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## Masculinity Portrayed In 13 Reasons Why

13 Reasons Why is an American teen drama television show that is based off a novel wrote in 2007 by Jay Asher. The show was made to spread awareness about suicide, rape and bullying. To summarize the first season, it revolves around seventeen year-old high school student Clay Jensen and his deceased friend Hannah Baker, who committed suicide after being bullied and being on the off end of gossip. She was also sexually assaulted by her fellow high school student. She received a lack of support from her friends and her school which triggered her suicide thoughts a lot more. Clay received a box of cassette tapes recorded by Hannah in the lead up to her suicide which was the thirteen reasons why she ended her life. Throughout the series we see him listen to them and investigate her suicide more.

### Clay Jensen

Clay Jensen is one of the many male characters in the tv show and each character portrays a different type of masculinity. Jensen is a good guy and friendly with all students. He nevertheless is shown with scars on his face for the entire 13 episodes which is the result of a bike accident and fistfights, he is also incapable of opening up to his parents as we see him hide in his room a lot. He shows his nice side with Hannah, often trying to comfort her when she let him or he was brave enough to speak to her. His nurturing and caring nature is what made him stand out against the rest of the schools bad boys and jocks.

### Tony Padilla

Tony (Hannah's male friend) show a masculinity that is nurturing and caring, just like Clay. He supports Hannah and helps her still even after she dies by making sure her tapes are spread around to everyone she wanted. We don't see much of him but when we do he often looking out for Clay or taking care of his family. As tony was gay and in a relationship with Ryan. Maybe that's why his character has a caring and naturing persona, as he is portrayed to be both feminine and masculine. Either way he has a caring thoughtful masculinity.

### Justin Foley

Justin took Hannah on a date and turned a harmless moment into the beginning of the end for Hannah. She was going down a slide in a playground and Justin took a photograph of her doing this. Then in result the photo shows Hannah's skirt blowing up and her underwear is on show. Justin shows his close friends the photo but regrets it after they taunt and pressure him into spreading it around the school. He tries to say no but Bryce, the show's 'bad boys', sports stars and popular students, sends it anyway. Justin laughs it off as he does not want to come across as caring for Hannah. This happens again when Bryce sexually assaults Justin's girlfriend. Justin is aware of what he's doing but doesn't stop him in fear of ruining his reputation. He does show his anger by crying and banging at the door - 'that's my girlfriend bro', that's all he says in hope of stopping him but the 'bro' is all Bryce hears. Bro-code is what makes Justin's masculinity a toxic one. He knows what he's doing is wrong but allows it to happen so he doesn't come across as weak or caring.

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## Bryce Walker

Bryce is shown offering support to his friends for example, by letting one of them live at his house for many days on end. However, Bryce is a prime example of the embodiment of toxic masculinity. His identity is rooted in his hyper masculine behavior and sporty persona leading him to become a “toxic jock,” which roots his identity in sports causing him to become hyper-masculine in an unhealthy way. Bryce was a big part of gender roles in terms of the series as he has shown a lot of masculinity that are more nuanced than those usually shown on television, especially in it being a targeted teenager show. We see him portray the ‘big jock’ stereotype as he would beat many people in school but no one would stick up for themselves as he had so much power over other individuals. It was one of the reasons he could do and say whatever he wanted, for example slut shaming Hannah Baker. Bryce was often involved in violence but with him being the popular kid in school he never lost, just like when he was sexually assaulting females and slut shaming, even for compulsively lying. In one instance, Clay and Alex are being tormented and pressured by Bryce and the other jocks of the school into drinking large bottles of beer. The jocks taunt them by calling them “sissys,” suggesting if they don’t drink the beer they are feminine and weak. In other instances the boys are shown playing video games referring to each other as “bitches.” This shows the unhealthy expectations of men to partake in “manly” activities for fear of being taunted for being feminine. Additionally, many of the instances of bullying based on sexism show a pack of boys taunting Hannah. This reflects the pack mentality and the need to fit into the societal expectations of boys to shame women.

## Zach Dempsey

Zach is a bittersweet character in the show. A softie on the inside but again suffers with toxic masculinity as he tries to fit in by hurting girls. Zach has always been depicted as the relatively good guy in a sea of popular, athletic bullies — but one who too easily gives in to peer pressure. In Season 1, he was generally a supporting role as one of the jocks in Bryce and Justin’s gang, but he was also a more sensitive one. Throughout the season, he’s shown as being generally kind and even having a crush of sorts on Hannah, of which he’s teased about by his friends. However, after being turned down by Hannah, he shows off a petty side, stealing her notes, as revealed on one of Hannah’s tapes, and seemingly throwing away her devastatingly honest letter to him. Thankfully he comes back in season 2 and stands against Bryce, winning him back his nice guy persona. However, he is still a complex character and struggles with his masculinity, worrying about being too feminine or too mean.

All in all, 13 Reasons Why only shows teenagers doing exactly what they’ve been taught to do. It tells us that the gender stereotypes they’re being offered remain extremely restrictive and damaging to everyone. That dominant masculinities still play a role in how young men interact with their peers. That girls are expected to be desirable and attractive, yet not play an active role in their own sexuality. That those who do not comply with these gender rules will be severely punished. The whole group of jocks acted the same towards girls, using and abusing them to suit their needs, doing drugs and drinking in fear of being called a ‘sissy’ and fighting and bullying others who didn’t agree with them, just to show their power. This is the typical Jock stereotype and how men are represented. 13 Reasons Why shows a lot of masculinity issues and the good and bad side of men, all of which I’ve examined.