gage, 01:26:47 – 01:28:52]

In the dialogue, Molly is trying to reveal a secret that she and her friends know about a game they played with Hardin, which certainly hurt Hardin's ego because Tessa rejected him. Thus, Hardin challenges himself to melt Tessa's feelings, and when Tessa begins to feel feelings for Hardin, then Hardin will break Tessa's feelings for him. This can be seen in the line Hardin says, "*Here's a dare. Make her fall in love with me. And then, I'll just... turn it off.*" This statement humiliated Tessa and broke the trust she had built in their relationship.

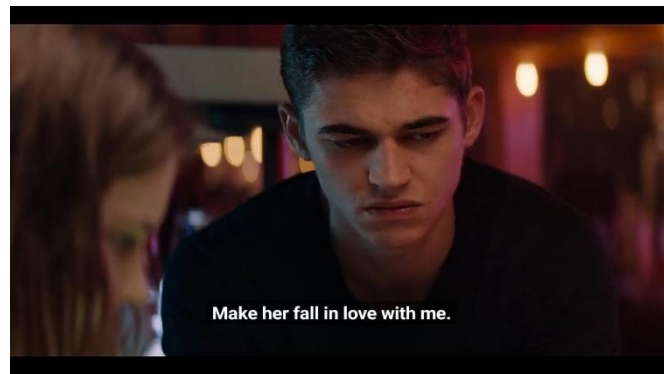


Figure 1 : Molly shows the video recording to Tessa (Source: *After*, 2019)

Based on the footage in Figure 1, Hardin showed a glum expression after Molly played a video of him answering the challenge in the “truth or dare” game. Hardin realized he had made a big mistake to someone who cared about him. This realisation is described as a person’s mental state that contains proportional things, such as beliefs, hopes, worries, and desires (Hastjarjo, 2005).

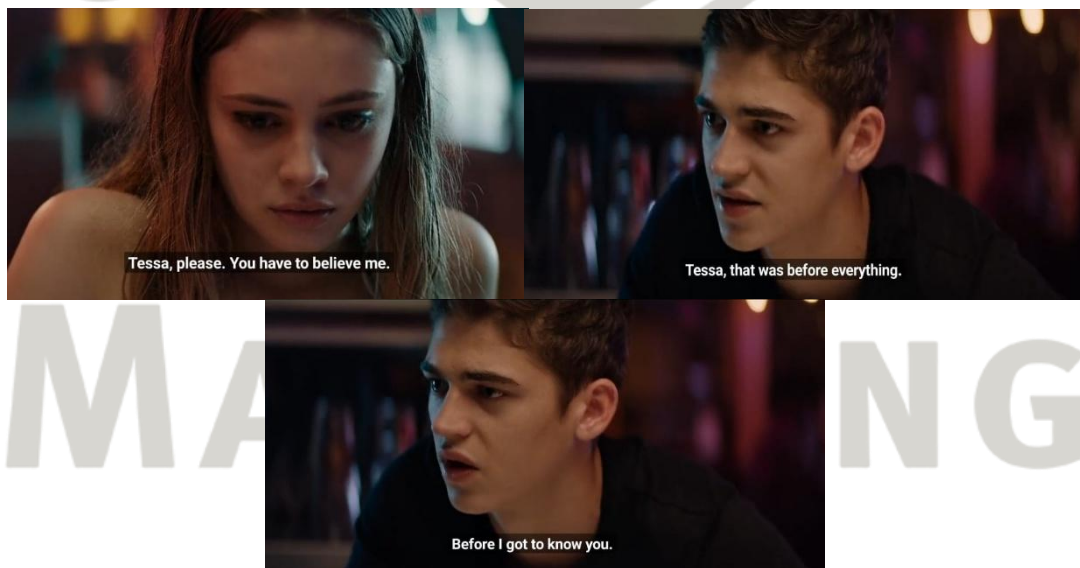


Figure 2 : Hardin tried to explain the situation now (Source: *After*, 2019)

And Hardin's concerns are answered as he tries to explain his current situation and how important Tessa is to his life right now. In figure 2, Hardin says to Tessa: “*Tessa, please. You have to believe me. Tessa, that was before everything. Before I got to know you.*” This dialogue

shows a great deal of guilt towards Hardin's actions, and Hardin is trying to make Tessa believe that now he has changed, and whatever happened before was just an act that Hardin was unaware of.

Monolog:

My dearest Tessa,

Like all our favourite stories, there are happy and unhappy endings. I thought we had a chance for a happy one, but at last, it was not meant to be. I love you with all of my heart, and that's exactly why I had to get as far away from you as possible. We're like an addiction to each other, with equal parts pleasure... and pain. And as for that other night, that girl, she was one of my former conquests. I had to apologise for my past in order to have a future with you, but fate just... seems to get in our way. So let's cut the bullshit. you're too damn good for me, and I know it. And somewhere in the back of my mind. I always knew we wouldn't last, and I think you did, too. I know this is going to be painful at first, and it could take days, even more. But one of those days, you're going to wake up and the sorrow will start to slip away... until we're nothing but a distant memory. Goodbye Tess.

[After We Collided, 2020, Roger Kumble, 01:27:31 - 01:28:33]

The monologue above is Hardin's letter to Tessa after the chaos of New Year's Eve. Tessa found Hardin talking to a woman, whom Tessa thought Hardin had done something else wrong, eventually leading them to an argument. Because of this, Hardin chooses to walk away from Tessa to give space to Tessa and their relationship. Hardin's decision to give space and time to each other plays an important role in executive function, which is the mind's ability to perform selective attention, planning, self-control, and evaluation of various action options. Baars (1997) revealed that awareness is the entry point for a person to direct behavior in a conscious and planned manner. Moreover, this is one of the plans that Hardin did, explaining what happened between him and the woman, and that he began to try to improve himself to become someone better.



Figure 3 : Hardin showed his intention to change (Source: *After We Collided*, 2020)

In the footage of figure 3, Hardin says, “*I had to apologise for my past in order to have a future with you.*” This statement shows a clear and rational intention to deal with past mistakes, and emphasises a thought process driven by the desire to improve the relationship. Thus, Hardin no longer positions himself in denial or avoidance of any wrongdoing. Instead, Hardin demonstrates self-awareness that illustrates a psychological shift towards responsibility and emotional maturation.

According to Cherry (2024), a person’s conscious mind includes all thoughts, memories, emotions, and desires that are always realized so that this part of a person’s mental process can discuss and solve problems logically. Hardin’s statement regarding his clarity and desire for forgiveness aligns with this view. A way of thinking that is no longer influenced by the workings of unconscious protection, such as denial, that functions more clearly and emotionally.



Figure 4 : Hardin reflects on his relationship with Tessa Source: *After We Collided*, 2020)

It can be seen in the footage in Figure 4 when Hardin reflects on his relationship with Tessa. Moreover, this can be seen in the dialogue *“We’re like an addiction to each other, with equal parts pleasure... and pain.”* This shows how Hardin’s feelings are mixed; conversely, this relationship gives them happiness. However, on the other hand, there is pain and suffering from past mistakes. So, Hardin consciously decided to temporarily walk away from Tessa’s life and give himself space to reflect on all his mistakes.

Hardin: That’s exactly it. I can’t help but think that you should be with someone else. Your life would be so much easier. There’s all this bad shit that I’ve been trying to suppress for so long. It’s.. It’s just all coming up. And there’s nothing I can do. The added thought of losing you is just... it’s pretty fucking dark in here, Tess.
Tessa: Why didn’t you just tell me? That’s the whole point of being open with each other.
Hardin: Because it’s a burden for me, and I don’t wanna burden you.
Tessa: I don’t want to be with anyone else. I wanna be with you.
[After We Fell, 2021, Castille Landon, 01:01:07 - 01:02:16]

The following dialogue shows that awareness of guilt and hurt is the basis of the desire to reconcile. Freud (1989), explains that feelings of guilt stem from the conflict between the id, ego, and superego, especially when a person violates his internal moral values. When a person acts against their internal moral values, the superego will “punish” the ego by causing guilt and anxiety. This process can be clearly seen in the dialog Hardin expresses to Tessa:

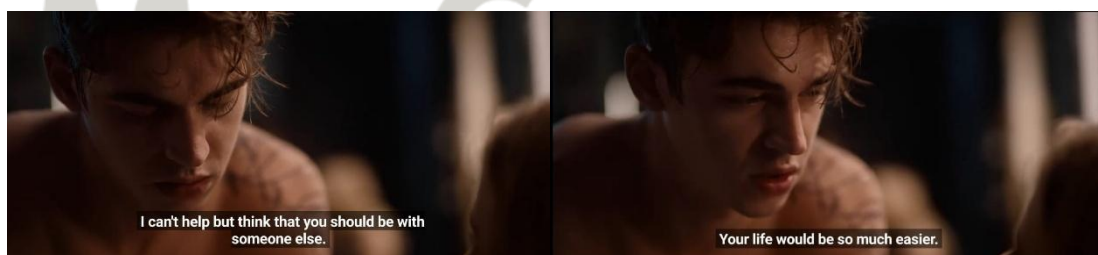


Figure 5 : Hardin told Tessa the concerns he felt (Source: *After We Fell*, 2021)

As seen in figure 5, Hardin expresses his concerns to Tessa. He says, *“I can't help but think that you should be with someone else.”* Hardin shows his condition, which is constantly haunted by the thought that he is not a suitable partner for Tessa. He felt that his presence was

actually complicating Tessa's life. In addition, Hardin also says “Your life would be so much easier.” Which is where Hardin recognizes that his existence has brought a burden to Tessa's life. This sentence explains Hardin's state of awareness of the consequences of his past behavior or wounds that impacted their relationship. Although it was painful, Hardin seemed to show that he was willing to let go of Tessa for the sake of Tessa's happiness and peace of mind. According to Freud's (1960) theory, a healthy ego functions to mediate between the intrusive emotional drive (id), moral values (superego), and the reality of the relationship. In this case, Hardin's ego functions consciously to restrain his own desires, in order to protect his loved ones.

On the other hand, Tessa's response of firmly accepting and affirming her desire to stay together with Hardin makes for a very important emotional moment in the dynamics of their relationship. This moment not only shows Tessa's commitment, but also shows her deep feelings for Hardin. In addition, this will be a turning point in Hardin and Tessa's relationship that is full of challenges that must be faced, but Tessa is ready to fight for their relationship. It can be seen from the words that Tessa conveyed to Hardin:

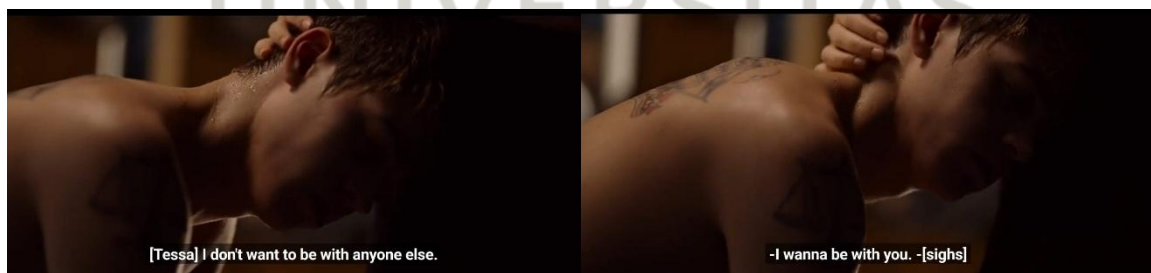


Figure 6 : Tessa tries to convince Hardin (Source: *After We Fell*, 2021)

The footage in Figure 6 shows a sense of firm commitment, unconditional acceptance, and faith in the relationship despite past conflicts or mistakes. By saying, “*I don't want to be with anyone else*,” Tessa shows a conscious and firm choice to stay with Hardin, despite all her past shortcomings. In addition, Tessa does not expect Hardin to be perfect or free from his

past, but instead, Tessa chooses to stay with him. This can be seen from Tessa's statement, "*I wanna be with you.*" This not only expresses love but also serves as a form of emotional release that psychologically calms Hardin's inner conflict. Moreover, this is called Unconditional Positive Regard, a form of unconditional acceptance and love given to someone (Pujawati, 2025).

In this level of conscious sentences that show strong emotional support, when one party has doubts and wants to give up. Then the other party can show feelings of love not just about comfort, but also about a conscious decision to stick together in healing and repairing the relationship to be healthier.

Hardin: I'm so sorry for what happened in London. I really am.

Tessa: I thought we had a love that was out of a novel. And no matter how hard or fast or tough it was, we'd survive to tell the story.

Hardin: Hey. We do. And we can. We can survive it.

Tessa: I don't wanna survive. I want to live. I can't keep doing this

Hardin: Tess.

Tessa: You don't love me enough to fight for me. You gave up every time.

Hardin: I tried. I really fucking tried.

Tessa: I'm sorry I couldn't fix you.

Hardin: Me, too. Me, too.

[After Ever Happy, 2022, Castille Landon, 00:36:42 - 00:38:15]

This dialogue shows a deep emotional conflict between Hardin and Tessa that can be directly linked to the concept of one's consciousness, this happens to focus on the full realisation of the hurt, failure, and inability to maintain the relationship which becomes the turning point of the desire to repair oneself and re-establish the broken relationship even though the process is not entirely straightforward. The conflict arising in the conversation between Hardin and Tessa shows a complex range of emotions, where guilt and the desire to repair the relationship come to the fore. Hardin in his confession:

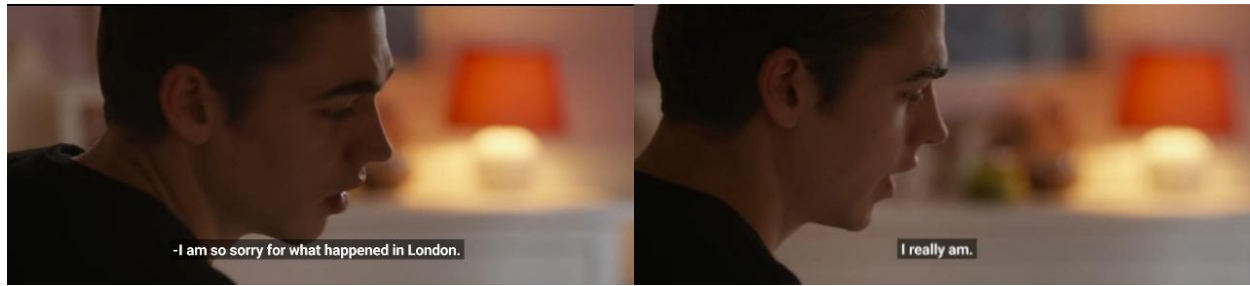


Figure 7: The regret that Hardin feels (Source: *After Ever Happy*, 2022)

Hardin's statement in footage figure 7 is a conscious admission of guilt, saying "*I'm so sorry for what happened in London,*" Hardin consciously acknowledges the actions he has taken against Tessa that are hurtful, this shows that he is not trying to cover up, avoid, or even deny his role in the incident. From a psychological perspective, this statement refers to an attitude of emotional responsibility. This is an attitude that we do not blame others for how we feel and do not rely on others to make us happy or to "fix" our behaviour (Melilo, 2024). Hardin begins to take responsibility for his own emotions instead of just blaming the circumstances or other people involved.

In addition, Hardin showed genuine remorse. Seen in Figure 7, where Hardin says "I really am" shows that the remorse he shows is not just a formality, but a sincere feeling from within himself. Hardin wants to convince Tessa that he really regrets everything he did and this comes from a deep sense of awareness and guilt. And this regret can be part of a conscious reconciliation process, so apologizing in a broken relationship is the first step in repairing the trust that has been lost. This act becomes one's awareness of responsibility in creating emotional feelings and demonstrating the intention to make things right.

Hardin: You know what? I'm.. I'm gonna come with you. I'm gonna start looking for places up there. I'm ready.

Tessa: I don't.. I don't think...

Hardin: Tess. Tess, it's my turn to be there for you.

Tessa: I don't want anything from you anymore.

Hardin: I don't believe you. And I don't think you believe yourself either.

[*After Ever Happy*, 2022, Castille Landon, 00:44:01 - 00:44:27]

This dialogue provides a moment for Hardin to demonstrate an active and conscious determination to improve his relationship with Tessa, although it takes considerable effort to convince Tessa in the midst of her downturn. In terms of consciousness, this shows a conscious initiative to change and be present for loved ones. One of the main indicators of fully conscious acceptance is a sincere desire to improve his relationship with Tessa. Hardin's change in attitude from passive to active is a commitment to proactively engage in the acceptance process. This can be seen in Hardin's statement:



Figure 8 : Hardin showed emotional responsibility and a willingness to change
(Source: *After Ever Happy*, 2022)

Hardin's statement in the footage in Figure 8 shows an explicit intention to take emotional and relational responsibility. It is not only an expression of love or regret, but also a willingness to significantly change his life. This is done in order to support and accompany Tessa in every step she takes. The sentence "I'm gonna come with you." shows Hardin's response which is not just a momentary emotion, but conveys a decision that he has consciously considered. And the sentence "I'm gonna start looking for places up there," which Hardin says

is a form of commitment that is not only emotional but also practical. Where Hardin is willing to adjust his life in order to be with Tessa, besides other sentences that Hardin expresses such as “*I’m ready*” indicate that Hardin has reached a point of emotional maturity. According to Legg (2020), someone who has emotional maturity has a deep awareness of the privileges they have in this life. Thus, Hardin is ready to face the future, leave his old life behind, and build a healthier relationship with Tessa.

Hardin: I’ve been stuck in my apartment for so long. Figure it’s taken a toll.

Nathalie: Stuck?

Hardin: More like self-contained, I guess. Figured if I shut myself away from the world for long enough, eventually I’d find the words. You don’t you?

Nathalie: Oh, yeah. That’s how you get to the good stuff. So why do you think you’re struggling so much?

Hardin: Second novel syndrome. I mean, it’s common enough to have a name, so at least I’m not the only one. But I guess there must be a number of reasons.

Nathalie: Like?

Hardin: Picking things apart again?

Nathalie: Oh, yeah.

Hardin: Well, “After” was easy. I had my muse. I was inspired. I could have written thousands of pages. It’s kind of the irony of it all, isn’t it? If I didn’t have her, I wouldn’t have the book. But if I didn’t have the book, then I would still have her.

Nathalie: Oh, she didn’t like the book?

Hardin: She absolutely fucking hated the book. The parts that she read, anyway. It was more about the circumstances of how read them as well, but...

Nathalie: Wait, you didn’t ask her permission to write it?

Hardin: I really thought that sharing our story would help people the same way that it helped me to get through my shit and figure things out, but obviously I now understand that I shouldn’t have gone and published it to the entire fucking world without telling her, I know that now.

Nathalie: I mean, it’s not nice being exposed without your consent.

[After Everything, 2023, Castille Landon, 00:45:18 - 00:46:53]

The dialogue between Hardin and Nathalie shows Hardin's deep self-reflection process. According to Adrian (2024), self-reflection can provide an opportunity for a person to be able to understand the important things from every experience that has been experienced. Hardin reflects on his past actions that have hurt Tessa, resulting in a desire to restore the broken relationship. This not only came from an emotional impulse, but was also the result of a deep

awareness of the mistakes he had made, as well as an understanding of the emotional impact this had on others.

The desire to repair broken relationships often arises from a process of deep reflection and recognition of past actions that have hurt others. In Hardin's case, his conversations with Nathalie gradually begin to reveal his realization of the huge mistake he made towards Tessa. Publishing a novel based on their love story without Tessa's consent was a very hurtful and selfish act. This realization became the first step for Hardin to make amends and attempt to regain Tessa's trust.



Figure 9 : Hardin's process of reflection and acknowledgement of past actions
(Source: *After Everything*, 2023)

The statement in the footage in Figure 9 shows that Hardin has passed the denial and justification phases, and now he is entering the acceptance stage. According to Pawestri (2023), someone who enters the acceptance stage will begin to accept the fact that bad things are indeed part of life and the shadows of loss may remain. Hardin's realization that he had exposed Tessa

without consent was not only a cognitive recognition, but also an emotional one. Hardin begins to understand that while his intentions may have been good, they cannot be used as an excuse to violate someone's privacy. Hardin's realization is that in order to achieve acceptance, a sincere acknowledgement of the harm that has been caused to others is required. Without such acknowledgement, the process of healing and repairing the relationship will never be realised.



Figure 10 : Complex emotional conflict for Hardin (Source: *After Everything*, 2023)

The statement in Figure 10 shows a complex emotional conflict, where Hardin realises that his career achievements come at the cost of losing his loved ones. This reflection confirms that his desire for peace was not a temporary reaction, but rather the development of a deep understanding of the impact of his personal decisions. According to Erikson (1993), a theory states that if developmental challenges are not met, there will be serious consequences, such as stagnation in personal growth and deep emotional decision-making. Initially, Hardin isolated himself from the outside world to feed on his isolation. However, this hindered his creative process and emotional development. His change begins when he realizes how much influence his writing has had on Tessa and acknowledges his mistake in publishing their story without

her permission. This realisation signalled a shift from a narrow focus on the self to a more profound empathy for others. The change in attitude shown by Hardin reflects a strong desire for reconciliation, which arises from his acknowledgement of his past emotional failings and his attempts to make amends.

Tessa: Can I say something?

Hardin: Since when do you ask?

Tessa: I'm sorry that I pulled away from you after I read your manuscript.

Hardin: Tess, I didn't handle it right.

Tessa: I was just so worried what people would think about me, or us. But I choose you. We're inevitable.

Hardin: Yeah, we are. We are. I can't imagine living another moment on this earth without you by my side, Tess. I fucking love you, so much. I wanna marry you. Do you... Theresa Lynn Young, will you marry me? Yeah? Yeah?

Tessa: Someday

[After Everything, 2023, Castille Landon, 01:24:52 – 01:26:52]

The dialogue shows the results of Hardin's process of reflection and self-redemption, as well as his efforts to repair his relationship with Tessa, and in the end, they can both forgive each other and get along emotionally again. Here are some quotes that evidence Hardin's change in the dialogue.



Figure 11: The evidence that Hardin has learned from past mistakes (Source: After Everything, 2023)

'Tess, I didn't handle it right,' the line Hardin utters in the footage. Figure 11 explains that Hardin acknowledges his mistake of treating Tessa poorly and addressing their relationship immaturely. According to Harney (2024), someone who believes in the mistakes made then

gives themselves the chance to find out how to do it right becomes one of the fastest ways to develop skills and advance a career. This makes Hardin's character no longer deny his mistakes, and he bravely faces and admits everything.

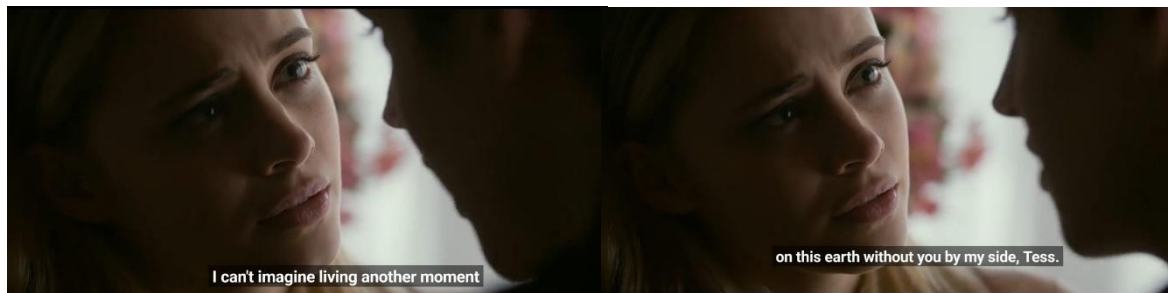


Figure 12 : Hardin showed sincerity in being with Tessa (Source: *After Everything*, 2023)

When Hardin says, '*I can't imagine living another moment on this earth without you by my side, Tessa,*' in the footage-like figure 12, it shows that he wants to improve the relationship, not just because he feels guilty, but because Hardin loves Tessa. Hardin intends to live this relationship more healthily. In Rumayar's (2011) research, one's ability to create good relationships and gain sympathy from others can be learnt and developed. It is a regular part of a person's mental development to be close to loved ones so that they can grow well.



Figure 13 : The emotional climax of Hardin's transformation process (Source: *After Everything*, 2023)

Hardin's statement, "*I fucking love you, so much. I wanna marry you.*" in footage-like figure 13 is a testament to how much Hardin's love and guilt for Tessa has led to a serious and

long-term commitment. This commitment indicates that Hardin believes that the way to make up with Tessa is to change for the better. Now Hardin feels confident enough that he has changed and deserves to be with Tessa.



Figure 14 : Tessa's response amplified the success of the redemption attempt
(Source: *After Everything*, 2023).

Hardin's attempt at repairing his relationship with Tessa was successful, after Tessa responded, "*But I choose you. We're inevitable.*" As seen in footage-like Figure 14, this response also changed Tessa's perspective on their relationship. Tessa has forgiven Hardin and believes they can start a new life without dwelling on past mistakes.

4.1.2 The Preconscious Rationalisation

At this stage, some of Hardin's previously repressed thoughts and feelings begin to surface. This is when the character is not yet fully rationally aware, but begins to understand the consequences of past actions. Freud's theory of psychoanalysis focuses on a person's preconscious structure, where hidden memories, guilt, and desires begin to be accessed, though not yet fully processed or managed wisely.

This led Hardin to experience a strong inner conflict when he realized that he had lost Tessa due to his own actions. As he began to digest everything that he had done, Hardin could not find any solution. So, he tried to ask Landon (his half-brother who is indirectly Tessa's close friend) for some advice. Instead of getting advice, Hardin and Landon argued about what

Hardin had done to Tessa. The following conversation between Hardin and Landon can reflect the Prasadara stage:

Landon: "So, you're just gonna run away like you do from everything, right?"
Landon: "Where are you going?"
Hardin: "London. I was going to take her with me."
Landon: "Hardin, do you really love her? No, bullshit"
Hardin: "Yes. Of course, I fucking love her. I've never felt this way about anyone before! Just wish I didn't fuck the whole thing up."
[After We Collided, 2020, Roger Kumble, 00:27:35 – 00:28:01]

This dialogue shows the moment when Hardin begins to realise and acknowledge the mistakes he has made in the past more logically. However, the acknowledgement has not fully emerged from his deepest consciousness. This process is part of the state of pre-consciousness, which indicates a person's mental state that is not yet fully awake in consciousness, but can be easily accessed and brought into consciousness. Here are some dialogues that explain Hardin's pre-consciousness:



Figure 15 : Landon confronts Hardin's tendency to avoid conflict (Source: After We Collided, 2020)

The dialogue excerpt in Figure 15 shows a form of confrontation by Landon towards Hardin. Landon voiced his frustration with Hardin, who habitually hibernates when faced with difficult situations or emotional conflicts. This shows Hardin has a pattern of behaviour in the form of an escape mechanism, which is a way for someone to avoid problems or uncomfortable feelings without trying to solve them (Olivine, 2023). In this case, Hardin tends to "escape" physically and emotionally when facing problems. Moreover, it can be seen when Landon says

“like you do from everything,” which emphasises that this is not the first time Hardin has tried to stay away or avoid every problem he faces.



Figure 16 : Hardin shows willingness to take Tessa to London
(Source: *After We Collided*, 2020)

In footage-like figure 16, Hardin explains his decision to return to London and his intention to take Tessa. This intention is seen in Hardin’s statement, “I was going to take her with me,” which explains his attempt to justify a painful decision by highlighting his underlying good intentions. This shows that Hardin is not fully prepared to face the reality of his emotions and actions, as he is still in the early stages of his journey towards awareness and personal growth. However, this defence also indicates that he is beginning to work on his inner problems and feelings of guilt, which could be the first step towards a more mature psychological change.





Figure 17: Hardin verbally acknowledged his feelings and mistakes for the first time (Source: *After We Collided*, 2020).

In the footage of Figure 17, Hardin states for the first time his feelings of love for Tessa and his guilt for causing all the problems in his relationship with Tessa. Although the statement is still in the preconscious stage, which refers to thoughts not being actively thought about, they can be easily recalled if there is the right trigger (Justice & Pitts, 2025).

Hardin's statement *"Yes. Of course, I fucking love her. I've never felt this way about anyone before! Just wish I didn't fuck the whole thing up,"* shows his pre-conscious expression. He admits that he loves Tessa and has messed up their relationship. However, this statement results from pressure from another party (Landon) rather than a profound realization from reflection. So this became the initial basis for Hardin to be able to repair his relationship with Tessa, even though his consciousness process was not yet fully open.

Tessa: You would never let me read what you were writing in there. And how the whole world gets to. Stuff about me. Stuff about my dad.

Hardin: I'm sorry. I never meant for it to be published. I started that journal to figure the shit out in my head. They asked me to read it in group therapy, so I did. And one thing just led to another.

Tessa: You accidentally wrote a book.

Hardin: I. I didn't mean for this to happen this way.

Tessa: No one wants to read this sick shit.

Hardin: I thought that, too. But there's a bidding war for my book. And that's why I'm in town.

Tessa: You accidentally wrote a book, and then you shopped it around to publishers without asking me?

Hardin: Fuck, this never should have happened like this.

Tessa: No, no. It shouldn't have.

Hardin: Tess, I hated myself. I had to deal with that every fucking day. What is the point in everything we've been through if we can't channel that into something that helps people?

Tessa: I don't want people reading about my life and judging me.

Hardin: It's not your life, Tess. It's our lives, and it's a story about forgiveness and unconditional love. It doesn't matter about parents or addiction or whatever fucked up past. It's never too late. People can always change. That is the kind of story "After" is.

Tessa: "After"?

Hardin: It's my journey after I met you.

Tessa: I think that journey is over.

[After Ever Happy, 2022, Castille Landon, 01:22:01 – 01:23:36]

This dialogue reveals Hardin's attempt to justify his actions in writing and publishing a book about his relationship with Tessa, as a means to give meaning to the emotional experiences and mistakes that have occurred. At this stage, Hardin is not yet fully aware of the impact of his actions on Tessa. However, Hardin begins to provide plausible reasons to achieve his intentions and goals, demonstrating a way of thinking that is not yet fully realised.

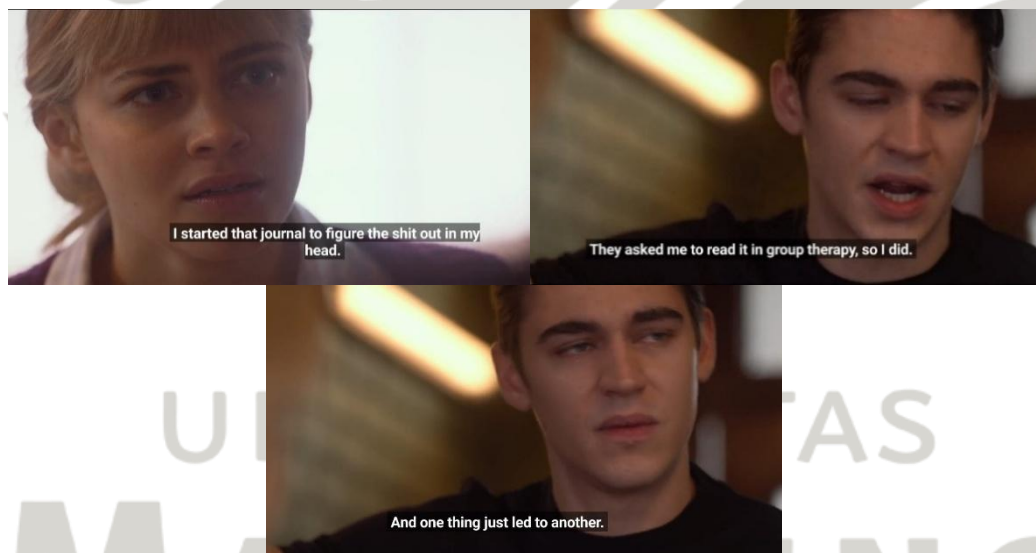


Figure 18 : Hardin's ego self-defence mechanism
(Source: *After Ever Happy*, 2022).

The statement in Figure 18, where Hardin states "*I started that journal to figure the shit out in my head,*" shows that Hardin's journal-writing process is a form of his attempt to understand the chaos of his feelings. Hardin clearly says that he writes not because he wants to be famous or tell his story to others, but to understand himself. This marks the beginning of the self-reflection process. According to Asmundson (2022), self-reflection refers to the ability to

critically examine oneself, particularly one's attitudes and behaviors, through self-examination and discussion.

Other statements include *"They asked me to read it in group therapy, so I did. Moreover, one thing just led to another."* Demonstrates a process known as self-disclosure, where a person intentionally reveals personal information to another person (Rimé, 2016). By saying, *"They asked me to read it in group therapy,"* Hardin shows that the impetus to write came from others, from a safe and supportive environment. Thus, Hardin became open to the healing process and made emotional connections, which she had previously avoided. Nevertheless, the phrase *"And one thing just led to another"* shows that Hardin has not fully realised that her writing will affect her. Hardin still positions himself as a "victim of circumstance" rather than as someone aware of his actions.

In the sentence, *"I didn't mean for this to happen this way,"* Hardin's statement becomes a way to defend himself from his mistake. Hardin wants to show that his intentions were not bad, but this statement also shows that he is not fully prepared to face and accept the emotional consequences of his actions. In the view of psychoanalysis, this shows that Hardin is in the process of moving towards a better emotional understanding, but is still struggling in dealing with his feelings of guilt, self-defence, and fear of losing Tessa again.

Hardin's mom: You know, a change of scenery might do you some good, might be inspiring to just get out of here for a while. A bit a distance might give you a new perspective, might help you make peace with your past so you can move on.

Hardin: I'm not ready to move on yet.

Hardin's mom: No, I know, I didn't mean in regard to... I meant move forward. Yeah, just let go of some of your regrets so you can stop dragging them into your future.

[After Everything, 2023, Castille Landon, 00:14:38 – 00:15:14]

The dialogue above falls into Rational Pre-consciousness because it shows the moment when Hardin begins to be introduced to the idea of being able to process and forget his past, even though Hardin is not yet fully emotionally or consciously ready to do so. Moreover, the

role of the pre-conscious is that thoughts or ideas about change and resolution begin to emerge in his mind, but are not yet entirely accepted.



Figure 19 : Reflection and Emotional Distance as Therapy (Source: *After Everything*, 2023).

In Figure 19, Hardin's mother advises Hardin to give herself some distance so that Hardin can see her past more clearly and accept what has happened. The sentence "*A bit of distance might give you a new perspective*" is a form of support for the emotional distancing process. According to Lawrenz (2023), emotional distancing is the inability or unwillingness to connect emotionally with others, which can protect against drama and stress. This statement aligns with principles in psychology and self-analysis approaches, which say that new insights often emerge when a person takes the time to step back and reflect on recurring emotional or behavioural patterns in their life. In this regard, Mrs. Hardin emphasises the importance of a healing process that requires time for reflection. She argues that emotional imbalances from past experiences cannot be resolved if they are carried forward into the future without first understanding and resolving them.



Figure 20 : Burden of regret and impact on others (Source: *After Everything*, 2023)

Whereas in the sentence “*Just let go of some of your regrets so you can stop dragging them into your future,*” listed in figure 20, is the advice given by Hardin’s mother for Hardin to be able to process his emotions honestly, due to his past that one day impacted Hardin’s future. It shows that healing and love cannot be built on unresolved wounds. The mother motivates Hardin to make peace with himself to build a relationship that is not affected by the baggage of the past, especially with Tessa.



Figure 21: Hardin acknowledges that he is not ready to let go of his past yet
(Source: *After Everything*, 2023)

Figure 21 shows Hardin’s response to his mother’s advice. Hardin says, “*I'm not ready to move on yet,*” which explains that he is not ready to let go of his past and start a new life. In addition, this statement shows that Hardin is still in the transitional stage between not fully aware and fully conscious because Hardin understands that “moving on” is an action he must take. However, emotionally, Hardin is not yet able to do so.

4.1.3 The Role of the Unconscious

In Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, the unconscious is a set of emotions, thoughts, urges and memories that are unreachable by consciousness, which continue to influence a person's actions even though they are not aware of it (Fadil, 2020). This makes Hardin's emotional struggle to reconcile with Tessa not only arise from rational awareness, but also from a subconscious inner conflict that he is fully aware of.

Hardin's Mom: Is he okay?

Tessa: Hmm?

Hardin's Mom: The nightmares. I heard him last night.

Tessa: Um, he's sleeping now. How long have they been going on?

Hardin's Mom: Uh, ever since he was eight. Um, he, uh, well...

Tessa: He told me... about that night and what he saw—the assault.

Hardin's Mom: Whoa. He's never told anyone that before.

(After We Collided, 2020, Roger Kumble, 00:45:09 - 00:45:41)

This dialogue shows a conversation between Hardin's mother and Tessa discussing the nightmare Hardin had. In this dialogue, Hardin opens up for the first time about his childhood trauma to Tessa, who becomes the first person he trusts to share about his deepest wounds. Hardin feels that by making amends and facing his past, he can redeem the trust Tessa has given him and repair their relationship. In addition, by beginning to acknowledge his trauma, Hardin realized that the anger and dissatisfaction he had been showing Tessa did not arise for no reason, but rather stemmed from unhealed past wounds.

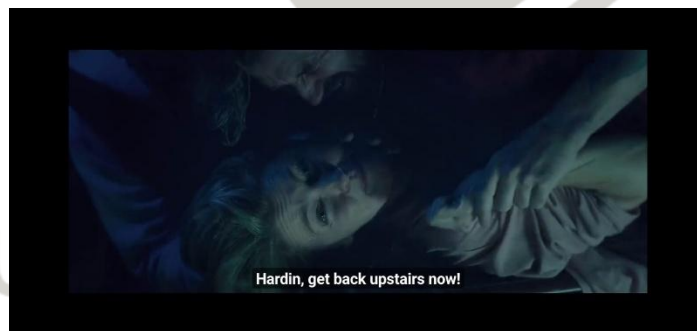


Figure 22 : Nightmare Hardin (*After We Collided*, 2020)

According to Freud (2015), traumatic experiences that have not been fully overcome will continue to operate within a person's subconscious. This can cause an indirect influence on a person's behaviour, which the person may not be aware of. In the footage of figure 22, it shows the nightmares that have continued to haunt Hardin since he was eight years old, leaving him traumatised because he saw his mother's violence. The persistent nightmares show that Hardin has not fully resolved his issues with the past. This trauma continues to affect the way

he relates to others, including Tessa. His realization of this trauma only came about because of Tessa's presence, where there was a shift from the subconscious mind to the conscious mind.

Hardin: I had this horrible dream of you and Robert. And I can't get it out of my fucking head.

Tessa: But I'm here with you.

Hardin: That's exactly it. I can't help but think that you should be with someone else. Your life would be so much easier. There's all this bad shit that I've been trying to suppress for so long, It's.. It's just all coming up. And there's nothing I can do. The added thought of losing you is just... it's pretty fucking dark in here, Tess.

Tessa: Why didn't you just tell me? That's the whole point of being open with each other.

Hardin: Because it's a burden for me, and I don't wanna burden you.

Tessa: I don't want to be with anyone else. I wanna be with you.

[After We Fell, 2021, Castille Landon, 01:00:47 – 01:02:16]

This dialogue shows that Hardin realizes that his past trauma has a huge impact on him, so the fear of losing Tessa becomes a very strong emotional drive, which ultimately makes him brave in dealing with the pain and mistakes of his past.

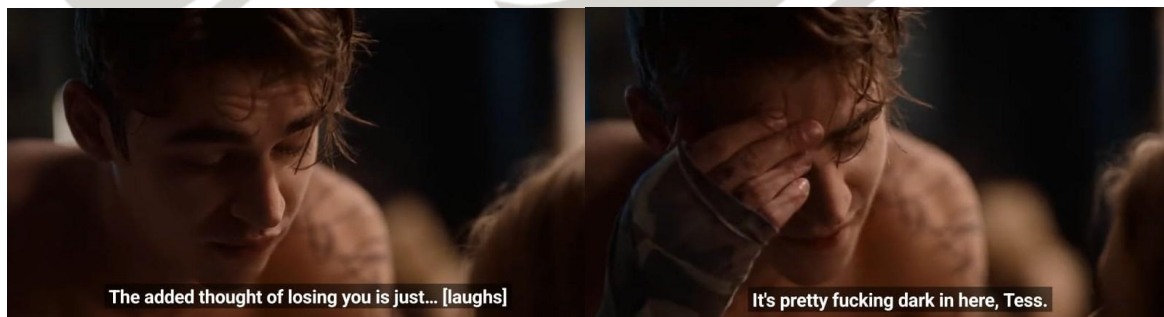


Figure 23 : Hardin's restlessness (Source: *After We Fell*, 2020)

The line “*The added thought of losing you is just... it's pretty fucking dark in here, Tess,*” in footage figure 23 describes Hardin feeling deep anxiety about losing Tessa. Not only does it make him feel emotionally sick, but it also shakes his emotional stability. In this situation, his love for Tessa becomes his primary motivation in the healing process. The fear of losing such a meaningful relationship pushed Hardin to confront the past wounds and traumas that he had been hiding, so as not to repeat the same destructive patterns. This moment became an important turning point in Hardin's psychological development, marking

his transformation from passive and trapped in denial to actively wanting to change and improve himself.

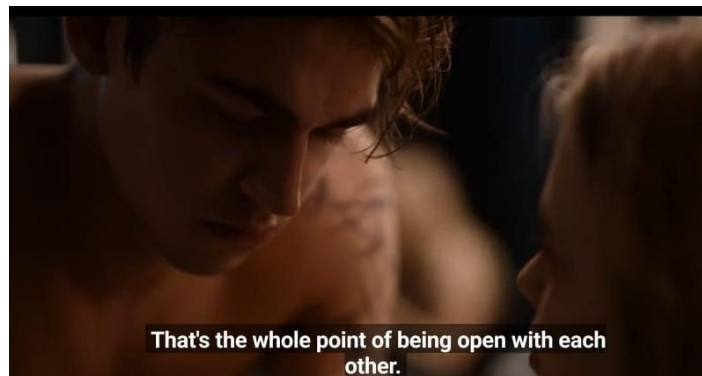


Figure 24 : Tessa convinced Hardin to open (Source: *After We Fell*, 2020).

In the footage in Figure 24, Tessa's statement symbolises emotional openness and the desire to confront what is in the subconscious mind. Tessa expresses this in the sentence, *"That's the whole point of being open with each other,"* which is significant in a relationship and Hardin's psychological healing journey. Hardin has always lived by emphasising the feelings of guilt, trauma, and a sense of unworthiness that exist within him. He felt that the emotional burden he carried was something he had to bear alone, as he was afraid of "burdening" Tessa. This view only deepened the emotional distance between them and worsened their relationship. However, when Tessa emphasises the importance of openness, it encourages Hardin to realise that he can build a healthier and more honest relationship by sharing his pain and dark side.

Hardin: I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Tess, but. You know, of all people, he knows how much you mean to me. That you're my fucking lifeline, and he didn't tell me, and that fucking hurts. It fucking hurts, okay? I'm shit without you.

Tessa: I'm just as good at dooming this relationship as you.

Hardin: Is it doomed? Is it? I feel like we can make this work.

Tessa: You're trying, and I see that. But I can't keep doing this back and forth. It's.. it's.. It's not just with you. It's with me

[After Ever Happy, 2022, Castille Landon, 00:59:16 – 01:00:03]

In this dialogue, Hardin shows that his emotional reaction comes from an unconscious part of himself. Hardin is not fully aware of what is causing his emotions, such as his fear of loss, past traumatic experiences, or his dependence on Tessa.



Figure 25 : Hardin reacts from an unconscious impulse (Source: *After Ever Happy*, 2021)

In Figure 25 when Hardin says, “*I’m shit without you,*” it has a powerful emotional meaning. Hardin suggests that his existence without Tessa by his side would feel empty and meaningless. This signifies emotional dependency, which is when a person feels incomplete without the presence of another person. When viewed from the subconscious, the expression suggests a complex inner conflict. It reflects feelings of guilt, longing for affection, and a tendency to blame oneself, all of which stem from inner conflicts. It is also not only an expression of despair, but also an expression of psychological wounds stemming from unresolved past traumas.





Figure 26 : Hardin projects his anger onto others
(Source: *After Ever Happy*, 2021)

Hardin's statement in Figure 26 shows that he is experiencing conflict that manifests as anger. When viewed from a subconscious perspective, the statement "*He knows how much you mean to me... and he didn't tell me, and that fucking hurts,*" is a manifestation of a deeper emotional and psychological conflict, which he is not fully aware of. In addition, Hardin does not fully realize that the leading cause of the pain he feels comes from a deep fear of losing Tessa. This unconscious fear suggests that Hardin felt threatened by the possibility of losing Tessa, but the fear was too painful to face head-on. Thus, Hardin would rather blame others than face his fear to avoid the pain.

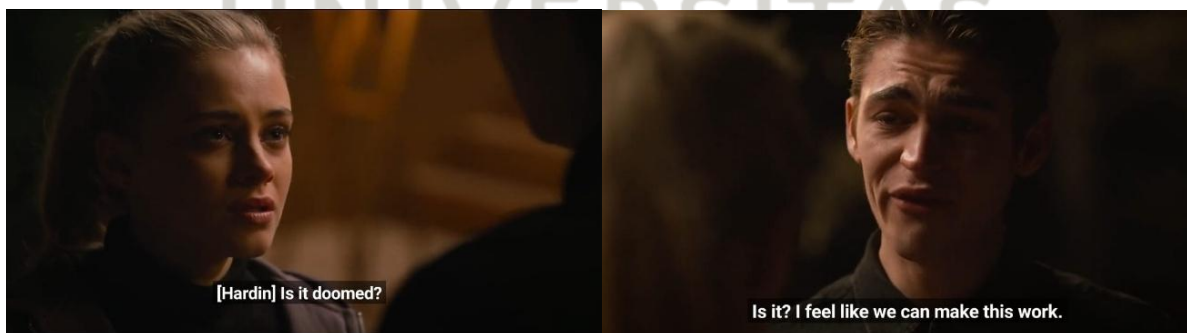


Figure 27: Hardin projects his anger onto others (Source: *After Ever Happy*, 2021)

Figure 27, when viewed from the subconscious, Hardin's statement "*It's a bit doomed? Is it? I feel like we can make this work.*" This shows a deep inner conflict between the fear of loss and the desire to maintain his relationship with Tessa, which he may not be fully aware of.

“Is it doomed?” implies Hardin’s subconscious fear that their relationship is over and there is no chance of making it work. This reflects a fear of rejection and relational failure, referred to as abandonment issues, which refer to deep-seated fears of rejection, abandonment, and hurt, usually resulting from childhood trauma such as abandonment, divorce, parental infidelity, or being a victim of crime and physical abuse (Pane, 2023).

Hardin's following sentence is “*I feel like we can make this work,*” which shows the urge to maintain his relationship with Tessa. Besides, Hardin subconsciously feels this relationship is on the verge of collapse. However, Hardin has not accepted this fact, so his subconscious encourages him to believe that his relationship with Tessa can still be repaired.

Hardin: You were on your way to uni, though, no?

Nathalie: No, yeah, I was, but I lost my scholarship with everything going on, and I didn't have time to apply for a student loan. And it turns out my support system was conditional. So, I picked a place that was sunny and affordable where no one knew me, and now here I am. But this part I was not expecting. I did not think I would see you again, much less have a catch-up over drinks.

Hardin: Sorry. I'm sorry.

Nathalie: Okay.

Hardin: I don't really know what else to say. I'm just... I know I fucked up and you had to pay the consequences, which, I mean, I really fucking I could just go back and then I...

[After Everything, 2023, Castille Landon, 00:29:52 – 00:30:56]

In the snippets of dialogue in *After Everything* (2023), Hardin's subconscious condition is shown through expressions of guilt that he is unaware of. The unresolved emotions and regrets show that Hardin has not been able to make peace with his past, and his subconscious still strongly influences the way he thinks, feels and speaks.

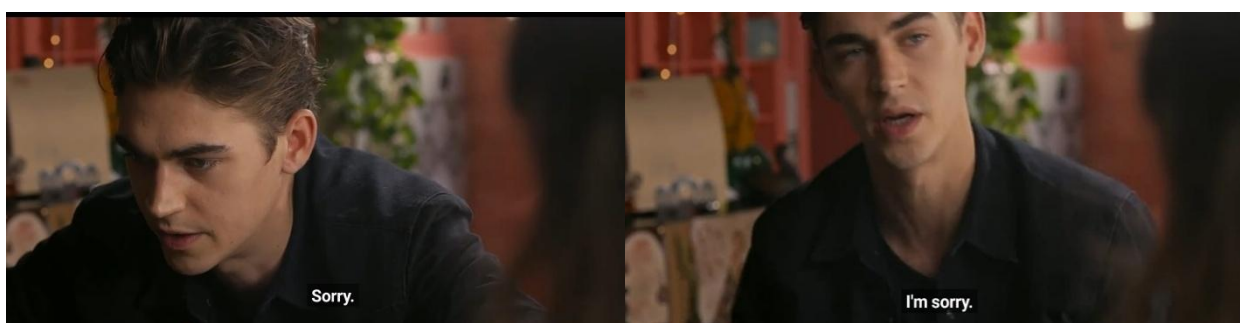




Figure 28 : Hardin's expressions of Guilt that arise from the Unconscious
(Source: *After Everything*, 2023)

In the footage in Figure 28, Hardin shows an expression of guilt that arises from his unconsciousness. When Hardin says, “*Sorry. I'm sorry*” and “*I don't really know what else to say.*” This is an uncontrollable emotional outburst, triggered by a deep sense of regret. These statements were not because he wanted to solve the problem in a sensible way, but because the feelings in his heart he could no longer bear. Hardin found it difficult to explain what he was really feeling because he didn't really understand it himself.



Figure 29 : Hardin's desire to fix the past (Source: *After Everything*, 2023)

In the footage of Figure 29, Hardin said, “*I know I fucked up, and you had to pay the consequences.*” and “*...which, I mean, I really fucking I could just go back and then I...*” (the

sentence is broken). This shows that in his heart, Hardin wants to turn back time to eliminate his past mistakes. However, he is confused between wanting to fix everything and knowing that it is impossible. In addition, the footage shows that Hardin tried to explain his thoughts several times but could not finish his sentence because his heart was not ready to deal with all the guilt. Because part of him was trying to be completely honest, but part of him was still holding back from feeling too much pain.

Hardin Scott's character in the sequel *After* shows a desire to correct his mistakes, not only because he is logically aware, but because emotional pressure is stored in his subconscious. The change he experienced was a complicated psychological process and took a long time to understand every problem Hardin faced until he decided to change. Previous research conducted by Lawolo et al. (2024) discussed Hardin's personality, which was formed from the conflict within him between instinctive desires, rational awareness, and moral values. This conflict often makes him experience emotional changes and be rude to himself and others.

In addition, the feelings of guilt that continue to haunt Hardin can be linked to research from Srikandi et al. (2021), which reveals that moral pressure that has been kept for too long will be the primary trigger for someone to change. Meanwhile, research conducted by Kurnia & Santyaputri (2024), in the film *"Everything Everywhere All at Once,"* in this study also used Freud's psychoanalytic theory in helping to understand the mental state of the characters in the film, especially the problem of trauma, inner conflict, and how a person protects himself psychologically. In addition, their research explains that the subconscious, past experiences, and traumatic events considerably influence the behavior and development of the main character's personality. This certainly has similarities with this study, which discusses the character of Hardin Scott in the movie sequel *"After"* using Freud's theory. Thus, these two studies both emphasise the importance of the three levels of human consciousness (conscious, preconscious, and unconscious) to understand the main character's emotional problems and

psychological changes. By looking at childhood experiences, guilt, and the desire to change, both studies show that changes in a person's behavior cannot be separated from complex inner struggles that are not fully conscious.

In his attempt to reconcile with Tessa Young, the main character in the sequel to *After*, Hardin Scott must undergo a long and complex emotional journey. A pivotal moment that triggers his realization occurs when Tessa discovers that the beginning of their relationship was actually based on a game of truth or dare, in which Hardin accepted a challenge to make Tessa fall in love with him and then leave her. Overcome with panic and guilt, Hardin tries to explain, saying, "*Tessa, please. You have to believe me. Tessa, that was before everything—before I got to know you*" (*After*, 2019, Jenny Gage, 01:26:47–01:28:52). This statement reflects a shift in his attitude, from someone manipulative to someone beginning to develop genuine empathy and compassion.

After mustering the courage to admit his mistakes, Hardin continues his recovery process by demonstrating responsibility through deep self-reflection. He participates in group therapy and begins writing about his personal experiences as a form of emotional healing. This is evident in his statement: "*They asked me to read it in group therapy, so I did. And one thing just led to another*" (*After Everything*, 2023). This action signifies Hardin's openness to the psychological healing process, something he had previously resisted. Through reflection and therapy, he not only seeks to reorganize his chaotic thoughts but also dares to confront and acknowledge the emotional wounds he had long suppressed. His commitment demonstrates that his desire to change is not a fleeting emotional reaction but rather stems from a deep awareness and a deliberate intention to improve himself holistically. He is not merely striving to repair his relationship with Tessa but is also in the process of rebuilding his identity as a more mature and responsible individual.

After undergoing a process of recognition and accountability, the most tangible sign of Hardin's personal growth emerges when he proposes to Tessa. In an emotional scene in *After Everything* (2023), he declares, "*I fucking love you so much. I wanna marry you.*" This statement symbolizes not only the highest level of emotional commitment, but also a conscious decision to assume long-term responsibility. From a Freudian psychoanalytic perspective, this moment reflects ego maturity—Hardin demonstrates an ability to balance emotional impulses (id), internalized moral values (superego), and the demands of reality (ego) to build a healthy and stable relationship. The proposal may also be interpreted as a form of symbolic reparation: a deliberate and meaningful act aimed at healing past wounds through a sincere and committed gesture.

Therefore, Hardin's actions—admitting his mistakes, taking responsibility, engaging in a process of self-improvement, and ultimately expressing his readiness to build a future with Tessa—serve as clear evidence that he believes correcting his past mistakes is the only path to reconciliation with her. This belief emerges from a profound psychological transformation, evolving from guilt and self-reflection to the courage to begin anew with a more mature and intentional commitment.

4.2 Hardin Scott's Perception of Transformation and Confidence in Not Repeating Past Mistakes.

Hardin Scott, as the main character in the story, undergoes significant changes over time. This transformation is visible in his outward actions and involves changes in how he thinks and feels. The realisation of his mistakes, which have hurt him and his loved ones, especially Tessa Young, is the basis for this change. In the sequel *After*, we can see Hardin's process from Hardin beginning to understand that his bad behaviour, such as uncontrolled anger and the habit of blaming others, are the leading causes of his relationship problems.

Through the dialogues Hardin speaks, he is starting to take responsibility for his actions and feelings.

In a book written by Goleman (1996) entitled Emotional Intelligence, which states that *'True change begins with self-awareness.'* The awareness referred to here is one that allows a person to be able to regulate their emotions and behaviour and understand others better. By understanding his past mistakes, Hardin eventually showed a desire to change and tried not to repeat the same mistakes. As such, Hardin's transformation was not only a behavioural one, but also an emotional and psychological one that led him to a healthier relationship and a sense of responsibility for his life, his relationships, and the feelings of those who genuinely love him.

4.2.1 Hardin Scott's Self-Awareness and Emotional Transformation.

Hardin's changes are evident in how he speaks and interacts with other characters in the film. This is especially evident when he realizes his past mistakes and wants to improve himself. One of the key moments occurs when Hardin talks to Tessa's father.

Tessa's father: She looks really happy.

Hardin: I've really been trying. Now more than ever.

Tessa's father: Yeah

Hardin: Well, clearly not right now, but I am trying.

Tessa's father: You know, you... you really remind me of me when I was your age.

Hardin: Fuck that.

Tessa's father: Mmm! Yeah.

[After We Fell, 2021, Roger Kumble, 00:09:06 – 00:09:23]

This dialogue is one of the conversations that show Hardin's personality growth taking place as he interacts with Tessa's father. In this moment, Hardin shows a side of himself that is more transparent, true to himself, and has a good understanding of himself. Through this short but meaningful conversation, it appears that he not only accepts his efforts to change, but also firmly refuses to be equated with a man who has the same history of failure. This dialogue is a

pivotal point that illustrates Hardin's changing character and the way he sees his past experiences and hopes for his future:



Figure 30 : Reflection and Rejection: Tessa's Father's Projection and Hardin's Resistance
(Source: *After We Fell*, 2021)

In footage-like figure 30, Tessa's father says, '*You know, you really remind me of me when I was your age.*' Moreover, Hardin replies by saying '*Fuck that,*' showing that Hardin consciously refuses to be compared to the man who once let Tessa down. This rejection is not just a knee-jerk reaction, but a portrayal of an earnest determination not to repeat a pattern of bad behaviour that may be like what Tessa's father did. Here, Hardin shows that he wants to change for Tessa and create a new person who is different from his past.

Hardin: You okay, though?

Tessa: Yeah, yeah, I'm fine.

Hardin: How was the drive down? Was it not too long?

Tessa: It was good, but when you get in traffic, it's terrible. It takes, like, 20 minutes to go a mile.

Hardin: And Vance and Kimberly's?

Tessa: Yeah, yeah, it's great. The, um, the place is amazing. It's, like, it's huge. It's like a palace.

Hardin: Nice. I'm really glad, Tess. I'm sorry I hurt you.

Tessa: You don't...

Hardin: No, I.. I just want you to be happy. You deserve to be happy

[After We Fell, 2021, Roger Kumble, 00:47:27 – 00:48:07]

Further dialogue that shows the changes in Hardin can also be seen in his personal and heartfelt conversations with Tessa. In this moment, Hardin not only shows genuine concern for Tessa's well-being, but also admits his past mistakes honestly and without making excuses. Hardin's gentle, understanding and thoughtful demeanour shows a concrete change in the way

he understands their relationship. This conversation could be the emotional maturing process Hardin is going through and a strong testament to his seriousness about not repeating the same mistakes:



Figure 31: Admitting mistakes is not only regret, but it also gives our loved ones the freedom to seek happiness. (Source: *After We Fell* 2021)

As seen in footage-like figure 31, Hardin says, *'I'm sorry I hurt you,'* and adds, *'I just want you to be happy. You deserve to be happy.'* This shows that Hardin has reached a different level of emotional maturity, where he can admit his mistakes without making excuses, and more importantly, he cares more about other people's happiness than his desires. This is clear evidence that the change is both external and internal. These two sentences prove Hardin views his change as a conscious and serious decision, not one made under external pressure. He is beginning to show the capacity to reflect on his past actions, feel remorse, and develop new, more positive and empathetic behaviours. This makes him confident that he will not repeat the same mistakes, as he is no longer influenced by momentary emotional impulses and past traumas, but by self-awareness, a sense of responsibility, and concern for others.

Hardin: Why did you stay if you knew she wanted him?

Ken Scott: I loved her. I thought that she would see that he couldn't give her the stability that I could. You know, I imagine if. If Tessa marries another man, this is how he's gonna feel, competing with a memory of you.

Hardin: I'm not Vance, okay? Just because. I'm not him.

Ken Scott: You are. Okay. So, it's... It's true. He's your father. I knew it. I knew it the first time that I saw you. You look just like him. I did everything so wrong. And I couldn't stand that you were his. That doesn't excuse the drinking, but. I've loved you. I still love you. You're my son. I'm sorry.

[After Ever Happy, 2022, Castille Landon, 00:46:01 – 00:47:26]

This dialogue became one of the important moments in Hardin Scott's emotional transformation when he had a serious conversation with his father, Ken Scott. During the conversation, Hardin learned the painful truth that his biological father was Christian Vance, not Ken Scott. This revelation shook Hardin deeply and made him question his identity, which had been shaped by childhood trauma, rejection, and family problems.



Figure 32 : Within the blank stare is the weight of the past that has not been resolved
(Source: *After Ever Happy*, 2022).

In Figure 32, Hardin sits back with his eyes closed and a restrained expression. This shows he is experiencing inner turmoil or struggling with his emotions. In a conversation with his father, Ken Scott, about Hardin's biological father and his feelings for Tessa, this facial expression shows that Hardin is trying to understand his inner wounds and deep awareness. This expression is consistent with Hardin's emotional transformation, from being always defensive and quick to anger to accepting reality and reflecting on himself. His still and closed posture reflects his inner state as he tries to calm or control his turbulent emotions.



Figure 33 : Hardin and Ken Scott embrace in the reconciliation scene, a symbol of acceptance and regret (Source: *After Ever Happy*, 2022).

In Figure 33, Hardin and Ken Scott, his father, are embraced. This moment has deep emotional significance and can be seen from the layout of the image. The placement of the two characters embracing tightly in the centre of the screen focuses the viewer's attention on them. The balance of the image reinforces the message that the two have reached an emotional meeting point, a peace between a painful past and an effort to forgive each other. The soft light from the sun shining through the window adds a touching effect and creates a warm atmosphere in this scene, further reinforcing the peaceful atmosphere and sincere remorse. The two characters' body movements are also essential to this scene. Ken's tight embrace, with his arms around Hardin's back, signifies acknowledgment and protection. Although their facial expressions are hidden within the embrace, this highlights the emotional closeness that requires no words. The phrase '*I'm Sorry*,' which appears in this scene, reinforces that this moment symbolises acknowledgment of mistakes and a profound apology. Overall, this scene depicts a pivotal point in Hardin's emotional transformation. The embrace is not only a symbol of peace with his father but also reflects Hardin's inner process of accepting his past and committing to change. The powerful composition of the image makes this scene a visual representation of the emotional peak in Hardin's journey toward healing and maturity.

Vance: I was hoping that you've maybe come away, you've moved on, started a clean slate, maybe? Move forward.

Hardin: I am trying, you know?

Vance: Yeah, yeah.

Hardin: I am. I'm fucking trying.

Vance: Look at yourself.

Hardin: Why do you think I came here? I came here in the first place to try and resolve my past so I can move forward. I am fucking trying. Maybe I need to try harder. I just don't think I'll ever move on, even if she has.

[After Everything, 2023, Castille Landon, 00:54:43 – 00:55:37]

This dialogue shows Hardin's character development in the change process in his life. It shows that he is beginning to realise his past mistakes and is trying to become a better person. The following sentences show the emotional transformation and self-awareness that is taking place within Hardin.



Figure 34 : Hardin's Self-Awareness Perception of Transformation
(Source: *After Everything*, 2023)

In Figure 34, Hardin shows three important things in his journey of change. First, Hardin demonstrates clear self-awareness through his statement, "*I came here in the first place to try and resolve my past so I can move forward,*" indicating that he is aware his past is filled with issues and acknowledges he cannot move forward in life without addressing those wounds or mistakes, while also having a clear goal to improve himself rather than simply running away from problems. Second, through the phrase "*I am fucking trying,*" Hardin demonstrates

emotional honesty by not claiming to have completely changed but rather acknowledging that he is actively working toward change and understands that this transformation is not something easy or instantaneous. Thirdly, Hardin understands that emotional transformation begins with acknowledgment and redemption, where he focuses not only on the results achieved but also on the process that must be faced, such as the pain and consequences of his mistakes, and seeks ways to atone for his mistakes as the first step in self-change. This shows that he acknowledges his shortcomings and takes responsibility for changing emotionally and morally.

4.2.2 Dialogue as a Mirror of Hardin Scott's Character Development.

Hardin: I think I should stay here for a while.

Tessa: Why?

Hardin: Because. Because I just keep dragging you into my shit, Tessa. It's not fair

Tessa: Please, don't push me away.

Hardin: I love you.

[After Ever Happy, 2022, Castille Landon, 00:12:57 – 00:13:33]

At this stage, Hardin's change shows a different attitude from before, which tended to be sudden and self-centred. Hardin begins to see himself as someone who not only realises the impact of his bad actions but is also ready to take steps to prevent them from happening again. This is evident when Hardin expresses his intention to Tessa to keep his distance, not because he has given up, but because he feels responsible for the problems in their relationship. This dialogue shows the new emotional awareness and responsibility that has emerged from Hardin's process of maturing, and here are some examples of that process:





Figure 35 : The decisions Hardin made for his and Tessa's relationship
(Source: *After Ever Happy*, 2022)

Hardin's character development can be seen in Figure 35, which shows his emotional transformation. One important moment occurs when Hardin says to Tessa, '*I think I should stay here for a while.*' Hardin makes this decision not out of despair, but because he realizes that his presence is hurting the person he loves. He adds, '*Because I just keep dragging you into my shit, Tessa. It's not fair.*' According to Abrams (1981), a character is a figure with certain moral traits and behaviours evident in their words and actions within the story. In this case, Hardin transforms from a reckless and emotional figure to a more thoughtful and responsible person. This dialogue demonstrates moral awareness and emotional consideration, which are important for understanding the depth of the character.

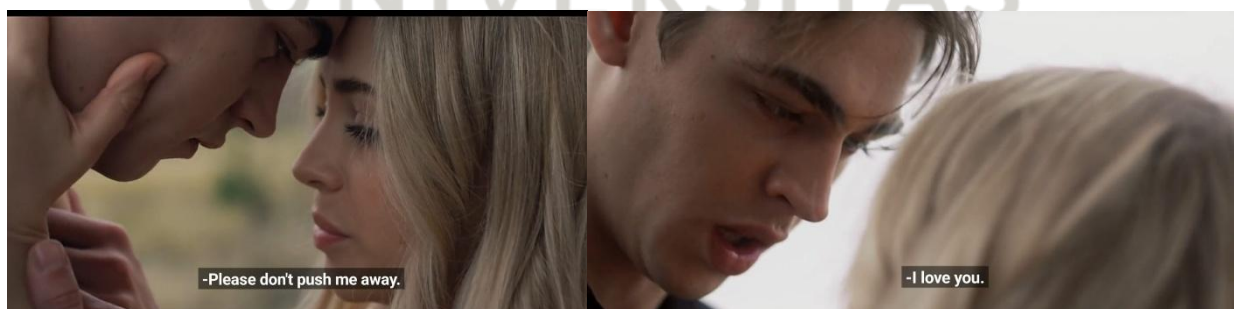


Figure 36 : Hardin's character development is now more mature and emotionally open.
(Source: *After Ever Happy*, 2022)

Furthermore, Nurgiantoro (2013) explains that one way to understand a character is through dialogue with other characters. From the dialogue in figure 36, Tessa asks, '*Please, don't push me away,*' and Hardin responds briefly, '*I love you,*' which shows that this

expression of love is not meant to control, but as a statement of emotional honesty that is no longer possessive. Meanwhile, according to Stanton (1965), a character's motivation is the reason behind their actions or words in a story. In Hardin's case, his motivation is no longer driven by fear of loss or a desire to control, but by a desire to protect Tessa and improve himself. Thus, the decision to distance himself is not a rejection, but a responsible action arising from internal conflict and emotional maturation. Overall, this dialogue reveals internal conflict, personal motivation, and a change in attitude that shapes character development. Hardin is not a dynamic character, but he is a character who continues to evolve. Thus, dialogue is not only a tool for communication between characters but also a way to delve deeper into the psychological state and emotional journey of the character, in line with various characterisation theories.

Vance: Well, take it from someone who does. It's easy to believe that our ability to love is finite, especially when your heart is broken. But believe it or not, slowly you will heal. And your capacity for love will grow exponentially. You'll be able to keep a space for Tessa in your heart, for your family, for your future children, for anybody who comes into your life. And you never know, maybe you and Tessa are meant to be together. And if that is the case, then you will find your way back to each other, but it's not gonna happen like this is it? Look at you. You go on drinking and messing up the way you are.
Hardin: You're right. You are, of course, you're right. You know, my life was finally getting somewhere. You know, with the book, I actually finally did something, something I was proud of. And then, yeah, I mean, I guess it fucked up and everything blew up in my face. And now the bar's so fucking high, I'll never get back there again. I'm so scared of failing, so I just end up ruining everything instead. It's pathetic. You're right.
[After Everything, 2023, Castille Landon, 00:56:22 – 00:57:56]

The dialogue spoken by Hardin in the story is not just conversation but can be seen as a reflection of how the character develops and changes. The following are sentences spoken by Hardin that demonstrate his deep character development.



Figure 37: Hardin's character development from impulsive to reflective and responsible
(Source: *After Everything*, 2023)

Hardin's dialogue in Figure 37 shows an important aspect of his character development. His words reflect his inner conflict and true character growth, where what he says is not just ordinary conversation but an emotional struggle within himself. For instance, when he says, *"I'm so scared of failing, so I just end up ruining everything instead. It's pathetic,"* he is revealing his deepest fears, which he had never expressed earlier in the story. This marks the beginning of Hardin's honesty with himself, no longer denying his weaknesses, acknowledging that he fears failure and, unconsciously, ends up ruining the good things he has. This signifies that he is beginning to realise that change must start from within himself, not from others or simply avoiding problems. Ultimately, this marks a significant character development from someone who was once impulsive, quick to anger, and short-sighted into a person who understands themselves, is willing to change, and takes responsibility for their actions, illustrating a deeply meaningful emotional transformation. Thus, this dialogue can serve as an important narrative tool to showcase Hardin's character growth into a more self-aware, honest individual who begins to understand the true meaning of self-improvement.

4.2.3 The Turning Point of Self-realisation

Hardin: I really thought that I had hit rock bottom, and then I'd hit it again harder than I'd hit it again harder and again and again, and I burnt down a fucking house. And, uh, I guess... I guess what I'm trying to say is thank you all. Because when I walked in that door, I, I didn't know how this would go. I didn't think it would work for me, I never open up. And somehow, you guys have found a way to make me, and I'm grateful. I mean this... this really helped a lot. I'd recommend it to anyone. I feel like I'm actually a better version of myself, and I haven't tried to better myself ever, really. So, thank you.
[After Ever Happy, 2022, , Castille Landon, 01:24:32 – 01:25:19]

Hardin experienced a significant emotional change when he began to honestly acknowledge the damage in his life caused by his self-destructive behaviour. This admission occurred while speaking in a therapy group in the film *After Ever Happy* (2022). At that time, Hardin said that he had experienced the worst moments of his life many times. Eventually, he realised that all these issues could no longer be hidden behind anger or denying reality. Hardin honestly admitted that he had never previously tried to improve himself. However, he now feels he has become a better person. This statement indicates that Hardin has fully come to terms with who he is, including his past mistakes and efforts to break free from a harmful lifestyle.

This moment became an important turning point where Hardin no longer used methods such as blaming others or running away to protect himself. Instead, he began to accept that change could only happen if he himself wanted it. His belief that therapy helped him, as well as the gratitude he showed, proved that Hardin had begun to believe that he could truly change. This awareness and reflection form the foundation of his conviction that he will not repeat the same mistakes. This dialogue not only shows Hardin's character development but also indicates that he has reached an important stage in his mental journey, recognising himself as the foundation for a healthier and more emotionally mature life.

Vance: Well, take it from someone who does. It's easy to believe that our ability to love is finite, especially when your heart is broken. But believe it or not, slowly you will heal. And your capacity for love will grow exponentially. You'll be able to keep a space for Tessa in your heart, for your family, for your future children, for anybody who comes

into your life. And you never know, maybe you and Tessa are meant to be together. And if that is the case, then you will find your way back to each other, but it's not gonna happen like this is it? Look at you. You go on drinking and messing up the way you are. Hardin: You're right. You are, of course, you're right. You know, my life was finally getting somewhere. You know, with the book, I actually finally did something, something I was proud of. And then, yeah, I mean, I guess it fucked up and everything blew up in my face. And now the bar's so fucking high, I'll never get back there again. I'm so scared of failing, so I just end up ruining everything instead. It's pathetic. You're right.

Vance: Listen to me.

Hardin: It's fucking pathetic, isn't it?

Vance: Listen. You need to change the metrics by which you define success. You can start by writing one page a day. Just that, and that'll be your success. And if your second book comes out and it flunks, but you've been real and authentic, then that is a success. Whether you end up with a woman you have loved or not, you have loved with every cell in your being, and that in and of itself is a spectacular success.

Hardin: Wow. You're not bad at this Dad stuff.

Vance: Now that for me is the pinnacle of success. So, what are you gonna do? Could book a return flight with me if you want.

Hardin: No. Thanks. I'm gonna stay here for awhile. Might sort things through and try to write.

Vance: I love you, Son. Really love you. I always have. Always will.

[After Everything, 2023, Castille Landon, 00:56:22 – 00:59:25]

During a person's life, many important moments serve as turning points for change for the better. Hardin experienced one such moment when he reached a deep level of self-awareness, known as a turning point of self-realisation. According to Hapsari & Hastuti (2020), a turning point is a phase of significant change in a person's self-perception, which occurs gradually and varies, often reflecting the difference between actual and ideal conditions.



Figure 38 : Hardin experienced a turning point in his outlook on life
(Source: *After Everything*, 2023).

In Figure 38, when Vance says, '*You need to change the metrics by which you define success*,' he advises Hardin to change how he measures success. Hardin has always considered success big, dramatic, and perfect. However, in this dialogue, Hardin realizes that this mindset is burdening him and pushing him towards a fear of failure.



Figure 39 : Hardin received and responded positively to the advice (Source: *After Everything*, 2023).

In Figure 39, Hardin begins to show openness to the input and criticism given to him. This can be seen in the sentence, '*You're right. You are, of course, you're right.*' This sentence indicates that Hardin is no longer stubborn or resistant to others' suggestions, as he might have been before. Instead, he acknowledges that Vance is correct. This marks Hardin's emotional and mental growth, as he has stopped seeking excuses to justify his bad behaviour and begun to accept reality. Hardin's willingness to listen to advice also shows that he is aware of the importance of change, not because he wants to please others, but because Hardin himself understands that he needs to change for his own good. When Hardin accepts Vance's advice and says he is ready to try again even though he is still afraid and hesitant, it proves that he is truly changing sincerely from within.



Figure 40 : Hardin took concrete steps towards change (Source: *After Everything*, 2023).

Hardin's statement in Figure 40 shows that he is taking real action, not just talking nonsense, to face his problems and improve his life. Instead of going home with Vance or running away from reality as he used to, Hardin chooses to stay and face what he is feeling. This decision shows that he has become more emotionally mature because he dared to face his own fears, including feelings of failure, loss, and disappointment. When Hardin says he wants to '*sort things through*,' it means he is aware that there are unresolved issues within himself that need to be addressed gradually through reflection. Meanwhile, his desire to keep writing shows that he still has hope and determination to grow into a better person, even though he once felt discouraged about his writing abilities. What's important is that Hardin's change isn't just in his thoughts and feelings but has already manifested in concrete actions. Hardin doesn't just say he wants to change; he's doing something to achieve it—staying put, stopping avoidance, and starting to write again.



Figure 41 : Hardin changes by starting to write and ditching alcohol (Source: *After Everything*, 2023).

Figure 41 shows Hardin's changes, such as when he started writing again. One of the things seen in Figure 41 is Hardin's hand typing on a laptop, which shows that he is actively involved in reflecting and healing himself. The quiet and well-lit environment creates a peaceful atmosphere, indicating that he has shifted from emotional turmoil to inner calm. Through writing, Hardin begins to rebuild his sense of self and reorganise his life. This is not merely a routine creative activity but a tangible manifestation of his growing self-awareness. Hardin's second action in Figure 41, throwing away the alcohol, is a very important turning point in his mental transformation. This action shows that he truly realised the need to change his life. This is known as sublimation, which involves transforming negative desires or impulses into beneficial actions that are acceptable to others (Claney, 2024). In this case, Hardin redirected his harmful habit of consuming alcohol into writing as a means of self-expression.

When viewed from a visual perspective, this scene reinforces the meaning that is being conveyed. In the second figure in Figure 41, Hardin is seen standing in front of a sturdy stone house, which symbolises strength and solitude. His deliberate movements of pouring and discarding alcohol clearly illustrate his intention to break free from his past dependencies and harmful habits. In this story, alcohol serves as a symbol of how Hardin escapes and self-destructs, so when he discards it, it signifies his refusal to remain the same flawed individual he once was. Thus, the two actions that Hardin takes in Figure 41 can be seen as clear evidence of Hardin's inner journey. Hardin is no longer controlled by destructive impulses but has begun to take control through clear and focused awareness. This awareness is the foundation for deeper and more meaningful changes in his future life.

Based on all the dialogue, visual, and narrative development data that has been analyzed, it can be concluded that the character Hardin Scott views his change as a process that comes from awareness and deep reflection about himself. Hardin no longer sees change as a

way to win Tessa back, but as an inner need to improve himself emotionally, mentally, and intellectually. In the dialogue *"I came here in the first place to try and resolve my past so I can move forward"* (After Everything, 2023), Hardin firmly states that his transformation stems from an awareness of his past wounds and a determination to resolve them.

The changes Hardin has made are reinforced by concrete actions, such as quitting alcohol and choosing to write again as a way to express his feelings positively. His decision not to run away from problems and to accept input from other characters such as Vance also shows an emotional maturity that he did not previously possess. Lines such as *"You're right. You are, of course, you're right"* (After Everything, 2023), which Hardin uttered, shows that he has stopped defending himself and begun to accept reality without resistance. This behavioral change indicates that Hardin has undergone a profound transformation in how he views himself and others. Hardin has begun to understand the bad habits that have been harmful to himself and others and is striving to transform them into more positive and beneficial actions. His belief that he will not repeat the same mistakes is based on the real changes he has proven himself capable of, as shown in Figure 41 (After Everything, 2023), where Hardin discards the alcohol bottle and begins typing on his laptop in a peaceful and well-lit environment. This represents Hardin's commitment to change, demonstrating self-control and a shift from negative behavior to more beneficial and positive activities.

Therefore, the changes Hardin made were the result of a combination of self-awareness, a desire to change, and tangible evidence that he was genuinely trying not to repeat the same mistakes. This change is not just empty promises, but a deep and consistent inner process that has led him toward the best version of himself—one that is more mature, understanding, and ready to love without causing harm. with an explanation that is easy to understand.

Based on an in-depth analysis of Hardin Scott's character in the five After films, his change occurred through a complex psychological process. He experienced an inner conflict

between regret, emotional reflection, and a maturing understanding of right and wrong. Using Freud's psychological theory, Hardin's desire to repair his relationship with Tessa Young arose from three layers of thought. First, there is a subconscious urge filled with past wounds. Second, there is a reflection at a semi-conscious level that begins to recognize old problems. Third, there is full consciousness that drives him to act more responsibly.

Hardin's transformation demonstrates genuine emotional maturity. He has begun to acknowledge his mistakes, accept help from others, and genuinely strive to change his behavior. He is also willing to undergo therapy, accept criticism, and show concern for those around him. This proves that the changes he has undergone are genuine and will last. Therefore, Hardin is not only trying to make amends for his past mistakes but also proving that he has become more mature and reliable. He is confident he will not repeat the same mistakes in his romantic relationships or daily life.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The author has presented and reported the results of a comprehensive analysis of Hardin Scott's psychological journey in the sequel to the film *After* in detail in Chapter IV to answer the research questions in this study. Based on the in-depth and comprehensive discussion in Chapter IV, the author found that the research questions outlined in Chapter I can be answered in detail and comprehensively. The two research questions are: (1) What leads Hardin Scott to think that fixing his past mistakes will help him reconcile with Tessa Young? And (2) How does Hardin Scott perceive his transformation, and what gives him confidence that he will not make the same mistakes again?

The first statement can be answered based on the overall data analysed, confirming that Hardin's motivation to correct his mistakes is very clear and understandable. This analysis successfully answers the question of why Hardin is confident that by correcting his mistakes, he can be with Tessa again. It starts with the guilt that arises because Hardin realises that his actions were morally wrong. As he said, he must apologise for his past in order to have a future with Tessa. This guilt is the beginning of his desire to change. What is interesting is that Hardin does not avoid his guilt. Instead, he uses it to reflect on his actions and then take concrete steps. He successfully balances his emotions with the reality that his relationship is indeed damaged because of his mistakes.

Hardin's belief in correcting his mistakes is built on three things: he is aware of his own feelings, he understands what is morally right and wrong, and he genuinely wants to create a better relationship with Tessa. Visual evidence in the film also supports this analysis. Hardin's remorseful facial expressions, his responsible attitude, and the story depicting his willingness

to change all reinforce the conclusion that he is truly serious about his intentions. Therefore, it can be concluded that Hardin's desire to atone for his past mistakes is a tangible manifestation of his hope to reconcile and reunite with Tessa. This motivation did not appear out of nowhere but was the result of deep thought and emotion.

Additionally, regarding the second issue, Hardin Scott sees the changes in himself as a gradual process, not something that happened suddenly. These changes arose because he reflected deeply on his mistakes, felt deeply remorseful, and ultimately accepted that he had indeed made mistakes. When speaking with Nathalie, Hardin admitted that he should not have published the book without informing Tessa first. This admission shows that he not only understands his mistakes intellectually but also feels them emotionally. He has truly learned from this negative experience. What is important is that Hardin no longer denies or seeks excuses for his mistakes. Instead, he honestly acknowledges what he did wrong. This becomes the foundation for the change he undergoes. Hardin is confident he won't repeat the same mistake because he has matured emotionally. When he says he will go with Tessa and feels ready, it shows that his decision to change is the result of careful thought, not just a momentary impulse. The culmination of Hardin's commitment is seen when he declares his love and his desire to marry Tessa. This statement shows that he feels he is worthy of loving and being loved in a healthy way. Thus, through awareness of his mistakes, emotional responsibility, and concrete actions, Hardin builds confidence in himself that he has changed. He believes that he is now capable of maintaining a healthy relationship without repeating the destructive behaviour he exhibited in the past.

5.2 Suggestions

In this section, the author would like to offer some suggestions that can be used in future research:

5.2.1 For General Readers

Through this study, general readers, especially teenagers and fans of the *After* film series, are expected to understand how traumatic experiences in the past can influence how someone forms relationships in the present. The character Hardin Scott illustrates the complex inner struggles resulting from unresolved emotional wounds. Therefore, readers can learn that self-awareness and emotional responsibility are important steps in the process of healing and personal development. Hardin's story inspires the idea that personal change and growth are possible if one is willing to confront one's past honestly.

5.2.2 For Future Researchers

For future researchers, this study can be used as a reference in conducting studies of fictional characters using a psychological approach, particularly psychoanalytic theory. This study only focuses on the character of Hardin Scott, so an analysis of other characters, such as Tessa Young, can be the subject of further research. In addition, a comparative study between the film and novel versions of *After* can also open new research opportunities related to differences in character portrayal and storyline. Researchers may also consider using other psychological theories to analyse the dynamics of characters' relationships to broaden the perspective of literary and psychological studies.

5.2.3 For English Study Program

For the English Studies programme, this research demonstrates the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in literary and film studies. The combination of character analysis

and psychological theory enriches our understanding of characters' emotional dynamics in works of fiction. English literature students can use this research as an example of exploring the deeper meanings of literary and film texts, not only from a narrative perspective but also from a psychological one. It is hoped that such an approach will encourage students to think critically and creatively, as well as develop sensitivity to the emotional and psychological issues that often arise in popular literary works.



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