A COMPARISON OF SUSIE SALMON AND HANNAH BAKER'S CHARACTERS AS THE VICTIMS OF RAPE

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Abstract: This research was aimed to analyze the main characters of two novels, which are Susie Salmon from *The Lovely Bones* novel (2002) by Alice Sebold, and Hannah Baker from *Thirteen Reasons Why* novel (2007) by Jay Asher. The purpose of the research was to found out the similarities and differences of both characters as the victims of rape through the characterization and plot development theories. The research used the qualitative method and content analysis. The results showed that both characters have similarities based on their characterization through the actions, speeches, and narration that showed them as smart girls. In the plot development, the similarities of both characters were found in the exposition. As the victims of rape, both characters reveal the reason for their death in exposition. In terms of differences, based on the characterization through their thought and action, Susie was showed as a confident and strong girl. While Hannah was showed as an introvert and weak girl in the plot development, the differences of both characters were found in the ending of the plot. As the victim of rape who did not survive, Susie finally let go of her regrets and chose to move on, while Hannah who can no longer bear the pain chose to end her life. The researcher suggests the next researcher to analyze the mental health of rape survivors and victims of bullying.
Keywords: characterization, character, novel

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menganalisis tentang karakter utama dari dua novel, yaitu Susie Salmon dari novel The Lovely Bones (2002) oleh Alice Sebold, dan Hannah Baker dari novel Thirteen Reasons Why (2007) oleh Jay Asher. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui persamaan dan perbedaan kedua tokoh sebagai korban pemerkosaan melalui teori penokohan dan alur pengembangan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan konten analisis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua karakter memiliki persamaan berdasarkan karakterisasi mereka melalui tindakan, ucapan dan narasi yang menunjukkan mereka sebagai gadis cerdik. Dalam alur pengembangan, persamaan kedua karakter ditemukan pada pengenalan cerita. Dalam hal perbedaan, berdasarkan karakterisasi melalui pikiran dan tindakan mereka, Susie ditunjukkan sebagai seorang gadis yang percaya diri, dan kuat. Sementara Hannah ditunjukkan sebagai seorang gadis yang introvert, lemah dan penyerah. Dalam alur pengembangan, perbedaan kedua karakter ditemukan pada akhir bagian dari cerita. Sebagai korban pemerkosaan yang tidak selamat, Susie akhirnya merelakan penyesalannya dan memilih untuk pergi dengan tenang, sementara Hannah yang sudah tidak sanggup menahan sakitnya memilih untuk mengakhiri hidupnya. Peneliti

menyarankan peneliti selanjutnya untuk menganalisis kesehatan mental penyintas pemerkosaan.
Kata Kunci*: Karakterisasi, Karakter, Novel*

A. INTRODUCTION

Characterization is part of literary work that portrayed and describes about how the character's mental behavior and the physical through speech, acts, and appearances (Djasi 2000). With the characterization, the audience or reader can get to know about the character in the story, about how their behavior and physical appearances show in the story. Therefore, aside from the character, characterization also takes a big role in the story. Susie Salmon from Sebold's *The Lovely Bones* is the main character of the story. She was a teenager who died after being raped and killed by her neighbor one day on her way home back from school. *The Lovely Bones* itself is a very unique novel. It is one of the best sellers and it is even adapted into a movie back in 2009. *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold was released in 2002. It covered a new kind of story that was not portrayed how the main character usually struggled throughout their life, but instead show how the main character trying to figure out and uncovered her murderer after her death. It is a very unique novel that the researcher wants to do the investigation toward its main character Susie Salmon, who experiences being raped before being murdered in the story.

To do the investigation in deeper analysis, the researcher decides to discuss Susie Salmon's character and compare it to another character named Hannah Baker from another novel titled *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Both characters are very appropriate to be compared one to another as both of them share the same four key points, teenager, rape, death, and their story after the death. Hannah Baker is the main character of the bestseller novel *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher which was released in 2007. It has also already been brought onto the screen as a television series in 2017. It tells a story about Hannah Baker, a high school student who had just died by ending her life, and how she tried to expose the reason why she was driven to suicide, by detailing it as the thirteen reasons in an audio diary which mailed to her friend two weeks after her death.
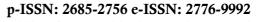
B. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research design

This research is using the qualitative research analyze the data. According to Kumar, the research is classified as qualitative research if the aim of the research is primarily to describe a situation, phenomenon, problem, or event without quantifying it (12). This research will use the qualitative method because the data are presented in the form of descriptions or words. The researcher will focus on the content analysis which relates to the situation and the events in the story experienced by the character. Therefore, this method is very appropriate to be used in conducting this research.

2. Research instrument

Arikunto (2000:134) revealed that an instrument in collecting data is a tool that is used by the researcher to help them in collecting data, in order to make it more

systematic and easier. According to Patton (2001, p.14) in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument. Hence, the instrument of qualitative research is the researcher herself. The researcher did the analysis by observing and collecting the data to compare both Susie Salmon and Hannah Baker's characters from the two novels The Lovely Bones and Thirteen Reasons Why.

3. Data and data source

Berg states that all data are qualitative, in some sense, because they refer to the essences of people, objects, and situations. Qualitative data can appear as words, and as still or moving images (qtd. in Miles and Huberman 9). The data of this research are the narration, dialogue, and speech from the characters of Susie Salmon in *The Lovely Bones* novel and Hannah Baker in *Thirteen Reasons Why* novel. Supposing comparing both characters, the researcher will use two sources of data. Those are *The Lovely Bones* and *Thirteen Reasons Why* novels.

4. Data collection

In this research, the researcher will use observation as the method in collecting the data. In order to collect the data, the researcher will conduct several steps. First, the researcher determines the topic and the object that will be analyzed. In this case, the topic is the comparison of Susan Salmon and Hannah Baker characters. Second, the researcher will read both novels which are The Lovely Bones and Thirteen Reasons Why, and focuses on the text in the novel several times. Then the researcher will take the important notes of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that indicated the character and characterization of Susie Salmon and Hannah Baker.

5. Data analysis

According to Wiersma (1991:85) stated data analysis in qualitative research is a process of categorization, description, and synthesis. After collecting the data, the data will be analyzed with three linked sub sub-processes of Miles and Huberman, "data reduction, data display, and conclusions: drawing/verification (429)".

6. Triangulation

The triangulation function is to improve the analysis and interpret the finding from various types of studies (Norman Denzin). It is proved to be an effective tool for reviewing and corroborating findings in the surveys, assessments, appraisals, and others that are essential in monitoring and evaluation (Rugg 13). Norman Denzin (Rugg, 14) identified there are four basic types of triangulations. They are data triangulation, methods triangulation, investigator triangulation, and theory triangulation.

7. Triangulation

This type of triangulation is the use of multiple theories or hypotheses when examining a situation of phenomenon. In this research, the researcher used data triangulation taken from the other relevant sources to get better results and validity. The purpose of this data triangulation in this research was to strength then the validity

of this present research which all its results that is supported by related data from relevant sources such as articles, and journal.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
1. The Similarities of Susie Salmon and Hannah Baker as the victim of Rape
a. Susie Salmon Character through the Characterization and Plot Development

In the story, Susie was a smart girl, she tried to reach out to people in the world of the living to help her expose the culprit and had her revenge. In order to reveal her rapist as well her murderer, Susie focused on her father through their bond by sending a signal. Thus, the similarities are found through Susie's actions in her speech. It can be seen from the data below when Susie tried to send a signal to her father through a flower.

"I can hear you, honey," he said to me, even though I wasn't talking. "What is it?" I focused very hard on the dead geranium in his line of vision. I thought if I could make it bloom he would have his answer. In my heaven geranium petals swirled in eddies up to my waist. On earth, nothing happened. (The Lovely Bones, chp. 4, p. 56)

Besides the action above, there is another action that proved her character as a smart girl. It was shown through Susie's actions, in her speech. Susie tried to reach out to people in the world of the living besides her father, Susie wanted to reach out to her friend as well, Ruth. Susie wanted to send a clue to Ruth regarding her death case to show Ruth that she wore a charm bracelet as an evidence and give it to her family. However, the charm bracelet was no longer in the cornfield.

> *"Try as I might, I could not point Ruth strongly enough to what no one had found: my silver charm bracelet. I thought it might help her. It lay exposed, waiting for a hand to reach out, a hand that would recognize it and think, Clue. But it was no longer in the cornfield"* (The Lovely Bones, chp. 3, p. 38)

Both stories shared the same kind of problem which tells about the characters that got sexual assault by the man around them at a young age. Both novels have similarities in the exposition where Susie and Hannah reveal the reason for their death. As for Susie was when she got raped and murdered by Mr. Harvey which explained in the data below.

> **I could not move. I could not get up.**
> When I would not — was it only that, only that I would not follow his suggestion? — he leaned to the side and felt, over his head, across the ledge where his razor and shaving cream sat. **He brought back a knife. Unsheated, it smiled at me, curving up in a grin.**
> He took the hat from my mouth.
> "Tell me you love me," he said.
> Gently, I did.
> **The end came anyway.** (The Lovely Bones, chp. 1, p. 15)

b.   Hanna Baker Character through the Characterization and Plot Development

As well as Susie, Hanna Baker is also a smart girl in the story. She also found her own way to have her revenge to on those people who were responsible of for her death. In addition, Hannah had prepared everything and sent packages to all of them. Packages of tape recorder and map. Aside from that, she also tried to reach out to her friend to help her ger get her revenge, Tony. Hannah also sent him the second set the second set of the tapes to keep an eye on them in case they were tempted to break the rules Hannah had given in the tapes.

Thus, the similarities found in the characterization through Hannah's speech in her action that showed Hannah as a smart girl in the story. It can be seen in the following data below.

> *In case you're tempted to break the rules,* **understand that I did make a copy of these tapes. Those copies will be released in a very public manner if this package doesn't make it through all of you.**
> *This was not a spur-of-moment decision.*
> *Do not take me for granted . . . again. (Thirteen Reasons Why, p. 9-10)*

As the explanation above regarding the plot development the similarities were found in the exposition. The similarities between these two characters were that they got sexual assault. The authors of each novel revealed the matter in the exposition. It was the beginning of everything that happened later, where the author revealed the reason of for the character's death. As well as Susie, Hannah also revealed the reason behind her death in the tape recorder. It is shown based on the following data below.

> *Hello, boys and girls. Hannah Baker here. Live and in stereo.*
> *I don't believe it.*
> ***No return engagements. No encore. And this time, absolutely no requests.***
> ***No, I can't believe it. Hannah Baker killed herself.***
> ***I hope you're ready, because I'm about to tell you the story of my life. More specifically, why my life ended. And if you're listening to these tapes, you're one of the reasons why.*** (Thirteen Reasons Why, chp. 1, p. 7)

2.   The Differences of Susie Salmon and Hannah Baker as the victim of Rape

Every author's stories always have different ways to portray and build the character in their stories. It makes every story have its own characteristics for the readers to attract their attention. The same with these two characters, Susie Salmon and Hanna Baker based on the novel The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold and Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher. Related to the explanations above regarding the similarities between these two characters, the researcher found that there are more differences based on both characterization and plot development.

a. **Susie Salmon Character Through the Characterization and Plot Development**

One of the differences that the researcher found based on the characterization were was through their actions. Susie Salmon was showed as a strong girl. She fought hard for herself. She defended herself to not let Mr. Harvey hurt her. She kept fighting him even though she started to lose herself in the struggle. It explained that Susie did not give up to where she can no longer move her body and have lost her consciousness in the struggle. It was shown through the following data below.

> *"I fought hard. I fought as hard as I could not to let Mr. Harvey hurt me, but my hard-as I-could was not enough, not even close, and I was soon lying down on the ground, in the ground, with him on top of me panting and sweating, having lost his glasses in the struggle"* (The Lovely Bones, chp. 1, p. 12)

Other differences that were found between the characters based on the characterization were through their thoughts. Susie was showed as a confident girl. In the story, it was showed from the way Susie would describe herself as a popular girl.

> *"When I got to Fairfax High I would insist on being called Suzanne. I would wear my hair feathered or up in a bun. I would have a body that the boys wanted and the girls envied, but I'd be so nice on top of it all that they would feel too guilty to do anything but worship me. I liked to think of myself — having reached a sort of queenly status — as protecting misfit kids in the cafeteria"* . (The Lovely Bones, chp. 2, p. 16)

b. **Hanna Baker Character Through the Characterization and Plot Development**

Unlike Susie who fought for her life, Hannah was the one who let go of herself. Due to her weak mental state. She was devastated with her life. Certainly, she was surprised and must have been shocked for her to had have been raped that way. Being raped in front of the people she knows and humiliated. Moreover, none of her friends who seen it came to help her, instead they purposely ignored her and pretend as if nothing happened. Hannah felt hopeless and trash. She gave up herself and let them have their way. Consequently, she did not even fight when she was being raped. She was desperate with her life that she let her friend raped her supposing supposed to let go of herself completely. It can be seen from data bellow.

> *Your whole hand was back. And when I didn't stop you, you slid your hand across my belly. Your thumb touched the bottom of my bra and your pinky touched the top of my underwear.* (Thirteen Reasons Why, p. 263)

She thought of giving up her life. She thought of a suicide. Although, it was only a passing though, the fact that Hannah thought of a suicide showed her as a pessimist supposing she could not overcome herself and confront her problem.

"After everything I've talked about on these tapes,
everything that occurred, I thought about suicide. Usually, it was
just a passing thought.
I wish I would die."
(Thirteen Reasons Why, p. 254)

In conclusion regarding the differences and the similarity of Susie Salmon and Hannah Baker as the victim of rape, the researcher found that based on the characterization both characters have different kind of character. Susie Salmon as a dynamic character at the beginning of the story. Susie was portrayed as a bright and innocent girl who changed supposing of big of events that occurred to her. The reason Susie had a dynamic character was that she changed. Susie's character who was innocent and bright girl changed into someone who filled with vengeance and rage that happened since Susie could not accept her death. While Hannah Baker as a round character in the story. Since Hannah was portrayed as the girl who had held lots of emotion. She showed a lot of emotion through the tape recorder that she prepared. She showed changes several times through the beginning to the end of the story.

D. CONCLUSION

In terms of similarities, there are two ways show the similarities between Susie Salmon and Hannah Baker as the victim of rape. Those are character & characterization theory by Griffith and plot development theory by Gustav Freytag. Based on the characterization, the similarities can be seen through Susie's actions and Hannah's action that shows them as smart girls. Whereas the plot development, the similarities can be seen in exposition. As the victims of rape, both Susie and Hannah reveal the reason of for their death in exposition.

As well as the similarities, there are two ways to show the differences of Susie Salmon and Hannah Baker as the victim of rape, which are characterization and plot development. Based on the characterization, the differences are found through their actions and thoughts that show Susie as a strong, confident, and optimistic girl and Hannah as an introvert, weak, and pessimistic girl. Regarding the plot development, the differences are found in the ending. As the victims of rape who did not survive the rape, Susie can finally let go of her regrets and desires to live. Where Hannah who survived the rape chose to give up her life.

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