



**HANNIBAL LECTER'S LACK OF SELF-CONTROL  
AS DEPICTED IN *HANNIBAL RISING* BY THOMAS HARRIS**

**A Final Project**

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The writer states that this project is written by herself without taking any research from other papers in any university, in S-1, S-2, S-3, and diploma degree. The writer also states that she does not take any material from other people's work except for the lists mentioned in the references.

Semarang, May 24<sup>th</sup> 2019

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## **MOTTO AND DEDICATION**

*“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts”*

**Winston S. Churchill**

*“Don’t stop when you’re tired. Stop when you are done”*

**Unknown**

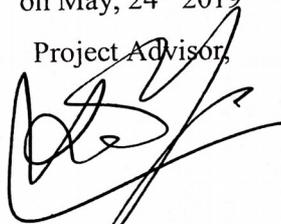
I dedicated this paper for my unbelievably amazing parents,  
and to everyone who strengthened and motivated me.

Thank you for the unconditional love given to me.

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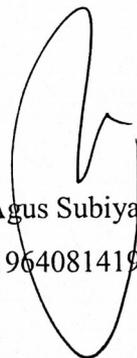
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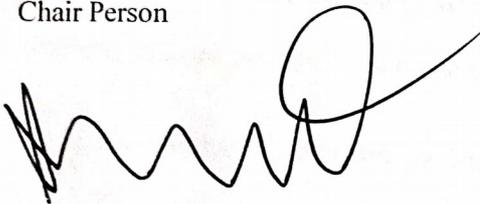
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## **ABSTRACT**

This research paper is an analysis towards the lack of self-control of a fictional character; Hannibal Lecter, as depicted in *Hannibal Rising* by Thomas Harris. The writer uses intrinsic elements; namely, Character, Setting, and Conflict. For the extrinsic element, the writer uses Self-control Theory by Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi. There are five objectives in this research paper; which are to explain the character and characterization of Hannibal Lecter, to explain the setting (setting of time, setting of place and setting of social environment), to explain the conflicts (External and Internal) experienced by Hannibal Lecter, and to discuss the destructive impacts of Hannibal Lecter's lack of self-control. Furthermore, the approach used to complete this paper is a psychological approach. To collect the data, library research methodology is applied. As a conclusion, the result of this study indicates that Hannibal Lecter's self-control is severely troubled after the tragedy that takes the life of his sister, resulting in his aggressive behavior.

**Keywords:** lack, self-control, destructive, impacts, aggressive, behavior

## 1.1. Background of the Study

In psychology, the term “self-control” points out to what helps human being controls their emotions and impulses which enables them to act and behave in socially appropriate ways (Knoch & Fehr, 2007: 128-132). Self-control can also be understood as changing one’s responses towards something unpleasant by sticking to rules, values, norms or ideals in daily life. It also points out to the ability of letting go of short-term pleasures that may have negative consequences and to the ability of acting in favor of longer-term interests (Geis, 2000: 38). In addition, lacking of self-control can lead an individual to act impulsively only to fulfill his/her momentary pleasures as well as it can trigger him/her to behave aggressively (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990: 90).

As for the object of this study, the writer uses a novel entitled *Hannibal Rising* by Thomas Harris. This novel exposes the main cause that triggers Hannibal Lecter’s lack of self-control, which is the horrible tragedy that takes his sister’s life.

From *Hannibal Rising*, we can see that Hannibal Lecter is psychologically troubled after watching a group of *Hilfswillige*; non-German citizens who choose to serve Nazi during World War II, butcher and cannibalize his little sister. Years after the tragedy, teenage Hannibal is sheltered in a boy’s orphanage maintained by the Soviet as Lithuania falls to them. Hannibal Lecter then starts showing symptoms of lacking of self-control where he does not hesitate to attack everybody who insults him. The truth is, the boy witnesses the horror of a tragedy that takes the life of his little sister and it has completely shifted his sane mental, traits and behavior.

Moreover, the writer chooses to analyze lack of self-control from *Hannibal Rising* because it is the beginning of his troubled psychology before he turns into a remorseless murderer. Apart from his lack of self-control analysis, the writer shall also analyze his characteristics to give more specific details about Hannibal Lecter before and after the tragedy that befalls him, the setting depicted in the novel, as well as external and internal conflicts experienced by Hannibal Lecter. The writer will also discuss about the destructive impacts of Hannibal Lecter's lack of self-control.

## **1.2. Purpose of the Study**

There are five purposes of this research, which are:

1. To explain the character and characterization of Hannibal Lecter's as depicted in *Hannibal Rising*.
2. To explain the setting (setting of time, setting of place, and setting of social environment) as depicted in *Hannibal Rising*.
3. To explain the conflicts (external and internal) that trigger Hannibal Lecter's lack of self-control as depicted in *Hannibal Rising*.
4. To discuss the destructive impacts of Hannibal Lecter's lack of self-control as depicted in *Hannibal Rising*.

## **2.1. Intrinsic Elements**

### 2.1.1. Character and Characterization

Kennedy and Gioia state that character can be understood as a person, an animal or a figure that appears in particular literary work (2007: 74). Meanwhile, according to Abrams, a character is a person who appears in any kinds of narrative prose or novels and is interpreted by the readers as an individual who possesses moral quality that is represented by his/her sayings and behaviors (1999: 76).

Kennedy and Gioia also state that characters in fiction can either develop or do not develop at all. The character which does not develop or only has one trait throughout the story is called as a flat character, while on the contrary, a character who experiences changes in nature, form or behavior is called as a round character (2007: 75).

Meanwhile, characterization is the process of conveying information about characters in narrative work. The information may be such as traits, sexual orientation, beliefs, motivation, etc (Martin, 1994: 95). Through characterization, readers are capable of understanding each character, and therefore they are able to understand the story. In addition, it has often been assumed that characters in literary work can be judged from four levels of characterization; namely psychological characterization. Psychological characterization reveals habitual responses, attitudes, desires, motivation, likes, and dislikes as well as the inner working of the mind, both emotional and intellectual which lead to action.

### 2.1.2. Setting

In *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, Abrams states that setting is the location, time, as well as social surroundings where actions happen in narrative work (1999: 284-285). Thus, the elements of settings can be divided into three important elements which are: setting of place, setting of time and setting of social environment. Setting of place is focused on the “where” aspect depicted in a story, while setting of time is focused on “when”, and setting of social environment is focused on the behavior of the social surroundings in a certain period of time. Setting gives an obvious and clear understanding about a particular story. It is very critical in narrative work to have setting since it gives readers the capability to imagine and feel each series of events as if it is real.

### 2.1.3. Conflict

The existence of many characters in a story often makes a disagreement or fight that is usually called by conflict. In addition, a conflict is usually built up by the moment a character in a story is facing some issues. According to Holman in *A Handbook of Literature*, conflict is a struggle between two different characters in a story (1960:98).

Moreover, there are two kinds of conflicts; which are internal and external conflicts. Potter explains that a conflict can be described implicitly, or it can be described explicitly and violent (1967: 25-26). Thus, internal conflict happens from inside of the character. It is the internal battle of a particular character, called as man vs self. Meanwhile, opposite from internal conflict, external conflict usually occurs because of the social surroundings. The most fundamental type of external conflict is man vs man.

The type of man vs man conflict occurs when a character struggle against another character.

## **2.2. Extrinsic Elements**

### 2.2.1 Self-control Theory

Self-control theory was proposed by Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi in *A General Theory of Crime* in 1990. According to Gottfredson and Hirschi, self-control refers to the power of letting go of short-term pleasures which may have some unbeneficial consequences, and alters it to the power of acting in favor of longer-term interests (Gibson, 2014: 6). The term “self-control” also concentrates on the very blockage which stands between an individual and an aggressive or even a criminal behavior.

In addition, those who is lack of self-control have a disposition that dictates their engagement in all behaviors which provide them immediate and momentary satisfaction (Gibson, 2014: 4). Furthermore, lacking of self-control increases the probability of all types of criminal acts that bring pleasure, gratification, and fulfillment in the short-term including murder (1994: 1). That is why, excellent levels of self-control are associated with less impulsivity (Frieese & Hoffmann, 2009).

People with lack of self-control have a tendency to have lack of empathy as well as lack of tolerance for frustration or anger. They also have a tendency to respond to a situation of conflict with physical means (1990: 89-90). Thus, lacking of self-control is linked to aggressive behaviors as well as other kinds of criminal actions because people

with lack of self-control tend to act impulsively. People with lack of self-control also have a tendency to act conforming to their own rationality as well as self-interest.

### 3

## RESEARCH METHOD

In analyzing a novel entitled *Hannibal Rising*, the method of collecting data termed as “library research” is used. Library research is “an investigation involving accepted facts, unknown, speculation, logical procedures rigorously applied, verification, evaluation, repetition, and ultimately an interpretation of findings that extends understanding” (George, 2008: 22-23).

To analyze this novel, the writer also uses contextual method. It focuses not only in the intrinsic elements but also the extrinsic. Moreover, the writer uses psychological approach in this paper. Psychological approach is used to analyze the main character’s lack of self-control. In *Personality and Individual Differences: Literature in Psychology-Psychology in Literature*, Aras states “There is a very strong correlation between literature and psychology for the fact that both of them deal with human beings and their reactions, perceptions of the world, miseries, by means of varied concepts, methods, and approaches” (2014: 251).

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Intrinsic Elements

#### 4.1.1. Character and Characterization

In *Hannibal Rising* by Thomas Harris, the main character is Hannibal Lecter. He is described as a very handsome and charming boy. Also, he is the last descendant of Hannibal the Grim and comes from a noble Lithuanian family (Harris, 2006: 4).

Before the war enters Lithuania, little Hannibal is characterized as a brilliant kid as it is told that in the age of two, Hannibal Lecter is already capable of reading a book. Later, in the age of six, Hannibal successfully measures the height of his father's castle using Euclid's formula. Impressively, the boy also studies English and German since he is very young as summarized from the book that Count Lecter asks the houseman to pull down heavy English, German and Lithuanian dictionaries in the castle's library in order to fulfill his son's curiosity. Not very long after, little Hannibal Lecter is on his own with the books (Harris, 2006: 16). Not only brilliant, full of curiosity and decent, but little Hannibal is also a very affectionate boy who is fond of his family especially to his little sister.

However, Hannibal Lecter's traits change after the war and one of its causes is due to the horribly violent circumstance during the World War II, especially when he witnesses his sister is butchered and cannibalized. He becomes a very aggressive little boy who has no emotion and remorse. After the war, he becomes a very antisocial boy who does not talk to anyone, does not socialize, and prefers to be left alone as described

in the book that the 13 year old Hannibal Lecter is standing alone on the rubble below the moat's embankment in his former castle, throwing crusts of breads into the black water while other boys are playing (Harris, 2006: 33). After the war, he is also described as a very easily provoked teenager who does not hesitate to assault people who like to bully and insult him.

Therefore, from how Hannibal Lecter is characterized, his character is categorized as a round character since there are changes of traits from when he is little and when he becomes a teenager. We can see how complex his character after the war since it is portrayed in a greater depth of psychological state after a traumatic tragedy that befalls him.

#### 4.1.2. Setting

The setting of time that is depicted in *Hannibal Rising* is during World War II in 1941 when Operation Barbarossa, declared by Adolf Hitler, finally hits the Eastern Europe as summarized in the book that it is the second day of the Hitler's Barbarossa Operation where the Nazi troops rapidly wipe across the Eastern Europe into Russia (Harris, 2006: 6).

Furthermore, the setting of place is in the city called Vilnius, Lithuania during the period of World War II, more specifically in Count Lecter's castle and lodge. As the war is becoming ferocious, Hannibal Lecter grabs his sister and they run to the castle to get ready to leave (Harris, 2006: 6). Later, the Lecter family and their servants survive in Count Lecter's lodge deep in the forest for a horrible three and a half years during Hitler's brutal Eastern Campaign (Harris, 2006: 15). Afterwards, there is a change of

setting of place since Hannibal Lecter is adopted by his uncle and is taken with him to his *chateau* in Paris, France.

Thus, the setting of social environment in the novel is during the chaotic and violent circumstance of war especially when the Nazi and the Russian have entered Lithuania in June 1941 and bloodbath is inevitably occurring. The setting of social environment can easily be found in the story where there is a group of *Hilfswillige*; local Lithuanian people who choose to serve Nazi during the war, plundering every place they can find as described in the following quotation: “Grutas and Dortlich carried a rolled tapestry out of the house and threw it into their half-track truck” (2006: 21).

During the period of war, there are locals who choose to join the enemy rather than their own forces. Usually, it is simply because the locals think that it will be more beneficial to join the enemy since they are the party who seem to win the war. In other cases, it happens when a country is fought by two different parties. In this case, Lithuania is fought by The Soviet and the Nazis. Most of the locals oppose The Soviet under the reign of Joseph Stalin since he is known for his ruthlessness to his own people. Therefore, they have no other choice but to pick a side, and changing side to the Germans is their answer. This is proven as summarized from the book that the Germans have begun to refer to Lithuania as *Ostland* which means a German minor colony, which in the near future can be resettled with the Aryans once the Slavic lives are completely exterminated (Harris, 2006: 14).

### 4.1.3. Conflict

#### 4.1.3.1. External Conflict

##### 4.1.3.1.1. Hannibal Lecter vs the War

The external conflict begins when the noble family of Lecter has to abandon their castle and move to their lodge deep in the forest to avoid bombardments during the war. After three and a half years maintaining to survive in the lodge, several tanks which contain Russian troops finally stop by to ask for water. Not very long after, a German *Stuka* with its terrorizing noises comes crossing the sky and shoots the Russian troops who are still staying on Count Lecter's yard. The bombardments cause the tanks to explode and its materials hit everyone in the yard, including Hannibal Lecter's parents and servants.

At that very moment, Hannibal and Mischa are watching the horror of everybody's death from inside the house. The two of them survive even though little Hannibal has to watch his parents' tragic death caused by the bombardments as explained in the following quotation: "Hannibal among the corpses, how much later he did not know, snow drifting down to dust his mother's eyelashes and her hair. She was the only corpse not blackened and crisped" (Harris, 2006: 25).

##### 4.1.3.1.2 Hannibal Lecter vs the Hilfswilige

Hannibal Lecter undergoes man vs man conflict when a group of *Hiwi* takes over his father's lodge. Not very long after the tragedy that takes Hannibal Lecter's parents, a group of deserter *Hilfswilige* plunders the lodge and also chains Hannibal and Mischa so that both of them cannot escape. When the winter is extremely cold and there are no

more animals to hunt, Mischa is becoming those soldiers' option as told: "He turned his bloody face up to the children and he said, "We have to eat or die"" (Harris, 2006: 30). Before the soldiers decide to take Mischa, they observe the children closely; thus creating such unforgettable nightmare for little Hannibal. Not long after, Hannibal witnesses his sister being butchered, cooked and eaten by those group of deserters. Hannibal also witnesses how the deserters eat the soup from Mischa's flesh and organs like starving animals.

#### 4.1.3.2. Internal Conflict

Internal conflict occurs when Hannibal Lecter is fighting against his own self. He witnesses so many traumatic violent scenes which are, of course, unhealthy to his psyche and mental health remembering that he is only a child back then. Afterwards, his personality totally changes as proven in the book, said by his psychiatrist:

"To be frank, he is perfectly opaque to me... But I would guess the hemispheres of his brain may be acting independently, as they do in some cases of head trauma, when communication between the hemispheres is compromised. He follows several trains of thought at once, without distraction from any, and one of the trains is always for his own amusement" (Harris, 2006: 54).

His personality and behavior have changed due to anger, hatred, anxiety, and pain of the past. He is anxious because his dreams keep bringing him back to the time when he has to witness those terrible things all by himself as summarized that in the dead of night, Hannibal Lecter's uncle and aunt hear constant screaming from Hannibal Lecter's room. When the two of them enter Hannibal Lecter's room, they witness that the boy has ripped out the pillow with his teeth (Harris, 2006: 46). This exact symptom happens to people who have gone through a terrible past experience where it is very difficult for

them to differ the reality and the flashbacks including Hannibal. He still feels as if he were there even though it is long gone.

The boy is angry and at the same time he is also guilty because there is nothing that he can do to save his sister. He also innocently eats the soup served by the deserters which means he also eats his sister. It leaves a big scar inside of him which can never be healed. These unhealthy emotions has stuck inside of him for quite a long time and grown worse since Hannibal Lecter refuses to talk to his psychiatrist. He does nothing to overcome his emotions and the result is that those emotions enslave him, turning him to be an easily provoked teenager who will not think twice to act aggressively.

## **4.2. Extrinsic Elements**

### **4.2.1. The Destructive Impacts of Hannibal Lecter's Lack of Self-control**

In Hannibal Lecter's case, it is unhealthy for a child to witness violent scenes from murder. In fact, if children live quite a long time in such a horrible circumstance, that will change their personality and the way they behave. It is also possible that they can adapt those violent behaviors and practice it in daily life since children's subconscious is very fragile. Little Hannibal Lecter witnesses a bloody scene where his sister is butchered and eaten, of course his personality and behavior change because he is used to violence and sadism. He has internalized and adapted violence from that point on.

There are several destructive impacts of Hannibal Lecter's lack of self-control that the writer will discuss:

#### 4.2.1.1. Attacking the Bully

The 13 year old Hannibal starts having issues on self-control when he is constantly bullied by another boy named Fedor in the orphanage. Even though Fedor is bigger, Hannibal Lecter is not afraid of him at all. In the book it is told that Fedor likes to bully Hannibal Lecter as described that Fedor takes a slingshot and a stone from his pocket. The stone is supposed to hit Hannibal but it hits the mud instead (Harris, 2006: 34).

The next thing that Hannibal Lecter does is brutally attacking Fedor from behind when the boy is about to leave with his friends. He keeps the boy's head under the water while smashing it hard with the slingshot over and over again. Afterwards, Fedor is bandaged around his neck and one of his fingers was splinted due to the brutality of Hannibal Lecter's attack, as described in the following quotation: "At another table Fedor watched, a bandage on his neck, and scrapes on his face. One of his fingers was splinted" (Harris, 2006: 35).

In this case, Hannibal Lecter's emotions enslave him, and that is why he conducts things impulsively without thinking further. If Hannibal Lecter possesses excellent self-control, he might just ignore Fedor or report him to the headmaster. In fact, the attack that Hannibal Lecter does towards Fedor is several times harsher than what Fedor did to him. Even his headmaster warns his uncle that Hannibal is dangerous, saying that it might be the best option not to let him play with other boys until he is settled as someone always gets hurt around him (Harris, 2006: 41).

#### 4.2.1.2 Attacking the Orphanage's Supervisor

The night when Hannibal Lecter attacks Fedor, he also attacks one of the supervisors of the orphanage. The two supervisors come into him and threaten to beat him. ““He's mute,” Second Monitor said. “No sense in beating him”” (Harris, 2006: 35). Later, when one of the supervisors is about to punch Hannibal in the face, he blocks the punch with a fork without remorse. Thus, the metal fork penetrates the supervisor's knuckles (Harris, 2006: 35).

In this case, emotional impulses lead Hannibal to make a poor decision, resulting in him lacking of self-control. Hannibal Lecter has another option such as reporting the supervisors to the headmaster instead of brutally attacking them which results in him being suspended. That, of course, if he possesses good self-control. His lack of anger management causes him to react aggressively instead of thinking rationally. In fact, through violence he is able to relieve himself from his emotional impulses by inflicting it into others.

#### 4.2.1.3. Attacking Paul Momund the Butcher who Insults His Aunt

Hannibal Lecter is not afraid to attack Paul Momund the Butcher who has insulted his aunt although Paul is far bigger and older than him as summarized from the book that Hannibal Lecter is on top of Paul Momund in all of sudden, beating him (Harris, 2006: 59). When he sees Paul Momund chopping the animals' flesh, he suddenly has flashbacks when the deserters eat his sister's flesh: “Hannibal saw Paul then, his face smeared with blood and feathers, like the Blue-Eyed One, like the Blue-Eyed One gnawing a bird skin” (Harris, 2006: 59). This clearly shows us how impulsive Hannibal

Lecter is. Therefore, without any hesitation, Hannibal runs over the butcher to beat him as if he is beating the deserters.

After the incident, Hannibal Lecter comes to Paul Momund and asks the man to beg an apologize from his aunt. However, Paul Momund laughs at Hannibal's offer and insults him instead. Having himself insulted by the man, that is exactly when Hannibal Lecter butchers Paul Momund without further consideration of the heavy consequences that he may face. Lacking of self-control drives Hannibal Lecter to satisfy his hunger of short-term pleasures, thus resulting in him responding to Paul Momund's insult without rational thinking. Even a detective who handles this case is afraid of Hannibal Lecter saying that his sense has been blunted by the war which turns him to become a monster (Harris, 2006: 76).

#### 4.2.1.4. Deciding to Hunt Down the Deserters who Kill His Sister

Lacking of self-control especially triggered by a severe traumatic event can lead an individual to act aggressively since they have lost the sense of thinking rationally and behaving well according to the norms and laws. Unlike animals, human beings are created with rational thinking. It serves them to have a closure over something unpleasant or traumatic that happens to them so that they can avoid impulsive actions, namely criminal ones.

In Hannibal Lecter's case, several rational choices might serve as considerations in order to have a closure against his emotions about the past; which are to let go of it, to talk to his psychiatrist and probably report those *Hilfwillige* to the organization of war criminals' seekers. However, he chooses to set an organized payback towards the

remaining deserters. It is proven as Hannibal Lecter decides to inject himself with a needle containing hypnotic liquids which makes him able to remember the missing parts of his terrible experience when his sister is butchered; which is to remember all of the deserters' names so that he can start hunting them one by one (Harris, 2006: 125-126).

This is where he starts completely losing his self-control. Rational choices no longer serve him as a sane and logical human being since he is driven only by his emotional impulses. Therefore, as his own justification, payback is the only correct answer. To set himself free from pain, anger and guilt; he needs to inflict it to those who have made him suffer. In order to have a closure over his bottled-up emotions, murder is the only way.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The very main cause of Hannibal Lecter's lack of self-control is because of his traumatic past experience where he loses his sister in the most horrible way. It has changed his personality, his characteristics, as well as his behavior as a decent, sane, and logical human being. He is, as a matter of fact, categorized as an individual who is lack of self-control as he does not hesitate to attack all the bigger boys and the supervisors who like to bully him. He also does not hesitate to hurt anyone who offends him or his beloved one, even he does not hesitate for a second to kill Paul Momund who has previously insulted his aunt as well as the deserters who has killed his little sister.

Lastly, lacking of self-control can and does lead an individual to act impulsively without further considerations regarding the consequences. It can lead a person to commit aggression or even possibly murder because without the presence of self-control, humans will be slaves of their emotional impulses since they are unable to think rationally. Thus, it makes them unable to behave well according to the norms and laws because they have their own justification of what is the right thing to do, even if it is contradicted with the law. The truth is, Hannibal Lecter commits homicide because he is hurt inside and is still struggling to deal with his bottled-up emotions. Therefore, through violence and aggression he is able to relieve himself from pain by inflicting it into others, especially into the ones who have made him suffer.

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