

A Psychosocial Development of a Young Adult Character in *Thirteen Reasons Why* Novel

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes a young adult protagonist character Clay Jensen in *Thirteen Reasons Why* novel by Asher (2007). The present research investigates the main character's psychosocial development. The novel tells a journey of Clay Jensen who struggles to listen to a series of tapes that reveal reasons why his crush, Hannah Baker, committed suicide in Hannah's voice. The way Clay reflects his emotions and responses to the tapes interest the researcher to analyze his psychosocial development, specifically the psychological and social characteristics. The purposes of this study are to enlist Clay Jensen's psychosocial issues and to discover how he copes with these issues as part of psychosocial development. This textual analysis applied Bucher and Hinton's (2010) developmental characteristics of young adults; the analysis explored Clay Jensen's narrative events that embody the ideas of psychosocial issues and how he deals with the psychosocial issues. It is concluded that Clay Jensen develops psychosocially because he experiences some psychosocial issues such as anxiety and low self-esteem, but he is able to cope with these issues. Clay Jensen is also a round character who develops himself from being selfish to be a more sympathetic person.

Keywords: *psychosocial development and issues, textual analysis, young adult character*

INTRODUCTION

Through reading novels, readers can enhance their sense of empathy and moral. Reading novels can be beneficial since it trains readers' imagination and sensitivity of human conditions and experiences (Yanklowitz, 2014). Readers can imagine the characters in the novel and their characterization as well as to learn more about humanity. In a more specific context, novel as a form of narrative shares more complexity than short story since novel depicts human's life events more comprehensively.

Young adult novels are mostly concerned with coming of age journey, telling the life of a young adult protagonist and how he or she deal with issues. Millard (2007) states that coming-of-age story tells the young adult character's progress from naive (inexperienced) trait to maturity. This kind of novel also portrays frequent self-consciousness of a young adult. Coming of age journey as portrayed in young adult literature can be very challenging for the character because it presents the character with various unpredictable problems so that

they can learn, change, and grow up. One of the most recent novels depicting this complex issue of young adults is *Thirteen Reasons Why*.

McClurg (2017) reports in NY Times article that *Thirteen Reasons Why* is awarded as the best-selling book. It tells a story of how Hannah Baker's story committing suicide. Before her death, she addressed her thirteen reasons why she killed herself in a series of tapes to people whom she thought guilty for her suicide. The novel begins in one day a shoe-size brown box arrived at Clay Jensen's front yard. He feels shocked after hearing his dead crush's voice, Hannah, which overwhelms his thoughts. Further, the narrative reflects Clay Jensen's point of view and consciousness mainly as he listens to all the tapes. In his listening to and interaction with the tapes, Clay experiences psychosocial issues such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and tendency to avoid parents that are typically experienced by young adults (Bucher & Hinton, 2010). The psychosocial issues presented in the novel attracts the writer of this study to see further Clay's psychosocial

development, and how he copes with the psychosocial issues as part of his journey to adulthood.

Psychosocial issues are common to occur in young adults. Derived from two words, namely 'Psychological' and 'Social', psychosocial issues refer to psychological and social problems. The problems are commonly about misbehaviour and issues: anxiety, depression, skills of handling problems, and supports from social environment (Holm, 2017). In addition, Bucher and Hinton (2010) add that psychosocial development exposes the psychosocial issues as well such as argumentative and aggressive behaviour, preoccupation, and shifted affiliations. Most of the problems are not necessarily overwhelming conflicts, some problems are actually a young adult's way to start their path to reach independent adult status (Hinmann, 2013).

Young adults can try to solve their problems alone such as by reacting properly in a certain social circumstance or asking for forgiveness if they do something

inappropriate. However, young adults can also ask for other's help since young adults may be incapable of handling issues because of their innocence (Millard, 2007). Seeing Millard's point of view about how innocent young adults are, adults can support in order to help them to be more experienced in handling issues.

There are previous studies regarding *Thirteen Reasons Why*. For example, Exter-Cortens and Jenney (2018) reveal issues of toxic masculinity and mental health of a young woman in *Thirteen Reasons Why* Netflix Series. The study shows how toxic masculinity performed by a hyper male community affects a woman's mental health through unfortunate social practices to her. Further, Chisholm and Trent (2012) promote critical perspectives of bullying to their pupils. Firstly, they ask the pupils to read *Thirteen Reasons Why* to make them understand the issue of bullying in the novel. Then, they ask them to fulfill some exercise to test their knowledge and response toward bullying. The result is the students are aware of bullying and have the ability to handle

social situations. Last, Ducker (2018) shows how hyperemotional listening and cognitive mapping in *Thirteen Reasons Why* creates an emotional landscape of Clay. Further, the study also focuses on Clay's emotional experience and how Hannah's voice affects him. The previous studies hence show that research which focus on Clay Jensen is possibly still understudying. In addition, most of them focused on the Netflix series adaptation of the novel and the character Hannah Baker. Specifically, study of Clay's psychosocial development has not been particularly conducted. Hence, the present study would like to see how Clay develops psychosocially and how he deals with the psychosocial issues. This study analyzes Clay's narrative events based on Bucher and Hinton's (2010) view of young adult development. Bucher and Hinton (2010) actually classify the development into three parts: physical, cognitive, and psychosocial. To limit the scope of the study, this study focuses only on the psychosocial development of Clay. Furthermore, the research questions are as follow: What are the

psychosocial issues experienced by Clay Jensen and How does Clay Jensen deal with the issues.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK Young Adult Literature

Young adult literature has become a genre which interests young adults for discussing real-life issues, literacy improvement, and also as a bridge to the classics (Stallworth, 2006). Young adult literature shows stories of problems of growing up, culture, and conflicting emotions of the young adult protagonists being portrayed that young adult readers could have experienced in their journey to adulthood. The sales of young adult literature are higher, and young adult literature may face its glorious golden age once again (Reno, 2008, as cited in Scherff & Groenke, 2009).

Young adult literature today encompasses broader ideas and themes. Young adult literature may let readers see some issues in the narrative. Moreover, Koss (2015) adds that there are many young adult literature today which are enriched with multiple narrative perspectives as the new trends: multiple points of

view, speakers, narrators, or structures. For example, *Thirteen Reasons Why* novel shows more than one protagonist: Clay Jensen and Hannah Baker. The “I” switches back and forth. The consciousness of Hannah Baker and Clay Jensen is differentiated through the font style into an italic one and non-italic. In addition, Bucher and Hinton (2010) see the young adult literature as a tool which can invite reading enjoyment and help young adult readers to see joys, challenges, trials, successes, and issues in various genres of young adult literature.

Young adult literature has various genres. Every one of them serves unique purposes and offers enjoyment to the individual’s choice of reading (Bucher & Hinton, 2010). The genres include fantasy, science fiction, horror, historical fiction, poetry, drama, short stories, comic books, graphic novels, and nonfictional works such as biography and magazines.

Despite all the benefits and excitement which may be found in young adult literature, the concept of young adult itself is vague. To make

an agreement regarding the concept of it, most members of National Council of Teacher of English in conference on English Education Commission on the Study and Teaching of Young Adult Literature put range eleven to eighteen to acquire age of young adults, between sixth to twelfth grades (YALSA, 2004 as cited in Bucher & Hinton, 2010). Moreover, Young Adult Library Services Association defines ‘young adult’ as twelve to eighteen-year-old people.

Meanwhile, Bucher and Hinton (2010) provide several criteria of young adult literature. The literature for young adults can reflect young adults’ age and development of the characters, real-life issues, and experiences such as growing-up problems, adults’ authority, illness, death, peer pressure, social anxiety, suicide, drugs, alcohol, and social experiment. Bucher and Hinton report that young adult literature shall concern with world perspectives as well in terms of culture, social, gender, environmental issues, and politics. Literature offers its reader not only its literary elements but also its life events to relate and concern.

Young adult literature offers the readers a connection since literature has a function of mimetic (to relate). For example, it makes alienated students feel relatable to the story that invites enjoyment to the readers, or young adult readers meet their characteristics in a character of a young adult literature they read (Bucher & Hinton, 2010). The young adult literature portrays lives of young adults and may trigger a discussion regarding coming of age issues or any issues in the young adult literature. The discussion of real-life issues can make the young adults more aware of the challenges and enriches young adults' knowledge to solve the problems. The interaction also may boost young adults' social awareness like improving senses of empathy and sympathy since they may start learning how to live in social environments (Thomson, 2017). Real-life issues being portrayed in contemporary young adult literature seem to be more complex which may imply social changes as well. The topics in the narrative can be about cruelty and crime, personal abuse, racial violence, and voices of

minorities (Dresang, 1999 as cited in Bucher & Hinton, 2010).

Contemporary young adult literature brings contemporary issues (Millard, 2007). It may resonate voices of depressive individuals, young adults' thoughts of life, LGBT community, people with disabilities, minorities, and alienated students (Dresang, 1999 as cited in Bucher & Hinton, 2010). Young adult literature serves as a vehicle to bring issues for the readers to think about and possibly to act upon. A study by Voltaire (2016) shows that young adult literature can be used to promote cultural empathy as cultural and diversity learning.

Despite young adult literature's rich portrayals of young adults' lives and issues, young adult literature is perceived as writings for poorer readers which make them tend to avoid canonical literature. "There are some who believe young adult literature only attracts the poorer readers who do not have the reading and analytical skills to enjoy classics" (Bucher & Hinton, 2010, p. 8).

Because of its easiness for reading, canonical literature seems to be more preferable than young adult

literature because canonical literature enhances reading and analytical skill. Hence, both kinds of literature actually share different values and benefits.

Canonical literature deals with rich language and complex themes which can be challenging to understand. In addition, canonical literature enhances not only reading but also analytical skill (Bucher & Hinton, 2010). “Successive generations of readers revalue the canon, and reassess what is most important about canonical works” (Millard, 2007, p.13). Canonical literature has its own distinctive style than young adult literature, and it is the style of the author that makes the canonical literature’s style of writing to be distinctive like Shakespeare’s works. The style of its writing is different with contemporary literature, especially young adult literature.

Despite its distinctive style of canonical literature, ‘young adult literature is well-crafted, accessible, and easy to read and that the stories are powerful and intense’ (Crocker, 20003, as cited in Bucher & Hinton, 2010). Further, young adult literature may reflect contemporary

sociopolitical issues. The writers of young adult literature want the young adult readers to be aware of the issues (Millard, 2007). Further, when concerning about social issues, one can start to think about social issues in his or her surroundings. Young adult literature can make the readers increase their empathy as it promotes frequent self-consciousness and how to treat people well (Stephans, 2013). The young adult readers, especially the struggling readers, can understand the story and emotional events well in the story. Young adult literature provides its young adult readers with relatable feeling in which the canonical cannot do (Bucher & Hinton, 2010). The style of writing becomes the main difference between canonical and young adult literature (Rybakova & Roccanti, 2016). In addition, both of them not only different in terms of style but also benefits that each of the literature has for the readers.

This section has provides some points of view regarding young adult literature. Since this study uses a psychosocial approach, it

is important to introduce what psychosocial approach is as well.

Psychosocial approach

As previously stated, the term 'Psychosocial' is derived from the words "Psychological" and "Social" (Manoux, 2003). Its development of knowledge was first proposed by Erik Erikson in terms of human development. Furthermore, Newman and Newman (2012) state that human development consists of experiences. On the other hand, a fictional humanlike character in young adult literature depicts life events as how humans experience them as well. Hence, this present study would like to see the developed sense of self of the character that are influenced by interaction with other people as a meant of character analysis textually. Moreover, to describe the character's psychosocial phenomenon, the writer of this study considers his psychological and social qualities.

The psychological state being discussed reflects mental condition of the person or the character as a result of experiencing events. Emotion, memory, perception, motivation,

thinking and reasoning, language, symbolic abilities, and one's orientation to the future are examples of psychological processes (Newman & Newman, p.7, 2012). Human's psychological and societal system develop over time which show changes continuously. As the development is influenced by life events, the experiences that human may deal with are such as interaction with friends, exposure to some preferences, and school life. The change or the development can also be self-driven. As previously stated about exposure to some preferences, the character can realize his goals or what he intends to do like being a valedictorian at school or applies some new ideas to his life. The mindset to reach the goals or embrace one's interest is called as self-insight. Wilson (2009, as cited in Newman & Newman, 2012) views that selfinsight can take an essential role in maintaining positive mental health.

The next section will explain even further about the psychosocial issues that young adults may experience according to Bucher and Hinton (2010)

Young Adults' Development and Psychosocial Issues

Bucher and Hinton (2010) state that contemporary young adults have fast development. Their physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development start to grow in this phase. We may see a fourteen-year-old young adult looks like an eighteenth-year-old person. Cognitively, young adults unlock their formal thinking ability and higher level of thoughts. Young adults can know about what they have to do with life and make future plan already than their parents could have expected. They may think about anything unthinkable before as a result of higher level of thinking processes (Fajarrani, 2013). In terms of psychosocial development, young adults tend to prioritize their friends and peers which are perceived as shifted affiliations (Manning & Bucher, 2009 as cited in Bucher & Hinton, 2010). The aspects of young adult development are interrelated and complex such as physical growth that influences young adults' self-esteem, being selective in terms of socializing, and capabilities to cope with social

situation in terms of psychosocial aspect (Bucher & Hinton, 2010).

Psychosocial issues include psychological and social attributes. Psychosocial problems are commonly about misbehaviour and may come from school life as the result of socializing. The issues are anxiety, depression, and coping skills (Holm, 2017). Referring to Bucher & Hinton (2010), young adults can also experience other psychosocial issues such as preoccupation, argumentative, and aggressive behaviour. To see the social aspect, young adults socialize to social groups such as family, neighbourhood, peers, and ethnic or religious or a certain community.

If the young adults seem struggling with problems, young adults can keep struggling to cope with the conflicts or ask for surroundings' support. Their ability in coping with issues help young adults to understand the problems and have insights to construct the sense of self.

Meanwhile, young adults' development involve physical, psychosocial, and cognitive issues and development. The table of young

adults' developmental characteristics by Manning and Bucher (2009) as cited in Bucher and Hinton, (2010) is as follow:

Table 1 developmental characteristics during adolescence

| Developmental Characteristics During Adolescence | |
|--|---|
| PHYSICAL | PSYCHOSOCIAL |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical changes (e.g., growth spurt, skeletal and structural changes) are rapid and visually apparent. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friendships form and social interactions increase, potentially boosting selfesteem and reducing anxiety. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considerable diversity in physical developmental rates occurs due to genetics, environmental factors, and health issues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinct gender differences occur in socialization patterns (e.g., females tend to have smaller numbers of close friends, males tend to have larger "social networks"). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinct gender differences are evident in size, strength, and age of growth spurt (e.g., | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allegiance and affiliation shifts from parents and teachers to friends and peers. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> girls around age 12, boys around age 14). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social tasks and situations are handled without adult supervision and advice. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health risks increase due to behavioral issues such as eating disorders, sexual experimentation, and drug use. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-esteem changes due to young adults' home and school lives. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preoccupation with the selflead to critical self-examination and, subsequently, to the formation of self-perceptions. |

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- Argumentative and aggressive behaviors become evident and often disturb parents and teachers.

COGNITIVE

- Higher levels of cognitive functioning (e.g., reasoning, higher level thought processes) develop.

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- Moral and ethical choices are now possible and often guide behavior.

-
- Developmental diversity leads to varying abilities to think and reason.

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- Cognitive ability is often affected by overall socialization.

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- Perspectives about past, present, and future develop that allow enhanced perception of time.

-
- Language and overall verbalization skills increase, allowing improved communication in both school and home situations.

It is stated that young adults' preoccupation enables them to initiate self-lead which can bring them to critical self-examination and self-perceptions as the result. Institution of Canadian of College Health Leaders (2010) explains that self-lead indicates self-awareness and character demonstration. Character demonstration implies inward motivation to do what is right, consistent in words and actions. Character demonstration also suggests senses of morality, empathy, and confidence. In other words, self-lead, which is related with character demonstration, points out actions of the self and shows his or her intention to reach the goal. Self-lead actions or character demonstration can make young adults to be better morally since it teaches a sense of morality.

However, young adults' developmental tasks or issues, like psychosocial one, are still inevitable.

Examples of psychosocial issues which may occur in young adults are argumentative and aggressive behaviour. Young adults tend to break

boundaries regarding values in their surroundings, especially in-home environment. The young adults can challenge the authority of parents by arguing, or the young adults can do physical aggression toward others as a form of aggressive behaviour. It can be considered as their way to get the independent adult status which can involve unexpected behaviour (Hinnman, 2013). The table of young adults' development also provides more terms regarding psychosocial aspect such as self-esteem, emergence of argumentative and aggressive behaviour, shifted affiliations, and anxiety.

Self-esteem is merely about how we appreciate and like ourselves. Self-esteem as one's personal trait can be seen through outfits, beliefs, emotions, and behaviour. If humans can appreciate themselves as form of balanced self-esteem, they can reach self-efficacy. Cherry states that self-efficacy is how well we believe to handle future actions, performances, abilities, and issues.

Moreover, high and low self-esteem are two common issues in self-esteem or embracing ourselves.

For example, high self-esteem leads to narcissism that possibly blocks one's mindset to care others (Cherry, 2017). On the other hand, low self-esteem holds one back in doing something worth for them. The issues of high and low self-esteem can happen in young adults since they are innocent, emotionally unstable or sensitive, and able to bear thoughts because of egocentrism (heightened focus on self). Being positive and realistic to cope with future matters is perceived as ideal (Cherry, 2017). In addition, it is also possible for humans to experience anxiety as they try to handle problems in the future.

Anxiety refers to fear or nervousness. According to MallorquíBagué, Bulbena, Pailhez, Garfinkel & Critchley (2015), anxiety is considered as an emotional state of experiential (e.g. fear), behavioural (e.g. avoidance), and physiological (e.g. Tachycardia or fast heart-beat) components. Anxiety may trigger somatic symptoms which bears physical and emotional disturbances as the result of mind-body interactions. The somatic symptoms

occur in visceral organs (stomach, lungs, heart, and intestines).

Specifically, the examples of somatic symptoms are muscle tension, palpitations, dizziness, shakiness, sweatiness, stomach ache, nausea, vomit, chest pain, fatigue, headache, shortness of breath, and numbness (Lickerman, 2010). On the other hand, there are also psychological qualities that take into account of anxiety such as distress, uneasiness, and flushing (strong emotions such as anger and feeling embarrassed). As in line with Parekh (2017), anxiety is commonly seen as normal feelings of nervousness. It can put humans to low confidence and tend to hold them back in doing something. However, anxiety helps humans to level-up in solving issues and accepting the situation.

Young Adult Literature, Development, and Psychosocial Issues

By reading the young adult literature, young adult readers can know about coping with young adults' issues and build empathy as they understand the narrative events and characters. But even though young adult readers can

observe and understand the young adult issues within young adult

literature, experiencing young adults' developmental tasks may be inevitable. The young adults may still find issues in coping with the tasks.

Young adults carry their coming of age journey differently (Bucher & Hinton, 2010). The developmental characteristics are various. Each young adult takes the "road" where no one knows what issues a young adult will encounter. If the young adults can encounter the issues well, it signifies that the young adults are successful in terms of developmental tasks.

Egocentrism will emerge at young adults because, at this stage, the cognition starts to develop like formal operational stage or formal thinking (Galanaki, 2017). As previously stated, egocentrism leads to heightened focus on self. What happens within young adults' mind can be unpredictable which bears unfortunate decisions and behaviours. The behaviours can make the surroundings, especially family, worried. Young adults actually need adults or surroundings' support to help

them with the ladder to adulthood because their innocence and developing cognition may put them in difficulties (Millard, 2007). Although young adults can handle the developmental tasks, adults or surroundings can still concern them in case they fall to the wrong track.

Characters and Characterization in

Literature Characters in literature are divided into two major types: round and flat characters. The characterization can be observed through their traits or changes in them. Traits refer to mindset or practices of behaviour portrayed in the story (Roberts & Jacobs, 2004). The traits can take examples such as being lazy and anxious, giving moral support to friends and always be reliable, or always thinking of themselves which reflect self-center. Round characters mean dynamic characters. Round characters experience changes in terms of traits either because of actions or events. On the other hand, Flat characters stay with static characteristics. Flat characters can change into round characters if the characters have changes in traits.

Usually, protagonists are the round characters, and antagonists are the flat or minor characters

Mostly, fiction stories focus on protagonists who face a major problem which comes from misunderstanding, misinformation, unfocused ideas and goals, difficult situations, problematic relationships, and challenging situations (Roberts & Jacobs, 2004). The characters choose either win, die, or tie. They may learn to be a better person from their conflict or miss the point and take an unpredictable road. They also can remain unchanged which makes them flat characters.

When analyzing characters in literary works, the observer can analyze the character by seeing values beyond their circumstances, acts, appearances, thoughts, and all details about the character as well. By reading what the characters say about each other and someone, we can know more about the character being analyzed. It is the presentation of the protagonist when observer wants to see the character's acts, speeches, or thoughts which show outer or inner of the character. Observer of the

characters can also draw conclusions about them.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a textual analysis of the psychosocial development of Clay's *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Asher (2007). This study is a descriptive qualitative research because it attempts to deal with words (Flick, 2009). Moreover, the research is meant to discover and describe psychosocial issues in the character Clay. It takes emotions, conflicts, motivation, and traits to analyze (Freud, 1899). The present study also analyzes how the character Clay copes with the issues to indicate his psychosocial development. Further, this textual analysis focuses on psychosocial aspect that is different from psychoanalysis. This textual analysis with psychosocial approach investigates psychological and social qualities of the character Clay.

The data for this study were taken from a novel entitled *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Asher (2007). The writer of this study chose the novel because it is included as one of the NY Times best-selling novels

(McClurg, 2017), and the adaptation of the novel into a Netflix series has invited many good comments, although controversies have also arisen. Accordingly, the writer of this study is interested to find issues and observe the character development in the novel as its original work.

Procedures

The novel is mostly about Hannah Baker's reasons to commit suicide recorded in a series of tapes. Clay, as one of the listeners, does not only show his feelings but also "interacts" with it as if Clay talks to her. This novel is narrated from two points of view: Hannah's and Clay's. While studies on Hannah character have been quite many, the character Clay whose point of view is largely used in the novel is still not much studied. Hence, Clay's dominant consciousness has prompted the writer of this study to analyze his characterization.

To find about Clay's psychosocial development, the writer of this study collects data by close reading the novel several times. During the process of close-reading,

the writer of this study highlights Clay's certain narrative events that show his consciousness and dialogue as those may represent his psychosocial issues and how he deals with the psychosocial issues. After the events are highlighted along with notes regarding Clay's psychosocial development, the writer of this study rereads the novel in order to confirm whether the noted events of Clay do reflect his psychosocial issues and development to be considered as data. After that, the writer of this study starts to put the data into a table for further analysis.

Data analysis

The analysis began by firstly interpreting each event of the data. In the process of interpreting, the writer of this study revealed what each selected event showed or implied regarding Clay's psychosocial issues and development by referring to Bucher and Hinton's theory of young adults development (2010). The next step was finding other events to prove whether Clay coped with the psychosocial issues. The events that showed how Clay coped with the

psychosocial issues shall be provided as additional textual evidence. The last step was summarizing the data in order to answer the research questions: what are the psychosocial issues that Clay Jensen experience and how does Clay Jensen deal with the psychosocial issues. In addition, the summary of this study also intends to reveal whether the character Clay develops in terms of traits.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study has found psychosocial issues in the character Clay namely anxiety, low self-esteem, losing affiliation from parents, failure to play the role as a friend, and preoccupation. The psychosocial issues that Clay experiences are in line with Bucher and Hinton's (2010) view of young adults' psychosocial developmental characteristics. The characteristics are mostly found in the character Clay, except for argumentative and aggressive behaviour. Clay Jensen is actually a nice and well-behaved young adult. However, he dislikes some people. Although Clay Jensen dislikes some people because he is angry at them for some reasons and

their mistakes in the past, he does not do any form of aggression or dangerous actions as a way to express his anger. Clay develops as well sympathetically to care for another friend. Furthermore, he is also able to cope with his psychosocial issues.

He faces his anxiety by facing bravely what he is anxious about. He regains his self-esteem and reduces his anxiety because of the help from a friend. He shifts his affiliation from parents to peers. To play the role as a friend to care for someone, he starts to talk to a friend that is in need of help. He overcomes his preoccupation through self-lead journey and selfexamination that makes him gain some self-perceptions.

The most apparent psychosocial developmental characteristics lie in the character Clay's ability to cope with anxiety, gain self-esteem, and take the role as a friend. The voice of Hannah recorded in a series of tapes triggers Clay to be anxious about what he has done that make her committed suicide. She stated that the persons who get the tapes are the reasons why she committed suicide. As time moves on,

his anxiety grows toward the tapes and the people mentioned on the tapes that consists of mostly students and a counselor. Clay's anxiety lasts as the effect of his listening. It takes worry feelings, more emotional qualities, and physical ones such as shortness of breath, muscle tension, nausea, vomit, and flushing: anger, sadness, and embarrassment. Even though Clay still experiences the traits of anxiety at the end of story, he is able to face what he is anxious about bravely. He still listens to the tapes. He is also able to get to school where "the people" may gather.

It is common to see how some characters in literature are afraid of something but they deal with the source of their anxiety. The character Kevin Lewis, as in *The Kid* (2004) novel, is scared of his abusive mother. His mother's frequent physical aggression (kicking, punching, pinching, biting) scares Kevin until he crawls his body like a ball. One day, he decides to keep silent while Gloria, his mother, is physically abusing him rather than fighting her back which can make the domestic abuse even worse. More examples, Charlie

Kelmeckis in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Chbosky (2000) is anxious about socializing as the effect of traumatic experience of his best friend's suicide. As time moves on, the story portrays how Charlie struggles in socializing. Being brave by approaching his seniors (Sam and Patrick) in a school ball despite his awkwardness, being helpful to them in any social situation which makes the three of them come to be his close friends, and bracing himself to raise his hand to participate in the classroom are his efforts to be able to cope with his nervousness of socializing.

At the same time, Clay experiences low self-esteem as well. His low self-esteem is caused by Hannah's rumors, self-blaming regarding Hannah's death, and his low confidence in relation to other people. Clay understands that he is to blame regarding Hannah's death. He feels confused, guilty, uneasy, and ready to be crushed because he thinks that he lets her dead. He becomes awkward even in the simple activity of taking a bus. He cannot see people in their eyes, and he believes that he is the

target of everyone's sight. The rumors of Hannah also affect him to have low confidence in reaching her. He is scared that the rumors are true once he gets closer to her. Clay is afraid of getting hurt if the rumors turn out to be true. As a results, he is less confident to reach her.

The psychosocial developmental characteristic of friendship can be observed in the friendship developed between Clay and Tony. Bucher and Hinton (2010) stated that friendship increases the social interaction which affects self-esteem to be balance. The interaction also serves to reduce anxiety helps gain self-esteem. Clay and Tony often talk about Hannah, Clay's feelings for her, her suicidal signs, and how the tapes exist. These talks help Clay to be more relax. Clay and Tony are able to find things to laugh at during the talks. Clay is grateful for there is someone who listens and is there for him. The narrative event also shows how tones (attitudes and feelings) can show humor (Roberts & Jacobs, 2004). Roberts and Jacobs (2004) explain that it is fine to discover a laugh even

in the serious condition in the narrative. It is fine to relax for a while because the humor material means to make the one who experiences a serious condition avoids the response of horror. The talk boosts Clay's self-esteem to finish his goal, to understand Hannah's stories by listening to the tapes. Tony has helped him gain more confidence not only in his quest of the goal, but also in his other aspects of life, such as school life and friendship.

The second most apparent characteristic of psychosocial development is shifting affiliation from parents to peers. In this context, Clay loses his affiliation from his mom and shifts the affiliation to his peer, Tony. His mom used to distract his focus on listening to the tapes. Then, Clay begins his outgoing from home in order to focus on reaching his goal of listening to the tapes. He somehow comes with the idea of approaching his peer, Tony. Further, Clay and Tony interact about Hannah and the tapes. Clay and Tony also cooperate to lie to Clay's mom. Clay wants to finish the tapes without making his mom worried in case he

does not go home. Clay loves his mom actually. It is stated that Clay does not want to make his mom worried by phoning her although he lies to her also. Clay's concern to his mom indicates that he is still care for her. The next day, Clay still does not even go home as well but to school. He does not want his mom to see him in a bad shape as the effects of listening to the tapes. He does not want his mom to strike him with unanswerable questions regarding his condition. It is clear that Clay is more open to his peer Tony than his mom. Avoidance of home and telling lies to his mom are how Clay loses his affiliation from parents.

The third characteristic of psychosocial development found in the character Clay is his success to play the role as a friend in helping the other friend as part of his social tasks. Clay develops his sympathetic sense which signifies a character development. He used to fail at being a friend which serves to care for the other friend. He was less sympathetic to his friends that are in need of help: Hannah and Skye. He was careless of Hannah Baker when she was alive. He

leaves Skye in the bus alone, while she needs him and she may have some problems just like Hannah. His regret over Hannah's death and his inability to help her through her problems, to prevent her from committing suicide has helped him develop psychosocially, that is in terms of friendship. He takes a great lesson from his past experience with Hannah to help prevent the same thing happens to Skye. He then does what he never could do to Hannah; He talks to Skye, trying to be her friend as much as he can.

The last characteristic of psychosocial development found in the character Clay is preoccupation. According to Bucher and Hinton (2010), preoccupation causes selflead journey and self-examination to earn self-perceptions. Clay thinks and worries a lot about many things after he decides to listen to the tapes. The subject of the preoccupation refers to his fear of the tapes, the real threat for the listeners, and his will to understand and honour his dead crush. Clay is afraid of the tapes because they contain Hannah's voice that judge him to be the reasons why she committed

suicide. In addition, Hannah's voice also threatens the listeners to listen to the tapes until finished. If each of the listeners does not listen to the tapes, the second set of tapes will be released publicly and the impact will not be good. The tapes trigger Clay to have some preoccupation, and the preoccupation actually helps him to have a self-lead journey. He embraces the journey to get more insights of Hannah Baker by visiting star-marked spots around Crestmont area. Throughout his journey, preoccupation occurs many times in that he questions the journey. It is stated that he is obsessed with Hannah and wants to understand her, and this obsession leads him to complete the goal. After he finishes listening to the whole tapes, he finally understands her stories. This understanding signifies that his goal of understanding her is accomplished.

As he understands Hannah's reasons for committing suicide, he also comes to the understanding of himself. He understands how he has been behaving bad, especially towards his friends. He then examines all of the things that he has been doing

wrong. Through this self-examination, he finally gains sympathy for others.

Adolescents reading Asher's *Thirteen Reasons Why* (2007) may learn from Clay on how to cope with the issues that usually emerge in adolescence, such as bullying, low self-esteem, and the like.

Moreover, *Thirteen Reasons Why* novel is considered controversial and dangerous. It is stated that the novel glorifies suicide and is forbidden to be part of school curriculum (Greensmith & Froese, 2018). However, a study shows that its Netflix series has made the issue of suicide among teenagers become more relatable to American parents and teens who start developing a conversation about real-life issues (COMHD, 2018). The institution also reports that some of the watchers tend to apologize to someone that they might have hurt. This only proves that literary works raising controversial issues may be labelled dangerous or even banned from circulation. Teenagers may indeed read the messages wrongly. That is why parents' role is really important in

helping teenagers see an issue more critically. Teenagers also have to communicate to their parents in order to avoid miscommunication between them and to prevent bad things from happening, like suicide. The novel has taught teenage readers a lot about how to deal with problems, in which the roles of friends and parents are the key to successfully cope with the problems. Meanwhile, the narrative brings opposite ideas of adult support; Clay understands that Hannah Baker once encounters a school counselor that cannot give her appropriate support because of victim-blaming tendency regarding a case of sexual harassment. It unexpectedly strengthens her intention to end her life. To build a better adult system to respond to youth, open dialogue and honesty with a good support can be an excellent start to help young adults' development and understanding of themselves (Stephans, 2013).

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that Clay Jensen develops psychosocially. The psychosocial development embodies the ideas of his psychosocial issues

and how he deals with the psychosocial issues. The psychosocial issues that Clay Jensen experiences are anxiety, low self-esteem, inability to play the role as a friend, losing affiliation from parents, and preoccupation. As time passes by, Clay Jensen is able to deal with these issues by facing them with the supports from his friend, family, and his own strong will.

The psychosocial development of Clay is identified from the ways he deals with his psychosocial issues. The friendship of Clay and Tony increases their social interactions that reduces Clay's anxiety and balances his low self-esteem. Moreover, Clay plays his role of being a friend well as a part of social tasks by caring his friend (Skye) that is possibly in need of help. He cares for her by approaching her and starting to talk with her. In addition, he shifts affiliation from parents to his peer. The phenomenon of losing and shifting affiliation is in line with Bucher and Hinton's (2010) view of common psychosocial developmental characteristics in young adults. Furthermore, he is able to form self-

perceptions that make him a better person as the result of preoccupation that causes self-lead journey and critical self-examination.

Research about young adult literature is indeed broad and developing. Studies on *Thirteen Reasons Why* keep growing but there is rarely a study of it that reflects portrayals of suicide. The portrayals of suicidal young adult characters are possibly found in certain contemporary young adult literature. Since its Netflix Series is also popular and considered as a contemporary work (McClurg, 2017), analyzing the original form of the novel or the series is recommended to develop the body of knowledge of the work. In addition, the theory of cognitive and physical development of young adults by Bucher and Hinton (2010) can be applied as well in research of other young adult literary works. Thus, the psychosocial approach is also applicable to see certain patterns, ideas, or psychosocial phenomenon of young adult literary works.

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