

**MALE HOMOSOCIALITY PERFORMED BY THE MAIN  
MALE CHARACTERS IN HANYA YANAGIHARA'S *A LITTLE  
LIFE***

**THESIS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**  
**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK**  
**IBRAHIM MALANG**

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LIFE***

**THESIS**

Presented to  
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

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2021**

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I state that the thesis entitled “**Male Homosociality Performed by the Main Male Characters in Hanya Yanagihara’s *A Little Life***” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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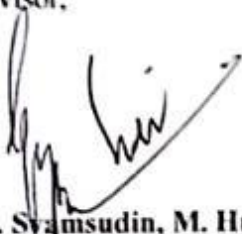
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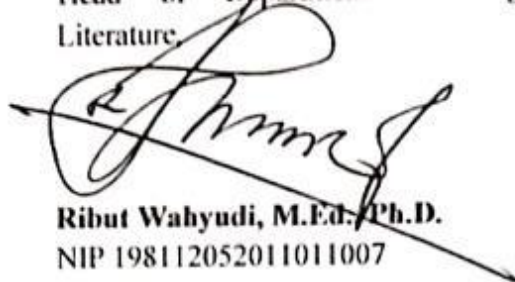
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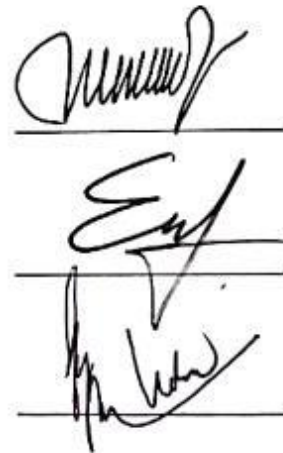
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## MOTTO

*“...the only trick of friendship, I think, is to find people who are better than you are—not smarter, not cooler, but kinder, and more generous, and more forgiving—and then to appreciate them for what they can teach you, and to try and listen to them when they tell you something about yourself, no matter how bad—or good—it might be, and to trust them, which is the hardest thing of all. But the best, as well.”*

-Hanya Yanagihara-

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to myself, my parents, Slamet Pramono and Nurul Farichah, and also my little sister, Naila Alfi Najwa Alfaiza.

We have come a long way as a small team, Fam!

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8. Finally, I want to self-pat myself for always choosing not to give up on everything; for always choosing to get up, make some coffee and start writing a paragraph or two. One quest has been accomplished, Self! You have come a long way. You have done great. Thank you.

I do realize that I might make mistakes and this research might have weakness in many ways. On that account, criticisms, feedbacks and suggestions are gratefully welcome for further improvement of this thesis and the future research on this field. Hopefully, this study can bring a light and give new insights for future researchers.

Malang, June 2021



Salsabila Aisyi Rasikhah

## ABSTRACT

**Rasikhah, Salsabila Aisyi.** 2021. *Male Homosociality Performed by the Main Male Characters in Hanya Yanagihara's "A Little Life"*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Dr. Syamsudin, M. Hum.

**Keywords:** Male Homosociality, Vertical Homosociality, Horizontal Homosociality, Main Characters

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Gender relations is established from the necessity to achieve hegemonic masculinity which preserves practices that exert men's dominance over women and other marginalized gender. These practices oftentimes occur in the male vertical homosocial circles whose members embody and perform hegemonic masculinity. However, male horizontal homosocial circles which is based on nonhegemonic and inclusive masculine embodiment are possible to construct in the society.

This present study aims to elaborate the vertical and horizontal homosociality represented in the friendship of main male characters: Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm, in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life*. The development and embodiment of hegemonic as well as nonhegemonic masculinity in their personal values influence how they befriend and interact each other.

This study is a literary criticism discussing and highlighting the gendered social relationship in a literary work observed from gender studies approach. The data were collected from a novel entitled *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara. The collected data were analyzed using the redefined theory of homosociality by Hammarén and Johansson (2014).

The results of the study show that the friendship of Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm portray two out of four characteristics of vertical homosociality: emotional detachment and homophobia. Meanwhile, horizontal homosociality is portrayed through four characteristics: intimacy, gender equality, nonhomophobia, and noncompetitiveness. Further, there are some character developments and changes in some of the characters' behaviors which make the development of horizontal homosociality is eventually more dominant. Therefore, their friendship is empowered to develop into more nonhegemonic and inclusive homosociality.

## ABSTRAK

**Rasikhah, Salsabila Aisyi.** 2021. *Homososialitas Pria yang Digambarkan oleh Karakter Utama Pria di "A Little Life" Karya Hanya Yanagihara*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Dosen Pembimbing: Dr. Syamsudin, M.Hum.

**Kata kunci:** Homososialitas Pria, Homososialitas Horizontal, Maskulinitas Nonhegemonik, Karakter Utama

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Relasi gender dibangun dari kebutuhan untuk mencapai maskulinitas hegemonik yang mempertahankan praktik dominasi pria atas wanita dan gender marginal lainnya. Praktik-praktik ini seringkali terjadi di dalam lingkaran homososial pria yang vertikal dan anggotanya menganut serta melakukan maskulinitas hegemonik. Namun, lingkaran homososial horizontal yang berdasarkan pada penjawantahan maskulinitas nonhegemonik dianggap mungkin untuk dibangun dan terwujud di dalam masyarakat.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguraikan homososialitas yang vertikal dan horizontal dalam persahabatan para karakter utama pria: Jude, Willem, JB, dan Malcolm, dalam novel *A Little Life* karya Hanya Yanagihara. Perkembangan dan perwujudan maskulinitas hegemonik dan nonhegemonik di dalam nilai-nilai personal mereka memengaruhi bagaimana mereka berteman dan berinteraksi dengan satu sama lain.

Penelitian ini merupakan kritik sastra yang membahas dan menyorot hubungan sosial gender dalam sebuah karya sastra, ditinjau dari pendekatan studi gender. Data diperoleh dari novel yang berjudul *A Little Life* karya Hanya Yanagihara. Data yang diperoleh lalu dianalisis menggunakan teori homososialitas milik Hammarén and Johansson (2014).

Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa persahabatan antara Jude, Willem, JB, dan Malcolm menggambarkan dua dari empat karakteristik homososialitas vertikal: tidak terikat secara emosional dan homofobia. Sementara itu, homososialitas horizontal digambarkan lewat empat karakteristik: kedekatan fisik dan emosi, kesetaraan gender, hubungan yang nonhomofobik, serta hubungan yang tidak berlandaskan kompetisi. Terdapat pengembangan karakter dan perubahan dalam sikap mereka yang membuat perkembangan homososialitas horizontal lebih dominan. Maka dari itu, persahabatan mereka dimungkinkan berkembang menjadi homososialitas yang lebih nonhegemonik dan inklusif.

## المستخلص

راسخة، سلسبيلا عيشي. ٢٠٢١. الممارسات المثلية الأفقية للشخصية الذكورية الرئيسية في "حياة صغيرة" بقلم هانيا ياناغيهارا. البحث الجامعي. قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وأدبها كلية العلوم الإنسانية جامعة مولانا ملك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج.

المشرف: الدكتور، شمس الدين، الماجستير

الكلمات الرئيسية: المثلية الذكورية، المثلية الاجتماعية العمودية، الشذوذ الأفقي، الشخصيات الرئيسية

تُبنى العلاقات بين الجنسين من الحاجة إلى تحقيق الذكورة المهيمنة التي تحافظ على ممارسة سيطرة الرجال على النساء والأجناس المهمشة الأخرى. تحدث هذه الممارسات غالبًا في دائرة ذكورية مثلية عمودية ويلتزم أعضاؤها بالذكورة المهيمنة ويمارسونها. ومع ذلك، فإن الدائرة المثلية الأفقية القائمة على تجسيد الذكورة غير المهيمنة تعتبر من الممكن بناؤها وظهورها في المجتمع. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى وصف المثلية الاجتماعية الرأسية والأفقية في صداقات الشخصيات الذكورية الرئيسية: جود (Jude) وويليم (Willem) وجي بي (JB) ومالكولم (Malcolm)، في رواية حياة صغيرة (Little Life) لهانيا ياناغيهارا (Hanya Yanagihara). إن تطور ومظهر الرجولة المهيمنة وغير المهيمنة في قيمهم الشخصية يؤثران على كيفية تكوين الصداقات والتفاعل مع بعضهم البعض.

هذا البحث نقد أدبي يناقش ويسلط الضوء على العلاقات الاجتماعية بين الجنسين في العمل الأدبي، من حيث منهج دراسة النوع الاجتماعي. تم الحصول على البيانات من رواية بعنوان حياة صغيرة (Little Life) لهانيا ياناغيهارا (Hanya Yanagihara). ثم تم تحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها باستخدام نظرية هامارين (Hammaren) ويوهانسون (Johansson) عن المثلية الاجتماعية (٢٠١٤).

تشير نتائج هذه الدراسة إلى أن الصداقة بين جود (Jude) وويليم (Willem) وجي بي (JB)

ومالكولم (Malcolm) تصف اثنين من الخصائص الأربع للمثلية الاجتماعية العمودية: الانفصال

العاطفي ورهاب المثلية. وفي الوقت نفسه، يتم وصف المثلية الاجتماعية الأفقية من خلال أربع خصائص: التقارب الجسدي والعاطفي، والمساواة بين الجنسين، والعلاقات غير المعادية للمثليين، والعلاقات التي لا تقوم على المنافسة. هناك تطور في الشخصية وتغيرات في مواقفهم تجعل تطور المثلية الاجتماعية الأفقية أكثر هيمنة. لذلك، من الممكن أن تتطور صداقتهم إلى مثلية اجتماعية أكثر شمولية وغير مهيمنة.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

The discussion of gendered social relationship in society, particularly among feminist and gender theorist, has stepped up the new chapter in the recent decades, as most of the times, the gendered sociality conveys gender relations in its practices so that the elaboration of this situation is highly needed. To delve deeper gender equality in the sociality, it is essential to understand that the nature of gender relations brings about asymmetries prevailed between men and women as well as among men and among women (Connell, 1987, 1992).

According to Connell (1987; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), the framework of gender relations is shaped from hegemonic masculinity which maintains practices that establish men's dominance over women and is constructed in connection with women and subordinate masculinities. In the attempt to maintain hegemonic masculinity, conforming the existing gender order, values and behaviors which do not correspond to and challenge hegemonic masculinity are suppressed and marginalized; their legitimations are denied in the terms of *masculine*. As an instance, the values and behaviors of male homosexuality oppose the values of hegemonic masculinity and it makes homosexual masculinity is suppressed, as it is deemed as 'effeminate' (Connell, 1992).



The maintenance of hegemonic masculinity thus can be examined in the male homosocial practices. Speaking about homosociality, this theory was popularized by postmodern and poststructuralist feminist theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick which is used to indicate the nonsexual attractions among same-sex members leading to interactions (Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Sedgwick, 1985). Homosociality oftentimes promotes clear separation between men and women through exclusion and segregation in society; between hegemonic and nonhegemonic masculinities by way of segregation in the social groups (Bird, 1996). Moreover, homosocial practices, which is mostly held among heterosexual men, give the contribution to the preservation of hegemonic masculinity norms by defending values associated with identities that qualify hegemonic ideals while restraining and suppressing values associated with nonhegemonic masculinity identities (Bird, 1996).

However, such view towards this concept is considered overexploited and excessively generalized by some researchers, whereas men do not always imply hegemonic masculinity in their every bond with each other and instead embraces their nonhegemonic masculinity values (Anderson, 2009). There are many relationships among men which is more emotional and supportive nowadays and their goals are to improve and maintain their friendships which is underlain by emotional and caring bonds, instead of to gain and upgrade their status in masculine social hierarchies (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014; Thurnell-Read, 2012). Therefore, some studies have conducted to bring an advanced understanding and exploration of male homosociality concept to the discussion.

The most well-studied discussion is Hammarén and Johansson's study (2014) which discusses further about homosociality and its development in today's male social relationship with other males. The discussion of homosociality in this study brings about the introduction and understanding of the restructured concept of male homosociality: there can be two kinds of homosociality practices developed in society nowadays, namely vertical homosociality, which is practiced to strengthen the power and maintain hegemony, and also horizontal homosociality, which is practiced to create an intimacy and inclusive, emotional relationship, such as friendship. The latter is told to be today's way to restructure the power relation in male homosociality practices (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014).

In Sedgwick's book *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, she explains her theory of homosociality and relates it to some English literary works, and because of this, the need to apply the redefined version of homosociality theory proposed by Hammarén and Johansson to analyze literary works is inevitable, since the continuity and development of this theory application in literary works are still so much needed.

Regarding that expectancy, Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life*, therefore, is the apt work to be applied with the redefined theory. This novel tells about four roommates, Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm that are best friends. The intertwined journey of their decades of friendship as well as their life stories become the backbone of the story. Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm meet when they are in the freshmen year and become a roommate in the campus dormitory building called Hood and so their friends and acquaintances in the college call them 'Boys in the

Hood' (Yanagihara, 2015). Relating this to male homosociality, this novel accentuates how these men's friendship is purely built on the necessity of supporting and helping to cope with their difficulties in life. Furthermore, this work will be an adequate data to explain the homosociality and its complex practices through literary criticism. Therefore, the discussion of male homosociality in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* is important, as it will give the two-sided, balance portrayal of male homosociality using the theory of homosociality by Hammarén and Johansson (2014). This theory will be applied to the literary work and prove that homosociality practices among male characters in the literary works do not always merely imply the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity and agenda of perpetuating patriarchal values, but also their means to build an intimacy and other healthier and more supportive bonds.

The topic of homosociality have been discussed and related to literary works in the last fifteen years with various extent. Those researchers focused on the connections between postcolonial theory and queer theory through love triangular structure and men rivalry in postcolonial novels (Kramer, 2008), how homosociality concept intersects with disability in a popular media, such as TV shows (Cherney & Lindemann, 2014), and the homotextuality including homosociality, homosexuality and homoeroticism in a novel trilogy (Harmi, 2017). Meanwhile, there are a study reviewed the nonstereotypical masculinity in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* using Connell's hierarchies of masculinity theory (Edvinsson, 2019).

The discussions of this theory related to literary works have been conducted using Sedgwick's theory of homosociality with the multifaceted range of topics. However, there is a gap which cannot be filled yet by those researches, that is the different perspective in the concept of homosociality which is possibly observed using Hammaren and Johansson's theory of homosociality. By using the theory of homosociality proposed by Hammaren and Johansson, not only the same-sex relationship based on the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity, but also the relationship formed through the development of nonhegemonic masculinity will be adequately portrayed in *A Little Life*. Therefore, the analysis of male homosociality from the theory of homosociality by Hammarén and Johansson in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* might fill the gap and differentiate this research with the previous studies.

### **B. Problems of the Study**

In order to obtain a thorough and profound discussion, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How is vertical homosociality performed through the friendship of the main characters in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life*?
2. How is horizontal homosociality performed through the friendship of the main characters in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life*?

### **C. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

1. Describe and elaborate the portrayal of vertical homosociality in the friendship of the main characters: Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm, in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life*.
2. Describe and elaborate the portrayal of horizontal homosociality in the friendship of the main characters: Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm, in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life*.

#### **D. Scope and Limitation**

This study focuses on the friendship of Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm and how the dynamic of their relationship occurs so that the data are collected merely from relevant chapters. Further, this study limits its problem on the portrayal of vertical and horizontal homosociality in their friendship by applying Hammarén and Johansson's homosociality theory. In addition, this study will not discuss further how the childhood trauma experienced by Jude, one of the main characters, affects his masculinity and sexuality, because the writer wants to focus on the bonds, attractions and relationship among the male main characters. The discussion of how childhood sexual abuse of the main character, Jude, affects his sexuality and masculinity within the book may be potentially done in any further research.

#### **E. Significance of the Study**

During the process of searching for the supporting literature for this research, the researcher found a little scientific research in the form of journal article, book or study which thoroughly discuss Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life*

from the aspect of gendered human social relationship. The discussions of this book are merely conducted in the form of informal reviews and can hardly be cited scientifically. Therefore, the researcher conducts this study to gain some benefits: practically and theoretically. Theoretically, this study is expected to give the society a comprehensive understanding of homosociality in general and male homosociality specifically in its relation to hegemonic masculinity. Also, this study is practically expected to enrich the scientific resource of gender studies for the next researchers.

#### **F. Definition of Key Terms**

**Homosociality:** the same-sex attractions and social bonds (Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Sedgwick, 1985).

**Vertical homosociality:** a means to reinforce power and establish close bonds between men to preserve hegemony (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014).

**Horizontal homosociality:** the term used to show more inclusive same-sex relations which are more intimate and non-profitable (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014).

**Masculinity:** a set of action which males do repeatedly in interaction with others. Male's acts create their masculinity. It is not a set of codes and rituals of manhood which are considered to be appropriate for men, instead the way in which males construct category 'men' (Butler, 1997; Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009).

**Hegemonic masculinity:** the culturally dominant type of masculinity which legitimates unequal gender relations. (Connell, 1987; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2019).

**Inclusive masculinity:** masculinity which includes the marginalized type of masculinity, hence it conveys a declining amount of cultural homophobia and enables the type of masculinity that is more inclusive and emotive (Anderson, 2009).

### **G. Previous Studies**

Several previous studies on Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* as the data or on homosociality as the theoretical framework with a variety of discussions have been conducted. Therefore, the researcher took three previous studies with the same topic to support this research. Firstly, Beth Kramer in 2008 has analyzed masculinity and homosocial desire using in two different novels about love triangle by two different authors, *A Man of the People* by Chinua Achebe and *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene. This study aims to intersect Sedgwick's homosociality theory with postcolonial theory to know how a love triangle can both strengthen and replace colonialization. Kramer (2008) points out how rivalry in a love triangle between two men over a female object can be directed into another matter, that is homosocial desire between the male subjects. The rivalry between two subjects which starts with the deep interest with the object turn into homosocial desire: the two subjects unconsciously put interest to each other and the rivalry turns into a battle of self-proclaimed power over another bigger matters to prove the one's self is better than the other; to maintain the masculine image which is resulted from the patriarchal values and control in society (Kramer, 2008).

Moreover, Kramer (2008) also argues that Greene's and Achebe's works confront the British Empire's weakening imperialist impression in the twentieth century using gendered models of desire. This study concludes that gender and political power are somehow tied together. Also, the love triangle has the "double nature", both preserving and critiquing power structures and it makes the attempt to lighten the complexity of colonial situation easy to locate.

Secondly, a study conducted by James Cherney and Kurt Lindemann in 2014 discusses the portrayal of masculinity, homosociality and disability in the first season of TV show *Friday Night Lights* which is acclaimed to be complex and problematic. Using Sedgwick's homosociality theory, this study is conducted by reading the situation gone through by the main character, Jason Street, as a queer narrative. His disability changes his position in the homoerotic love triangle which goes around him, Lyla Garrity, his girlfriend and Tim Riggins which is his best friend who is secretly in love with Lyla. Because of the secret affair between Lyla and Tim which is behind Jason's back when he becomes quadriplegic, Tim and Lyla contend for Jason's attention after he know that and the conventional gender roles are destabilized in the triangle. The heterosexual relationship between Jason and Lyla is desexualized and the homosocial and homoerotic situation between Jason and Tim happen more intensely.

To make the analysis more profound and comprehensive, another homoerotic triads performed by the characters are also analyzed. Furthermore, the result shows that, as sport is always defined with ableism and heterosexism, *Friday Night Lights* counters the convention of disposing male athletes being



able-bodied. However, it also disguises homosociality and strengthen the heteronormative systems which authorize a narrow way of reading male-male relations in mediated portrayal of sport.

The third study is a thesis conducted by Rahmat Satria Harmi in 2017 which discuss the homotextuality in Rainbow Trilogy: *Rainbow Boys*, *Rainbow High* and *Rainbow Road*, by Alex Sanchez. This thesis covers the discussion of homosexuality, homoeroticism and homosociality in literary works which is written by gay authors which show their orientation in their texts. This thesis, therefore, uses many theories to elaborate those topics covered, they are Foucault's, Kinsley's and Rubin's theory of homosexuality, Edward's, Sedgwick's and Gonzales-Casanovas' theory of homosociality and homoeroticism, and lastly Stockinger's theory of homotextuality. This thesis also uses the research elaboration on homotextuality by Heathcote and Nelson to help to achieve detail image of narrative inversion and textual change which is shown on homotextuality. For explaining the focalization image in the literary works, Harmi (2017) uses the theory of focalization proposed by Genette. Further, the objectives of this thesis are to describe the presentation of homosexuality, homoeroticism and homosociality issues in literary works and also to elaborate the presentation of homotextuality writing through the issues of homosexuality, homoeroticism and homosociality in literary works (Harmi, 2017). Since its various topics of discussion, this research unfortunately does not discuss homosociality in an adequate amount.

Meanwhile, the analysis conducted on Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* is a dissertation by Edvinsson in 2019 which discuss the nonstereotypical masculinity of the main characters in the novel. Edvinsson (2019) uses the basis of gender stereotypes and Raewyn Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity to analyze the masculinity of Yanagihara's male characters in *A Little Life*. It is found that the characters in Yanagihara's novel do not fit into the practices of hegemonic masculinity, as their masculinity is portrayed and combined with the so-called effeminacy and feminine traits, and therefore they are considered defying the typical gender roles the society legitimizes. Yanagihara's male characters tend to have a wide range of characterization which makes them carry the complex view of masculinity which does not suit the idea of hegemonic masculinity. The findings also show that hegemonic masculinity on men can be constantly changing over time. In conclusion, this analysis has indicated that the male characters in Yanagihara's *A Little Life* have the mixture of masculinity and femininity with some implying the stronger masculinity side and the other carrying the stronger femininity side in them (Edvinsson, 2019).

From the previous data above, it is pointed out that there is an aspect which differentiates this study with the previous ones: the first three studies use Sedgwick's theory of homosociality which only focuses on and emphasizes men's bonds which imply the continuation of hegemonic masculinity, such as love triangle and power seizure, while this study applies Hammaren and Johansson's homosociality theory which divides homosociality into two categories: vertical homosociality, which underscores the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity in

specifically men's nonsexual relationships with each other, and horizontal homosociality, which highlights the possibility of nonhegemonic masculinity development in the men's same-sex nonsexual relationship. Therefore, this study is conducted to fill the gap by applying the restructured concept of homosociality theory by Hammarén and Johansson to view the two sides or approach of men's same-sex nonsexual bonds in Hanya Yangihara's *A Little Life*.

## **H. Research Method**

### **1. Research Design**

This research is a literary criticism with gender studies approach. This study is presented to describe and elaborate the data from Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* and to obtain the understanding of male homosociality. This research applies gender studies approach, which is a field of study that focuses on gender identity and gendered representation. This approach covers the discussion of women's studies and feminism, men and masculinity studies and also queer studies (Woodward & Woodward, 2015). This approach thus helps to elaborate the gendered human relationship among the male main characters in the novel. This research then uses the theory of homosociality restructured by Hammarén and Johansson (2014) to describe the as well as horizontal approach of homosociality in the novel.

### **2. Data and Data Sources**

This research collects the data from a literary work entitled *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara. The novel used in this research is the first edition of the US version with 720 pages which was published in 2015 by Doubleday, New York,

United States. The words, phrases and sentences in this novel becomes the data of this research.

### **3. Data Collection**

The researcher did four steps to collect the data:

- a. Reading the novel *A Little Life* and attempting to apprehend the work by recognizing the intrinsic elements of the novel. The first reading generates the detection of the different patterns and dynamics of male homosociality;
- b. Reading the second time to find the possible data, i.e., the homosociality and the horizontal homosociality enacted by the male main characters;
- c. Classifying the portrayal based on the characteristics of vertical homosociality.
- d. Classifying the portrayal based on the characteristics of horizontal homosociality.

### **4. Data Analysis**

The collected data are analyzed by conducting the following steps:

- a. Describing collected relevant data that have been classified into two categories of homosociality: the homosociality, which is based on hegemonic masculinity, and the horizontal homosociality, which is based on nonhegemonic/inclusive masculinity;

- b. Elaborating the data with Hammarén and Johansson's theory of homosociality to display the male same-sex relationship in terms of hegemonic masculinity;
- c. Elaborating the data with Hammarén and Johansson's theory of homosociality to display the male same-sex relationship in terms of nonhegemonic/inclusive masculinity;
- d. Drawing conclusion to summarize the results of analysis.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **A. Gender Studies**

Gender studies appear as a field of study which focuses on and discuss gender identity and gendered representation. As it talks about gender and how it is perceived in society, gender studies then cover women, men and masculinity as well as queer studies as the branches of it (Woodward & Woodward, 2015). The cope of discussion in gender studies inquires the power issues which has been designated by patriarchal assumptions about gender and gender roles, the challenge on the concept of gender as either feminine and masculine, the relationship between sex and gender as well as the relationship between gender and sexuality (Sedgwick, 1985).

Gender studies firstly emerged fundamentally by virtue of the feminist movement and always pertain to it. The first feminist movement has emerged in 1960s as the response of the toxic system of patriarchy. In its development processes, the postmodern and poststructuralist feminist scholarship in 1980s and 1990s has been a means to examine and denaturalize the traditional concept of gender in general (Brown & Ismail, 2019). Those examination and denaturalization therefore had resulted some alternative theories, such as the Butler's theory (1997) about the production of gender through performativity and discourse, the theory of homosociality proposed by Sedgwick (1985) and female masculinity theory by Halberstam (1998). Gender studies, however, had been

quite suspicious with the existence of men and masculinity studies, as this field was viewed as the opposition of women studies. Men and masculinity studies is eventually included as a field of critical inquiry only in the last decade (Haywood et al., 2017). Kimmel (2002) then suggests that masculinity studies has the potential to become the support system of feminist approaches.

Therefore, talking about men and masculinity studies which are evidently more complex than merely the notion of men being the oppressor of women, gender studies have become the gate to discuss more about it and its complexity. Gender studies tend to question the concept of traditional heterosexual men as well as their privilege and dominance which presumably embody a lot of complexity viewed from many aspects. Those privilege and dominance which are compiled in the patriarchal system are often times also considered as the prison for certain groups in their own community, that is men which is conceived as not carrying enough the values to be called 'men' (Haywood et al., 2017). The rise of gender studies, thus, ignites the emergence of a new focus on the formation of masculinity as a gender (Zosuls et al., 2011).

### **B. Hegemonic Masculinity**

Hegemonic masculinity is basically and conceptually viewed as the legitimation of unequal gender relations; the ways and reasons of men maintaining dominant social roles over women and subordinated men who do not carry the expected traits of being a man (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2019). The discussion of gender relations, moreover, results in

and structures the new concept through power inequalities in relation to hegemonic masculinity, such as emphasized femininity and hierarchies of masculinities which consists of the hegemonic masculinity itself and the other four nonhegemonic masculinities (Messerschmidt, 2019). The term itself is derived from the term 'hegemony' which the concept is expanded by Antonio Gramsci to refer to the domination of a diverse society in culture of which the ruling class mastermind the culture so that the widely-accepted culture would be everything which comes from ruling-class worldview (Jewkes et al., 2015).

There are some confusions towards the concept of hegemonic masculinity found in many studies related to masculinity studies, such as the query of who and what kind of man actually is entitled to hegemonic masculinity, the unnecessary focus of who is the hegemonically masculine man, and the inconsistencies of masculinities scholars in defining and explaining the concept of hegemonic masculinity. This situation therefore force Connell, as the originator of the concept, and Messerschmidt (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2019) to reemphasize and straighten out the spreading confusions among gender studies scholars. Connell and Messerschmidt point out the confusion of this concept in the masculinity studies, especially for the question of who the bearer of hegemonic masculinity is. They then in their newest study reemphasize that the collective agents of hegemonic masculinity are of course all participator which justify an unequal gender relation. Moreover, some masculinity studies scholars tend to blur the difference between hegemonic masculinity and the dominant form of masculinity which Connell wants to differ and point out, as both in fact cannot



be equated (Beasley, 2008; Flood, 2008). Connell and Messerschmidt once again have to reassert that the dominant form of masculinity does not always legitimate unequal gender relationships, even though the agents frequently shows their ownership of power position (Messerschmidt, 2019).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is applied to many studies as well as theories and considered helping them to draw the line on the discussion of men's domination over women and other gender. One of those studies is Eve Sedgwick's theory of homosociality which refers to the same-sex social bond which is occasionally surrounded by the notion of gender relation. The discussion of hegemonic masculinity on homosociality theory would mainly help the emphases of nonsexual male social bonds which is perceived as nonintimate bonds and based on power maintenance (Bird, 1996).

### **C. Inclusive Masculinity**

Regarding the discussion of hegemonic masculinity which legitimates and focuses on the preservation of men's dominance over women and marginalized gender among gender theorists, there are also, however, a body of literature which convey a rapid, pervasive decreasing of cultural homophobia and an expansion of social landscape for men deeming more inclusive and emotive masculine identities (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012). Anderson (2009, p. 4) states that men are "rapidly running from the hegemonic type of masculinity that scholars have been describing for the past 25 years." He also argues that men, along with

the shift in their masculine identities, also engage in more affectionate, emotional and physical relations with other men.

Inclusive masculinity is thus perceived as a masculinity which includes the marginalized type of masculinity, or nonhegemonic masculinity. It is now can be examined in the major social institutions which oftentimes maintain the presence of hegemonic masculinity, such as sport, education and also social media. Men in these institutions have changed their perspective from conservative tropes of masculinity to more progressive ones and are less affected by society's assessment on their sexuality and gender traits (Anderson, 2014; Savin-Williams, 2005). Anderson (2009, p. 97) thus argues that the change of these men's perspective has empowered them to accept feminine, inclusive and intimate behaviors.

*In a culture of diminished homophobia, boys and men will be free to express emotional intimacy and physical expressions of that relationship with one another. Accordingly, this culture permits an even greater expansion of acceptable heteromale behaviours, which results in a further blurring of masculine and feminine behaviours and terrains. The differences between masculinity and femininity, men and women, gay and straight, will be harder to distinguish, and masculinity will no longer serve as the primary method of stratifying men.*

These changing behaviors of masculinities in twenty-first century result in the possibility and ability of men to have intimate social relations, beside casual friends (McCormack, 2012). The downturn of cultural homophobia has made men to declare their abandonment to guard their gendered behaviors. Men now can still befriend and bond with other men over shopping and dining together, beside through sports, drinking, and exercising. They can therefore form deep emotional relationships through their every activity based on emotional exposure with one

another. Though there are several studies which found the struggle of male friendships due to emotional restraint, hierarchies, and cultural homophobia, many studies have now suggested that the millennial generation adopts and supports a more inclusive and cohesive culture (McCormack, 2012; Thurnell-Read, 2012). The research findings above therefore can be the supporting literature to explore the new form of homosociality which has the potential ability to slowly process the rearticulation of hegemony.

#### **D. Introduction to the Theory of Homosociality**

Though the theory of homosociality was popularized in 1985 by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in her book *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Jane Lipman-Blumen was the one who firstly defined the term ‘homosocial’ in her study “Toward a Homosocial Theory of Sex Roles: An Explanation of the Sex Segregation of Social Institutions” in 1976. Lipman-Blumen discusses the segregated social context and defines the term ‘homosocial’ as the preference for the companionship of the same sex. She points that ‘homosocial’ mostly revolves around men and that the homosocial view of sex roles has the fundamental premises which shows that “men are attracted to, stimulated by, and interested in other men” (Lipman-Blumen, 1976, p. 16). This premises arise in response to the pragmatic recognition that males control nearly all of the resources, from economics, politics, education, occupation, law and social, and this situation makes men associate with and seek help from other men (Lipman-Blumen, 1976).

At this point, men indeed can and often attempt to obtain satisfaction for most of their necessity from other men, while women's position here is both as the resource seekers from men and the resource itself. Women is forced to search for help and protection from men, but at the same time, their very existence is used by men to promote their own recognized superiority in the homosocial world of men. For instance, man who has a beautiful woman as a wife will be considered having a resource which elevate his status claims as compared with the other men and also will give him a sexual resource. Women, therefore, before the feminist movement and women finally have control over resources, barely have their own homosocial world, as they oftentimes seek the resources from men, "... this uneven array of resources systematically made men more interesting to women, women less interesting and useful to other women, and women fairly often unnecessary and/or burdensome to men" (Lipman-Blumen, 1976, p. 18). However, Lipman-Blumen (1976, p. 17) also claims in her study that the origins of male control over resources are a mere speculation and provides the possible explanation with the historical male roles of warrior and hunter as resource-acquiring and resource-protecting which is inaccessible to women.

*Warrior and hunter roles placed men in positions of protecting and acquiring territory and food-fundamental resources in any society. Men's positions in these resource-acquiring and resource-protecting roles also led to certain dominance hierarchies that persisted long after technology had obviated the need for such differentiation and stratification of roles.*

Sedgwick seems fully concur with Lipman-Blumen's notion of homosocial world of men and has developed the idea by exploring the changes in the system of male 'homosocial desire' in the English literatures, mainly novels in the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century, and by pointing that "male

friendship, mentorship, entitlement, rivalry and hetero- and homosexuality” have constructed themselves in the context of shifting systems of class and gender (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 1). In line with Lipman-Blumen’s notion, Sedgwick argues that “in the presence of a woman who can be seen as pitiable or contemptible, men are able to exchange power and to confirm each other's value even in the context of the remaining inequalities in their power” (1985, p. 160). Moreover, in redefining and explicating the concept, Sedgwick suggests that the word ‘homosocial’ in homosociality itself is the neologism of ‘homosexual’ and it is used to differentiate the social traits it carries from homosexuality. In fact, this term is often pertained to the activities of ‘male bonding’ which might be typified by homosexual panic and serious homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality. Thus, the term ‘homosociality’ is always followed by and identified with the occurrence of those other three terms: homosocial desire, homosexual panic as well as homophobia. Sedgwick (1985, p. 2) has a convincing reason to choose and use the word ‘desire’ in her book, instead of ‘love’, to name to mark the erotic emphasis, as the word ‘love’ shows more a certain emotion, while she intends to explicate about a structure.

*For the most part, I will be using “desire” in a way analogous to the psychoanalytic use of “libido”—not for a particular affective state or emotion, but for the affective or social force, the glue, even when its manifestation is hostility or hatred or something less emotively charged, that shapes an important relationship.*

To explain the previous statement furtherly, ‘homosocial desire’ is Sedgwick’s way of conceptualizing the ‘male bonding’ which refers to men’s interest and attentiveness to other men and is frequently attached with intimacy and women’s presence as the links, while ‘homosexual panic’ and ‘homophobia’

are understood as the anxieties and often serious hatred of those attention turning into homosexuality and same-sex erotic probabilities. Homosexual panic and homophobia are understood as having a different and significant nuance with the first merely happens in a person's imagining and is more subtle, while the latter is an endeavor to stigmatize particular kinds of relationships between men and between women. As homophobia is an attempt to stigmatize relationships, sometimes the misogynist language as well as the verbalization of hatred towards homosexuality are developed and uttered at this point. The hatred of homosexuality itself is generated from the attempt to maintain the patriarchal structures; the power of cis-heterosexual men, notably which become the agents of hegemonic masculinity, over the other gender, "much of the most useful recent writing about patriarchal structures suggests that 'obligatory heterosexuality' is built into male-dominated kinship systems, or that homophobia is a necessary consequence of such patriarchal institutions as heterosexual marriage" (Bird, 1996; Sedgwick, 1985, p. 3).

Another interesting point which Sedgwick explicates in her book is about the difference between male homosocial and female homosocial, or usually termed as lesbian continuum by Adrienne Rich (1980), which emphasizes on the continuity between those two terms. Women can love and validate other women both in public and private space and it build an uninterrupted sequence in the continuity of homosocial and homosexual terms, so the distinguishment between both terms are less dichotomous and in-depth, while if it is men who do so, it may provoke a homophobic reaction and thus violate the hegemonic masculinity

values men try to fulfill. Therefore, the continuity between terms homosexual and homosocial in the men world are so disrupted and both terms are so dichotomous. From this point, male homosociality itself is then extensively viewed as the male-male social bonds which is often identified with the attraction and attention, emerging in the male relationships, such as friendships, rivalry, mentorship and even the heterosexual relationship which men build and this term is also described as a system and social dynamic which states the continuation of patriarchal values and hegemonic masculinity.

#### **E. Hammarén and Johansson's Theory of Homosociality**

As the concept of homosociality characterizes same-sex social bonds, its uses in men and masculinities studies have brought some special circumstances on the table. The term male homosociality has been used to show how men uphold gender order and patriarchy through their bonds with other men (Bird, 1996; Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Sedgwick, 1985). In other words, as Hammaren and Johansson have suggested, this concept can be mainly described as “mechanism and social dynamic” that explicates the preservation of hegemonic masculinity (2014, p. 1).

To investigate and explore the concept of homosociality, Hammarén and Johansson held a study in 2014 in which they examine and problematize the use of the concept among gender theorists. Through this study, they mainly point out the oversimplification and reduction in the applications of the concept in Sedgwick's prominent study in her book *Between Men: English Literature and*

*Male Homosocial Desire*, which only copes homosociality in men's world: the way men bond and how they build inclusive teams and also maintain their privileges and position over other gender through their bond with each other. Accordingly, through this study, Hammarén and Johansson provide the further discussion of male homosociality and its relation to hegemonic masculinity and homoeroticism along with the discussion of female homosociality to compare and complete Sedgwick's thesis on the phenomenon in question and evaluate its concept in homosocial world.

In discussing the relation between homosociality and hegemonic masculinity, Hammarén and Johansson (2014) argue that homosociality in men's world is oftentimes used as a means to construct power union and preserve male territory as well as privilege. It also considered as their way to strengthen their position in the society over women and other marginalized gender. In order to do so, men usually use all the different strategies, such as in Paul Willis' (1977) study about a working-class group who opposes middle class values and constructs an exclusive male order that oppresses young women, immigrants, and other men (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 2). Another example of men's strategy is Michael Flood's (2008) study about how relations among men also fashion their relationships with other gender, especially women, as well as their values, beliefs and behaviors about sexuality (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 2).

Beside competing for power and hegemony with women and other gender, men also compete with each other, so male homosociality is oftentimes viewed as



being built on competition and exclusion. It then leads men's relationships which imply the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity into relationships which is based on lack of intimacy and also homophobia, because they gatekeep each other from associating themselves with women and other gender who they see as having lower position in society.

Further, Hammarén and Johansson (2014) discuss the relation between homosociality and homoeroticism which involves queer readings of homosociality and the continuous sequences situated underneath desire and relationships between same-sex members of relationship. Homoeroticism itself can be understood as the sexual attraction between members of the same-sex relations. However, it differs from homosexuality, as it refers specifically to the desire which can be temporary. According to Hammarén and Johansson (2014), the connection between homosociality, especially male homosociality, and homoeroticism can be explained through the love triangle which involves two men and a woman. This kind of triangle might be portrayed the two men as rivalry, while it actually can be interpreted as an attraction between each other. This argument then leads to the discussion of the distinct types of male homosocial desires which make present a potential extent of research and literature that point out the lessening of homophobia in homosociality, especially male homosociality (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014).

While there are already numerous amounts of discussion of male homosociality, Hammarén and Johansson then present an increasing literature on female homosociality. To begin with, they point out Sedgwick's (1985) argument

that male homosociality is shaped through the exchange of women and the union of men's power in society, while female homosociality does not take place for the same reason and instead is shaped through the exclusion of them from men's world or through the attempt to escape from men's influence (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 5). Female homosociality also tends to blur the boundaries between homosociality and homosexuality, which makes the sharp cleavage between those two terms "is not that distinct, clear, and stable", unlike male homosociality (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 5).

The situation of female homosociality above constructs the distinct traits for the phenomenon in question. For instance, Gunkel (2009) states that women tend to provide other women with emotional support and sometimes women's bonds tend to develop into sexual encounters and relations (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 5). Hammarén (2008) also argues that concepts of love and intimacy have been feminized and intimate relationships which involves kissing, holding hands, and hugging each other are considered as expressions of friendship and heterosexuality (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 5). This happens to be the reason of why male homosociality which implies hegemonic masculinity does not embody this concept.

Those three major discussions on homosociality—homosociality and hegemonic masculinity, homosociality and homoeroticism, and female homosociality—are partly overlapping so that the way gender studies scholars framing and examining the concept need to be reinterpreted. Therefore, in response to the requirement of reinterpretation, changes as well as redefinitions of

homosociality and new masculinity, Hammarén and Johansson suggest a reconstruction towards the concept by dividing homosociality into two kinds: vertical and horizontal, to emphasize the possibility of “an underlying continuum between different kinds of male homosocial desires” which “open up a potential arena for research on the fragile boundaries and lines between different masculinities and hetero-/homosexuality” (2014, p. 4). They claim that these concepts do not have absolute boundaries and the combination between the two—horizontal homosociality in relationship and vice versa—might happen. The division is aimed to ease the analysis of different aspects and point out the different implications (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014).

### **1. Vertical Homosociality**

Hammarén and Johansson (2014) claim that vertical homosociality is analogous and has already been defined and explained as the means to strengthen power and establish close bonds between men to preserve hegemony. Moreover, this purpose also projects the obligatory heterosexuality and “male traffic in women” which results in the emotional constraint and bring in the nonintimate relations and competitiveness between them (Bird, 1996). This concept, though mainly used to discuss about men’s relationships and their trades of valuable social connections and cultural capital, is also plausible to be used to frame and examine women’s relations. In other words, the characteristics of vertical homosociality includes nonintimate relationships, gender inequality, homophobia and competitiveness.

**a. Emotional detachment**

Emotional detachment in vertical homosociality involves the lack of emotional closeness and the withdrawal of the expression of feelings among same-sex members of relationship (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014). Withholding the expression of feelings is to conceal vulnerabilities and weakness which is associated with feminine expressions and considered violating the norms of hegemonic masculinity (Bird, 1996). The repression of feminine emotions then becomes a means to establish individual masculinity and so emotional detachment becomes a way by which gender hierarchy are preserved.

**b. Gender Inequality**

Gender inequality in homosociality, especially male homosocial relationships, is formed through women objectification, the asymmetry of power between men and women as well as the segregation between men and women (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014). To strengthen this argument, Sedgwick (1985) states that the construction of male homosociality is through the exchange of women and the integration of men's power in the society. Another study conducted by Flood (2008) presents that men also shape their heterosexual relationship as well as their attitudes and behavior towards women through their friendship with other men. Flood (2008), in his study, also elaborates the organization of men's sociosexual relationships in four ways: the precedence of male-male friendships over male-female and the feminization of men who have platonic friendships with women; the interconnection between sexual experience

and masculine status; the enactment of men's bonding through heterosexual sex as the direct medium; and the construction of men's sexual storytelling by centering around homosocial masculine cultures.

### **c. Homophobia**

As stated above, homosexual panic and homophobia are understood as the anxieties and serious hatred on homosocial attention between, specifically, men turning into homosexual desire and same-sex erotic experiences, respectively. In maintaining hegemonic masculinity, homophobia is oftentimes developed and externalized, as homosexuality is perceived as effeminate and its values negate the value of hegemonic masculinity (Bird, 1996; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hammarén & Johansson, 2014). Beside the marginalization and exclusion of gay men in the male homosociality, this situation can also result in the disrupted continuum between homosocial desire and homosexual desire among men so that men's relationships oftentimes do not develop, even are ceased to develop, into sexual encounters and relationships (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014).

### **d. Competitiveness**

According to Hammarén and Johansson (2014), homosociality, especially male homosociality, is oftentimes viewed as being based on and fashioned through competition. Bird (1996) argues that competition in the male homosocial group depends on separation and distinction, instead of likeness and cooperation. It also promote hierarchy in relationship and perpetuation of male dominance over other men or women, meanwhile cooperation encourage symmetry of relationship

(Bird, 1996). The presence of competition in male homosociality can function as the conceptualization of masculinity in men's self. Competition among men then can be in the form of the exchange of power and women, or can be specifically in the form of sport or nonsport activity which can possibly elevate their status and position to the ideal hegemonic masculinity.

## **2. Horizontal Homosociality**

Hammarén and Johansson (2014) state several studies which discuss the different strategies by which men operate to preserve the gender order and maintain male privilege, or to maintain the hegemonic masculinity values, which results in the lack of intimacy in their relationships and base them on competition and exclusion. However, Hammarén and Johansson (2014, p. 2) also attempt to provide the discussion of male homosocial relations in the form of “a silent and slow process that might undermine or reconstruct this power structure”. Thus, they introduce the concept of homosociality which is thus perceived as similar to female homosociality and is used to show relations that are “based on emotional closeness, intimacy, and a nonprofitable form of friendship” among men and among women (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 5). Hammarén and Johansson therefore call the contemporary male homosocialities which convey the same value with female homosociality as horizontal homosociality, “Using this approach further allows us to point toward [...] a potential and slow process of rearticulating hegemony by referring to horizontal homosociality” (2014, p. 10). Therefore, horizontal homosociality can be identified with four characteristics: intimacy, gender equality, nonhomophobia and noncompetitive relationships.

### **a. Intimacy**

Intimacy in the horizontal homosociality can be perceived as the involvement of emotional and physical closeness in the same-sex nonsexual relationship, which is also considered as effeminate traits in the male homosocial relations (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014). As horizontal homosociality is analogous with female homosociality, emotional involvement includes confiding each other's stories and secrets as well as being vulnerable in front of each other, meanwhile physical closeness involves holding hands, kissing and also hugging (Hammarén, 2008; Hammarén & Johansson, 2014). The emotional and physical closeness in the male homosocial relations brings a more sensitive and intimate kind of masculinity and relationship and it clearly does not imply the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity which requires emotional restraint and physical contact through symbolic act of violence, such as mock punching. Changes and redefinitions of male homosociality above by Hammarén and Johansson are obtained from several studies, such as Hammarén's study on how female homosociality also normalize physical intimacy or 'skinship', such as kissing, holding hands and hugging, and perceives those behavior as normalized feminine heterosexual behavior; Thurnell-Read's study (2012) on how groups of stag-night are actively working to preserve and develop their friendship through group cohesion, togetherness and intimacy.

Another evidence of the possible existence of horizontal/female homosociality is being implemented in male homosocial relationship is that there is the concepts of *bromance* (brother-romance) in popular culture which,

according to Hammarén and Johansson, exhibits “the close and intimate nonsexual and homosocial relationships between two (or more) men” and “emphasizes love, exclusive friendship and intimacy that are not premised on competition and often described as ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’ friendship”. (2014, p. 6). Moreover, Nardi (2001) argues that bromances or homosocial relationship among gay men and between a straight man and a gay man does exist, though the occurrence is infrequent (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 6). Further, according to a Swedish daily newspaper (Svenska Dagbladet, 2011), the concept of bromance and men’s friendships which can be similarized to a kind of love relationships and it include hanging out all the time, talking about various topics and hugging each other (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 6). These behaviors then can be included as the forms of intimacy.

#### **b. Gender equality**

Gender equality in male homosocial relationships is indicated with the absence of women objectification, the symmetry of power between men and women as well as the absence of the segregation between men and women (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014). Meanwhile, according to Sedgwick (1985), the construction of male homosociality is through the exchange of women and the integration of men’s power in the society. In achieving this redefinition, Hammarén and Johansson oppose the study conducted by Flood (2008) on how men’s friendships also shape their heterosexual relationship as well as their attitudes and behavior towards women.



**c. Nonhomophobic relationship**

Nonhomophobic relationship requires the lessening of homophobia as well as homosexual panic in the same-sex nonsexual bonds (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014). Hammarén and Johansson try to implement the characteristic of female homosociality in which the homosocial desire and homosexual desire is continuous; the homosocial desire is enabled to turn into homosexual desire and erotic expression; the friendship between straight men and gay men is enabled and developed (2014). Male homosocial relations are possible to have such continuum and include gay men in their circles as well as develop values which is perceived as effeminate (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014).

**d. Noncompetitive relationship**

Noncompetitive relationship is signified with the absence of men's bonding through competition and instead the development of supportive and helpful friendship among men (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014). Competitiveness becomes the major characteristic of male homosocial relations, as through competition, men are enabled to bond and conceptualize their masculinity (Bird, 1996). The bonding through competition can take place in the activity which requires lifting up their positions in the community, such as sport and the exchange of women (Bird, 1996; Sedgwick, 1985). On the other hand, Hammarén and Johansson (2014) find that noncompetitive relationship can happen in the male homosociality in which supportive and nonhegemonic masculinity are developed and embodied by the members through helping and also supporting

each other. These homosocial relations mostly focuses on maintaining the relationship, togetherness and also group cohesion (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014; Thurnell-Read, 2012). The example of this characteristic in male horizontal homosociality can be seen in the study of the friendships of the members of stag-night groups where they help their friends' premarital party and also wedding preparation (Thurnell-Read, 2012).

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the researcher attempts to describe and elaborate the analysis using the theory in the previous chapter. The analysis breaks down male homosocialities in *A Little Life*. This chapter presents the analysis of how the characteristics of both vertical and horizontal homosociality are performed by main male characters in their friendships with each other in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life*. The researcher found three out of four characteristics of vertical homosociality in the main characters' friendship, they are emotional detachment, gender inequality, and homophobia. On the other hand, the researcher also found four characteristics of horizontal homosociality performed in their friendship: intimacy, gender equality, nonhomophobic environment, and noncompetitive relationship.

#### **A. Vertical Homosociality in *A Little Life***

The following analysis classifies and analyzes the vertical homosocialities performed in the friendship of main male characters in *A Little Life*: Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm.

##### **1. Emotional Detachment**

Emotional detachment involves the lack of emotional closeness and the withholding of the feeling expression in the relationships of same-sex people. As the means to exhibit and defend hegemony, men's relationships are commonly

characterized by emotional detachment, for emotive expression suggested as expression of weakness, such as tears, pain and self-pity, are perceived feminine and contradicting heterosexual masculine ideals which typify with the absence of self-exposure and a lack of emotive expression. This condition results in the lacking of emotional intimacy in the men's relationships. Correspondingly, this trait is found in one of the main characters, Jude.

The dynamic progress and circumstances in this friendship is different for Jude, compared to his three friends, that makes him detach his emotional circumstances from his friends. Unlike his other friends, Jude experiences a childhood trauma and trust issues related to homosociality in his past. He is surrounded by men, since he is adopted by monks and lives in the monastery as a child, and what he has experienced and learned from there affects his future relationships with men. It thus drives him to be so reserved to his male best friends and to keep his past life as well as problems as a secret, as shown in the data below.

*He knew Jude would hate how fragile, how feminine, how vulnerable, how young it made him look, ... (p. 36)*

*But he'd had years to learn how to keep his thoughts to himself; unlike his friends, he had learned not to share evidence of his oddities as a way to distinguish himself from others, ... (p. 88)*

The first data, told from JB's perspective, shows that Jude "hate" to be seen vulnerable and to show his vulnerability in front of his friends, while the second data shows his intention not to confide his true self, secrets and stories which he perceives as the "evidence of his oddities". This situation makes him not fully perform and conform emotional closeness to his friends.

In order to hide the truth about himself, he strives to convey masculine ideal values to the outside world. He never cries in front of his friends, never tells his past stories and secrets and also does not want to look weak. According to Connell (2000), the masculine ideals in Western societies are determined by the act performed by men's bodies. However, Jude is someone with mobility impairing disabilities and it means his masculinity already has a flaw. Apparently, he feels odd about himself and is quite self-conscious about his flaw. That is the reason why he has never been seen crying or showing another vulnerable act even in front of his best friends. He knows his masculine image is not perfect because of his disability and he does not want to damage it more by being a weak person. Accordingly, he is so restrained not to show his vulnerability to his friends.

## **2. Gender Inequality**

Gender inequality can possibly happen in homosociality, especially male homosocial relations, through women objectification, the asymmetry of power as well as segregation between men and women. This conventional homosociality then becomes the means to divide men and women through sexual joking and sexist narratives and the purpose behind these behaviors is to institute male heterosexual identity and facilitate male group bonding.

In *A Little Life*, such circumstances cannot be found in the friendship of Jude, Willem, JB, and Malcolm and their relationship with any female characters in the novel. Meanwhile, the analysis of gender equality will be explained in the further discussion.

### 3. Homophobia

As the means to constructing hegemonic masculinity, homosociality surely entrench and encourage heteronormativity through the display of heterosexuality and masculinity, sometimes hypermasculinity, and it thus externalizes the homosexual panic and the verbalization of homophobia. In contrast with JB who has been brought up in the queer and feminist way of thinking, Malcolm has grown up in the deeply heteronormative family. It thus affects his way of thinking and responding on other sexual orientation and gender identity.

Malcolm's homosexual panic can be found in several occasion in the novel when developing homosocial as well as homosexual desire to his friends, as demonstrated in the following data.

*He often thought that being gay (as much as he also couldn't stand the thought of it; [...]) was attractive mostly for its accompanying accessories, its collection of political opinions and causes and its embrace of aesthetics. (p. 63)*

*He fancied himself already half in love with Willem, and at various points in love with Jude too, and at work he would sometimes find himself staring at Eduard. [...] A few weekends ago, he had been at Willem and Jude's, ostensibly to take some measurements so he could design them a bookcase, and Willem had leaned in front of him to grab the measuring tape from the sofa, and the very nearness of him had been suddenly unbearable, and he had made an excuse about needing to get into the office and had abruptly left, Willem calling after him. (p. 63)*

The first data shows that Malcolm has a certain sentiment regarding gayness and it can be the indication of him being homophobic, even though he is being indirect. "As much as he also couldn't stand the thought of it" indicates a form of homophobia; his resistance towards his own imagining if he is being a gay. As he befriends with JB and see how JB takes a stand in the masculinity and heteronormativity realms, there are many clashes of opinions between them. JB is an outspoken person regarding to his view and irritation to conformity and

heteronormativity. He is also politically as well as emotionally expressive, adventurous and artsy. Meanwhile, Malcolm, who after all this time mostly views and behaves in propriety and finally sees queer realms mostly through JB's takes and behavior, finds it as a subversive action and pretty deviant and he cannot stand the idea of his being a gay man. This situation then leads him to a certain opinion as shown in the first data. However, this kind of views from Malcolm also brings him to a curiosity while he is still on the quest for his sexuality.

The second data is therefore the continuation and realization of his thought and curiosity in the first data. In his search of his sexuality, he already develops his homosocial desire to Willem, Jude and one of his colleagues into homosexual desire. Therewith, it also can be seen that there is an externalization of gay panic in his behavior when he is near Willem. His homosexual panic is developed when he thinks that being near Willem is sexually tensed and "unbearable" and he suddenly goes out from Willem and Jude's apartment. Along with the statement from Hammarén and Johansson (2014) that the development of fear and hatred of gayness mostly requires the emphasis of heterosexuality, he has the panic and urge to emphasize his masculinity and heterosexuality and eventually is assured with that when dating Sophie, even though after all Willem understands it and never humiliates him for this occurrence afterwards. But even so, proving the argument from Rumens (2011) that bromances which is situated in the mixed gay-straight or gay-gay nonsexual relationships might reduce homophobia and oppose heterosexist norms even more, Malcolm later would understand more the

different nuances of manhood and it will be shown in the further analysis of horizontal homosociality.

#### **4. Competitiveness**

Another major characteristic of male homosociality is the competitiveness which functions as the conceptualization of masculinity. In other words, the process of conceptualizing masculinity requires men to bond with each other through some activities which involves competitiveness. This bonding can take form, mainly, in sport or other nonsport activity which can lift up their status and position to the ideal hegemonic masculinity.

Boys in the Hood, on the other hand, does not exhibit such characteristic in their friendship, as there is no data which presents competitiveness in their friendship. Because they basically do not defend and maintain hegemonic masculinity values and instead base their relationship on support and affection, they refuse competition to sustain a collaborative relationship. The analysis of noncompetitive relationship among them will be explained in the further discussion.

#### **B. Horizontal Homosociality in *A Little Life***

Along with the findings of vertical homosociality in the main characters' friendship, the researcher also found horizontal homosociality with more inclusive behaviors in their friendship which negates the vertical homosociality. Some characters that are mentioned in the previous subchapter also go through character developments and perform horizontal homosociality. Thus, this study tries to



analyze the horizontal homosociality performed by the main male characters through four characteristics. They are intimacy, gender equality, nonhomophobic relationship and noncompetitive relationship.

### 1. Intimacy

Intimacy in the horizontal homosociality can be identified as the involvement of emotional and physical closeness in the same-sex nonsexual relationship, which is also seen as effeminate traits in the male homosocial relations. Correspondingly, in *A Little Life*, intimacy in the relationship between Boys in the Hood mainly implies the possibility of emotional and physical attachment.

Unlike the majority of men's relationship which maintain conventional rules of masculine ideals and male homosociality, JB, Willem and Malcolm develop emotional disclosure as well as emotive expression in their friendship and base their friendship on trust and affection. They incline to share their stories and confide their feelings with each other. Moreover, they express profound vulnerability and connection towards each other to the point they can admit, even freely show and utter their love to one another in endearing terms, as demonstrated in the following data.

*As he listens to Malcolm, he tries not to smile: [...] Malcolm has never been someone who pretended he was cooler, or more confident, or silkier than he actually is, and as they grow older, he appreciates and admires more and more his sweet guilelessness, his complete trust in his friends and their opinions. (257)*

*He is about to say something, make some stupid joke, when Willem begins to cry, and not just cry, but keen, bending over and moaning, sobbing like he has never seen anyone sob. (p. 604)*

*"I've never stopped being your friend, JB," Willem said, and sat down next to him. "You know I love you." (p. 278)*

*"To Jude with love and apologies, JB," JB had scribbled on the canvas ... (p. 169)*

The first data, which is told from Jude's perspective, shows that Malcolm implements the characteristic of horizontal homosociality in terms of emotional intimacy by freely being himself and sharing his stories with Jude. From Jude we know that Malcolm never pretends to be someone who is cooler when he is around his male friends. As hegemonic masculinity requires men to serve the best version of themselves in front of their male peers, the first data proves that Malcolm does not have any tendency to do so. He allows himself to become vulnerable in front of his friends and trust them.

Moreover, the second data proves that Willem also exhibits emotional intimacy with his friends by showing his emotionally vulnerable side and allowing himself to freely cry in front of his friends. Crying becomes the symbol of weakness among men who conform hegemonic masculinity and apply homosocial relationship with other men. Meanwhile, Willem even cries hardly and shows how sad he is in front of Jude. Also, to prove more Willem's implementation of emotional closeness in his friendships, the third data exhibits how he undoubtedly shows his affection and says love to his male friends, in this case JB. This behavior clearly does not suit the values of homosociality which demands men to restraint their affection to their male peers. However, Willem does not restraint his affection to his friends and it proves that he conforms the characteristics of horizontal homosociality in terms of emotional intimacy.

Same with Willem, JB also oftentimes adopt this characteristic by showing his love and affection to his friend and one of his such behaviors is proven by the

fourth data. He sends his art to Jude and scribbles ‘love’ along with apologies, which the homosocial conformers would never relate to. It clearly proves that JB also develops emotional closeness in befriending his male friends.

Thus, the data above shows that *Boys in the Hood* do not attempt to exhibit and develop homosocial practices based on hegemonic masculinity maintenance in terms of emotional intimacy. Although the majority of men would hesitantly show and involve feelings in their relationships, Willem, JB and Malcolm are unhesitant to show their emotional and vulnerable side in front of their male best friends. They will share their stories and feelings and do not hold back their strong emotion. They are also not ashamed being seen crying and expressing love and affection to their friends.

Furthermore, besides the emotional intimacy, the display of physical intimacy in the relationship of *Boys in the Hood* involves soft tactility, such as holding hands, kissing and hugging. Meanwhile, in order to continue ascribing hegemonic masculinity, physical intimacy in men’s relationships with other men is restricted only in public sphere, such as sport, and through symbolic acts of violence, such as mock punching, while holding hands, hugging and kissing are traditionally prohibited. Consequently, men performing physical intimacy, as well as emotional one, would be socially homosexualized and it deprives them of their masculinity. The following data demonstrates the physical intimacy exhibited by Jude, Willem and JB.

*... he [Jude] wasn't wearing enough layers to really let Willem hug him this closely ... (p. 388)*

*Willem grabbed him [Jude] and kissed him, noisily, on the cheek. (p. 454)*

*JB came in [...] and put his arm around his [Jude] neck and kissed him on the cheek. (p. 560)*

The first and second data show that Willem and Jude perform the physical intimacy by having a soft and endearing physical contact with each other, such as hugging, grabbing hands and also kissing cheeks. Moreover, the third data shows how JB kisses Jude on his cheek and it indicates his execution of physical intimacy in his friendship. Seeing how freely they do such feminized things in the perspective of hegemonic masculinity and homosociality, it is evident that in their relationship, Jude, Willem and JB attribute to more inclusive version of masculinity and blur the boundaries between masculinity and femininity in their homosocial activities by involving and performing endearing physical contact with each other. Meanwhile, there is no data showing how Malcolm also exhibits physical touch with his friends, but as shown above, he develops emotional intimacy. However, the portrayal of physical contact which involves symbolic act of violence, such as mock punching, is nowhere to be found.

Homosocial activities that involve hugging, kissing on cheek and holding hands are conventionally only perceived as female homosocial practices, yet they proceed to develop and exhibit those behaviors in their relationship. As they surround by nonhomophobic and nonhegemonic inclusive masculinity performers, their social environment also seems to apply and accustomed to feminist way of thinking and act where there are no implications for men's cultural dominance over women and homophobia. This environment thus makes natural the physical proximity that does not require exhibition in public sphere and of symbolic act of violence.

In the earlier part of the analysis, it is presented that Jude having the distinct circumstances which drive him to exhibit emotional detachment in front of his male best friends. Even so, as shown above, he does not necessarily have any judgement to any of his friends for showing their vulnerability. He instead welcomes them to share their stories and problems with him and is considered as the most caring, loving and understanding friend in their circle. He is also never hesitant in showing his love and support to his friends, although, for some self-loathing reasons, he finds himself hard to accept their love and support for him. He is merely hard to himself in order to cover his own real circumstances in front of his friends. The data below shows how hospitable he is on his friends' vulnerability and divulgence.

*But he had never complained, not once, although he had never begrudged anyone else's complaining, either; ... (p. 18)*

*They were all bored with the hair project, although Jude—alone among them—thought that the pieces were lovely and would someday be considered significant. (p. 7)*

*... unlike his friends, he had learned not to share evidence of his oddities as a way to distinguish himself from others, although he was happy and proud that they shared theirs with him. (p. 88)*

The data above shows how welcome and caring he is when his friends show him their vulnerability, as for instance, in the first and second data, he does not judge JB when he complains or fails his hair project. While in the third data, he also states that he is “happy” if his friends share their oddities to him. In this case, he lets his friends to apply and show any form of emotional and physical proximity to him, yet he does not let himself to do so.

Those circumstances thus require him several years to truly believe his friends and confide everything he holds back about himself. Jude tells Willem the

stories which he has never told anyone before and eventually develop a more emotional and physical intimacy with Willem. Jude eventually can cry in front of Willem when he tells him his deepest secret, as demonstrated in the data below.

*“No, Jude,” Willem said. “I’m sorry. I didn’t know it was going to be so traumatic for you.” He reached over and stroked his hair. They were quiet. “That was the first time I’ve ever seen you cry, you know.” (p. 456)*

This data shows that Jude is eventually willing to develop the more deeply emotional and physical intimacy with Willem by telling him his past stories about his experience as child sexual abuse survivor, crying in front of him and letting him stroke his hair. He finally erodes his eagerness to show his masculine side in front of Willem. This is an evidence of Jude’s gradual change on his view of male homosociality and manhood.

As the view of masculinity in someone’s perspective and homosocial behavior of someone can be definitely changed and redefined along the time, Jude also gradually changes his homosocial behavior towards Willem when he is constantly encountered by how male homosociality can be undemanding for anything except for trust and affection through Willem’s homosocial behaviors to him. Jude is finally willing to tell Willem about his past life and secret after he can fully trust Willem as someone who is being so benevolent and understanding to him for so many years and who loves him unconditionally as a friend. In the data above, Willem also does not seem to judge Jude for what he has told him, even though Jude’s story as well as Jude’s way in telling him will potentially make him questioning Jude’s masculinity, and instead shows his sympathy. Willem’s such behavior exhibits the implementation of horizontal homosociality

which does not obligate his peers to act manly, as he himself also implements emotional and physical closeness to his friends as already shown above.

## 2. Gender Equality

Gender equality in male homosocial relationships is indicated with the absence of women objectification, the symmetry of power between men and women as well as the absence of the segregation between men and women. Along with this indication, there is a performance of nonhegemonic heterosexual relationship Malcolm and his partner, Sophie, which also influences and is influenced by Malcolm's friendship.

It seems that Malcolm does not adopt any patriarchal values and thus the conversation about Sophie between Malcolm and his male friends does not display objectification of her, as demonstrated in the following data.

*He lists the potential negatives (marriage is so conventional; it feels so permanent; he's not really interested in the idea of a wedding but fears Sophie is; [...] something about spending the rest of his life with another architect depresses him; he and Sophie are cofounders of the firm—if something happens between them, what will happen to Bellcast?) [...] he really does love Sophie, and knows he won't be able to do better than her; ... (p. 257)*

*They all chose differently: [...] Malcolm, he thought, had chosen reliability, and competence (Sophie was intimidatingly efficient), and aesthetic compatibility. (p. 583)*

*... Malcolm has had conversations with Willem about weddings, and does Willem think they're an indulgence or not; and with JB about jewelry, and when women say they don't like diamonds, do they really mean it, or are they just testing the way it sounds; and with him about prenuptial agreements. (p. 234)*

The first data, being told from Malcolm's perspective, demonstrates how Malcolm applies gender equality by considering Sophie's agency in their heterosexual relationship and not weighing the continuity of their relationship on his friends' views and opinions towards their relationship, as men's friendships

highly influence heterosocial as well as heterosexual relationships of their member of community, even though in the third data, he asks his friends' opinions and advices for his relationship with Sophie.

Besides, another gender equality practice implemented by Malcolm is how he views Sophie as equal with, even better from, him and value her for what she has done in her career and life. He does not view Sophie as a mere woman with whom he can perform any sexual activity, but he values her as a partner who is also his fellow architect and coworker. Malcolm valuing Sophie in a way he sees her for her personality, ability and also compatibility with him and shows these considerations to his friends can be once again confirmed in the second data which is told in Jude's perspective.

Malcolm's behaviors above are obviously opposed Sedgwick's (1985) argument that there is always "male traffic in women", where women are equipped to secure the bonds of men with men and in doing so, they oftentimes use women's body and their sexual activity with them to boost men's ranking and status in the relation to hegemonic masculinity. Women's existences and relations in male homosociality, hence, are confined only on their body and their sexual prospect. Women's agency and other qualities are often abandoned.

Moreover, as shown in the third data, which is also told from Jude's perspective, the homosocial practices are conducted by Malcolm and his friends through the discussion of Malcolm and Sophie's heterosexual relationships. There might be a "traffic in women" there, as they use Sophie's existence to arrange the homosocial practices through socialization, conversation and discussion.



Conversely, there is no discussion of Malcolm's sexual experience with Sophie and it can be implied that there is no indication of Malcolm's attempt to achieve and claim any higher status in masculine hierarchies through Sophie's body and his sexual experience with her. Their homosocial activities instead relate to the continuity of Malcolm's heterosexual relationships with her, meaning that they support Malcolm's endeavor to further develop his heterosexual relationship with Sophie.

Strengthening this part of analysis, Jude, Willem and JB also give their sign showing they allow Malcolm to declare his attachments to and feelings for Sophie. Malcolm, in several occasions, is shown spending more times with Sophie when they start dating, instead of with his squad, as shown in the data below.

*... Malcolm had eventually started dating Sophie, and they made their own unit.  
(p. 264)*

*No one else was in the city. Malcolm was with Sophie visiting her parents in Hamburg ... (p. 259)*

*It was August; the city was empty. Malcolm was in Sweden on holiday with Sophie ... (p. 389)*

The situation in the three data above show that Jude, Willem and JB do not apply pressure on Malcolm to prioritize them over Sophie, since mostly the homosocial obligations demand men's friendships to be placed as primary (Flood, 2008). Instead of prioritizing his friends and spending time as well as accompanying his friends, he oftentimes chooses spending time with Sophie and his friends respect him for doing that. They do not pressure him with those homosocial obligations.

Further, there is some implications of women inclusion in the homosocial bonding of Boys in the Hood which involves Sophie and a girl named Robin who

in some chapters becomes Willem's heterosexual partner. The following data further shows how Boys in the Hood's gatherings oftentimes, either in the same or the different occasions, involve Sophie and Robin.

*It is the Saturday before Labor Day, and they would normally be in Truro, but this year they have rented Harold and Julia a house outside Aix-en-Provence for the entire summer, [...] today Willem is picking up Malcolm and Sophie and JB ... (p. 609)*

*He remembered Lionel and Sinclair's wedding, where it had been Malcolm with Sophie and he with Robin and JB [...] with Oliver, and Jude with no one. (p. 440)*

The two data above display how Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm implement gender equality by including Sophie and Robin in their gatherings. Sophie is often included both formally and informally in those men's bonding. Formally, as have been stated earlier in this sub-chapter, they, especially her partner Malcolm, value and acknowledge Sophie's ability and competence in architecture. Meanwhile, in the informal setting, they frequently invite Sophie in their group bonding, such as private dinners, holidays, wedding parties, since she has been dating with Malcolm. She even takes part in taking care of Jude, together with the boys, when Jude has to recover from leg amputation. Along the times, Sophie becomes part of this circle.

Meanwhile, though only shown in the informal frames, Boys in the Hood seems to consider Robin's presence as Willem's partner. Boys in the Hood also do not hesitate to invite her in their gatherings, although it is not as frequent and intense as with Sophie due to the short period of her relationships with Willem.

Conventionally, another form of homosocial practices also adopt the exclusion of women from men's circles as the ideological emphasis on men's sense of superiority to and distinguishment from them (Flood, 2008). Lipman-

Blumen (1976) also argues that the exclusion of women is because they are viewed as lacking in their resources so that it makes them less useful and interesting to men. By way of contrast, the homosocial bonding of Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm does not conform the homosocial rules and so it enables the inclusion of their female partner, not to mention their female friends, in their circle.

### **3. Nonhomophobic Relationship**

Nonhomophobic relationship requires the lessening, even the eradication, of homophobia as well as homosexual panic in the same-sex nonsexual bonds. The friendships of Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm, therefore, convey the significant shift of homosocial construction regarding to feminization that leads to homophobia and homosexual panic, as shown in the several homosexualized and feminized practices done by them in the preceding explanation, such as emotional as well as physical intimacy and women inclusion in their circle. Another overtly nonhomophobic and gay-friendly practices, including befriending gay friends and respecting their sexuality and also giving welcoming responses to friends when they 'come out'—the process of accepting and openly sharing one's sexual orientation and gender identity—to them, have become some real and natural move as well as action this circle of friends has done in order to constructing a nonhomophobic same-sex nonsexual relationship and negating hegemonic masculinity.

To delve deeper into the analysis of their nonhomophobic relationship, the researcher will start the discussion of JB's sexuality and how his friends react

with it. In contrast with Malcolm who has grown up in the deeply heteronormative family, JB has been brought up in the queer and feminist way of thinking. Moreover, JB's sexual orientation is oftentimes shown through some appearances of his boyfriends in the novel, as shown in the following data.

*And then he headed off to see his boyfriend, ... (p. 60)*

*They are all here: Willem and his girlfriend, Robin; Malcolm and Sophie; and JB and his new boyfriend, ... (p. 288)*

The preceding data shows how Jude, Willem and Malcolm apply nonhomophobic relationship with JB by still including him in their circle despite his gayness. JB is always portrayed having boyfriends and how they seem to be casually presented and included in JB's circle of friends. JB's friends seems to respond casually when JB talks about his boyfriends or brings his boyfriends into their gatherings. Because their friendship is portrayed as a relationship in which the members do not intend to achieve and develop any hegemonic masculinity, it is indeed a supposedly action they give in responding JB's stance as a gay man. The externalization of homophobia is also nowhere to be found. They tend to welcome JB in the circle despite his sexual orientation and build a nonhomophobic environment for him and his boyfriends.

Moreover, Mills (2001) states that gay men may subvert hegemonic masculinity in which heteronormativity is challenged and gayness is made visible. JB, in line with that statement, also overtly subverts traditional ideals of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity. JB overtly shares to his friends about his homosexuality since the first year they are in college and there is also no externalization of homophobia as well as homosexual panic found in his friends'

behavior ever since then. They remain unbothered with it and do not withdraw or cease to befriend with him. They even do not develop any homophobic behavior and language or homosexual panic in response to JB's sexuality, except for Malcolm, as already being explained in the earlier part of the analysis.

Furthermore, the absence of homophobia regarding to JB's gayness then leads the analysis to Willem's sexuality and his sexual feeling towards his own male friend, Jude. As known from many parts of the novel, Willem is clearly portrayed as a cis-heterosexual man and always surround himself with many women. It turns out that Willem's sexual feelings to Jude is started to develop in the chapter "The Happy Years" where the following data are from.

*Lately, however, he had been feeling differently about Jude, and he wasn't sure what to do about it. They had been sitting on the sofa late one Friday night [...] and talking, [...] when he had almost leaned over and kissed him. But he had stopped himself, and the moment had passed. But since then, he had been revisited by that impulse again: twice, three times, four times.*

*It was beginning to worry him. Not because Jude was a man: he'd had sex with men before, everyone he knew had, and in college, he and JB had drunkenly made out one night out of boredom and curiosity ... (p. 439)*

This data exhibits how Willem's homosocial desire to Jude starting to glide over into homosexual desire when he eventually feels different about Jude and almost kisses him. Unlike Malcolm, he does not try to stop the turning by expressing any homophobia or homosexual panic when contemplating about his sexual feeling towards Jude. Such behavior turns out coming from his previous sexual experience with several men, including JB, as shown in the second data. His sexual experiences with JB and some men then leads him to his sexual fluidity and the eradication of his need to be seen as masculine, as proved in the data above.

In addition, in the paragraph the second data is from, Willem says he worries to Jude because he instead is afraid his feeling to Jude will be temporary and it will hurt Jude. In that case, it shows that he does not convey any homosexual panic when contemplating and considering his sexual feeling to Jude. The nonhomophobic environment they develop in their friendship and, for the most part, JB's strong influence on his friends' collective views of sexual world, thus, become the strong encouragement for Willem to bravely express his sexual feelings towards Jude, despite society's perception to him, as his occupation as an infamous movie star requires him to be heterosexual.

Then, he undoubtedly continues and expresses his feeling to Jude, as demonstrated in the following data.

*"I'm saying I'm attracted to you," Willem said, patiently. And then, when he didn't say anything, "Judy—I don't think it's all that odd, really. Haven't you ever felt that way about me, in all these years?" (p. 451)*

The preceding data shows the continuation and realization of Willem's homosexual desire. He eventually expresses his homosexual desire to Jude. "I don't think it's all that odd" indicates the absence of homophobia and homosexual panic as well as his perception that gayness can be as valid as heterosexuality. At this point, he finally continues his homosexual desire towards Jude by expressing his feeling, as the homophobia and homosexual panic is not developed. This is in line with the statement from Hammarén and Johansson (2014) that homosexual desire can be stopped and disrupted by the existence of homophobia and homosexual panic. Yet, when homophobia and homosexual panic is nowhere to be found, the continuation from homosocial desire into homosexual desire is highly possible.

Jude himself is a complex character in terms of his sexual life. Jude's sexual orientation has never been clearly defined or uttered in the novel. However, his sexual relationship with a man named Caleb is disclosed in the chapter "The Axiom of Equality". It thus can be concluded that Jude might be a gay or bisexual man. Despite the ambiguation of his sexual orientation, it is essential to note that Jude does not seem to problematize any sexual orientation of his friends and also seems to develop sexual fluidity. It helps to draw the line that Jude can also be sexually attracted to Willem, though it also has never been clearly defined in the novel. This is eventually shown when he finally accepts Willem's confession and their friendship grows into a sexual relationship ever since.

Jude and Willem's relationship get the positive and welcoming as well as warming responses from their friends and colleagues. There is no one expressing any resistance when they deliver the news about their relationship. Malcolm and JB congratulate them and are happy for them, as demonstrated in the following data.

*Then they told Malcolm and JB, separately. First, Malcolm, who they thought would either be shocked or sanguine, and who had turned out to be the latter. "I'm so happy for you guys," he said, beaming at them both. "This is so great. I love the idea of you two together." (p. 463)*

*JB was trickier, as they'd known he would be: they knew he would feel betrayed, and neglected, and possessive, [...] and Jude [...] delivered the news. They watched as JB put his fork down and put his head in his hands. "I feel sick," he said, and they waited until he looked up and said, "But I'm really happy for you guys," (p. 463-464)*

The first data shows that Malcolm has been going through a character development and now implement the nonhomophobia characteristic by understanding more the different nuances of manhood and the different types of masculinity. He eventually grows into a hospitable friend to his friends' choice

regarding to sexual orientation and gender identity. The homophobia and homosexual panic inside himself are destructed by the amount of time he has spent socializing in the circle which does not preserve any form of hegemonic masculinity and is mostly gay.

Meanwhile, as shown in the second data, JB seems to give a different yet expected response to the news delivered to him. JB is jealous as he turns out expecting Willem's attention and attraction to him a little more than his to Jude, as strengthened in the data below.

*JB was jealous: he [Willem] got the attraction to Jude, he did, and he knew it was illogical and maybe a tiny bit self-involved, but it wouldn't be truthful if he didn't tell Willem that part of him was miffed that Willem had picked Jude and not him. (p. 465)*

The preceding data exhibits JB's jealousy over Jude in terms of Willem's attention and attraction. He might also feel betrayed and expect to develop and continue the homosexual bond in his relationship with Willem, because Willem is used to be the closest person to him and is the most compatible in terms of nature. As female homosociality sometimes overlaps with heterosexual romantic relationship, the strong emotions, such as jealousy and fears of betrayal can be the characteristics of it (Thompson, 2006). Considering this, as the friendship of Boys in the Hood resembles female homosociality so much, the existence of those emotion in the circle of friends is possible.

#### **4. Noncompetitive Relationship**

Noncompetitive relationship is marked with the absence of men's bonding through competition and instead the development of supportive and helpful friendship among men. Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm frequently collaborate with



each other to make the other succeed in their endeavors. The data below shows their attempts to build a friendship based on collaboration, support, acknowledgement and respect.

*He had always known that JB was talented. They all did, [...] that hidden within JB was someone of huge sympathies and depth and understanding. And that night, he [...] had felt only an uncomplicated pride in and gratitude for JB: for the accomplishment of the work, of course, ... (p. 171)*

*Each of them had spent an exhausting weekend following JB from barbershop to beauty shop ... (p. 7)*

*... Willem was deliberately not reacting to all the women so the other men around him wouldn't feel threatened by him. This made more sense; Willem was liked by everyone and never wanted to make people feel intentionally uncomfortable, and so it was possible that, subconsciously at least, he was feigning a sort of ignorance. (p. 10)*

In the first data which is told from Jude's perspective, it is shown that Jude, Willem and Malcolm apply noncompetitiveness by acknowledging JB's competence and talent in art. They do not feel threatened by his success in career and instead participate in completing the instalments of his first art exhibition, as shown in the second data. Instead of bonding through some career competition, they bond through helping their friends achieving their milestones in career and life. This kind of bonding indicates the horizontal approach of homosociality which does not focus on power and hegemony maintenance and instead focus on maintaining their friendship and supporting their friends. They clearly do not seem to need conceptualizing their masculinity by competing with JB in terms of career.

The second data, meanwhile, shows how Willem does not use his possibility to utilize women's interest towards him to compete and peer-pressured his friends and it indicates his implementation on noncompetitiveness. The exchange of women is considered becoming the source of competition in the male

homosociality. However, as someone who does not care with the attempt of maintaining hegemony in his masculinity, Willem purposely does not react to all women interested in him, because he does not intend to lift up his status in hegemonic masculinity among other men by utilizing their body and interest to him. Accordingly, he is deemed respecting those women by not objectifying them and staying true to himself that he is not attracted to them.

Finally, the analysis of this study reveals several essential points that describe and elaborate the portrayal of male homosociality in the friendship of Jude, Willem, Jude, and JB. In their friendship, the vertical homosociality is performed through three characteristics: emotional detachment of Jude, gender inequality practice enacted by Willem, and also the externalization of homophobia and homosexual panic by Malcolm. Further, there are eventually some changes in their behavior which make the performance of horizontal homosociality is eventually more dominant through four characteristics in their friendship: emotional and physical intimacy, gender equality, nonhomophobia, and noncompetitiveness. This situation, therefore, enables the development of more inclusive and nonhegemonic male homosociality.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### A. Conclusion

Based on the previous chapter, the researcher concludes that both vertical and horizontal homosociality is performed in the friendship of Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm predicated on Hammaren and Johansson's theory. Moreover, vertical homosociality is performed through two characteristics: emotional detachment and homophobia. First, Jude emotionally detaches from his friends as he does not want to show his vulnerability which can lead to the imperfect image of his masculinity. Second, Malcolm shows some heterosexual panic and homophobic behaviors in several occasions.

However, there are some character developments which happen to both Jude and Malcolm. Accordingly, horizontal homosociality is performed through four characteristics in this friendship: intimacy, gender equality, nonhomophobic relationship, and noncompetitive relationship. To begin with, this friendship mainly develops emotional disclosure and is built on trust and affection. Jude is finally emotionally attached to his friends as he understands that male friendship is not always demanding his strong masculinity.

Secondly, they often enable the inclusion of their female partner and female friends in their circle. Third, this friendship also conveys nonhomophobic environment and gay-friendly practices. At this point, Malcolm eventually understands the different nuances of manhood and the different types of

masculinity and put more respect to his friends' sexual orientation. Lastly, Jude, Willem, JB and Malcolm frequently help each other to make the other succeed in their endeavors. Therefore, the more inclusive and nonhegemonic homosociality is developed in their friendship.

### **B. Suggestion**

This study focuses on the horizontal homosociality portrayed in the male main characters' friendship based on nonhegemonic masculinity implication. However, the implication of nonhegemonic masculinity in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* can also be analyzed from other potential perspectives. From the perspectives of gender and psychology, as Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* contains sexual abuse and childhood trauma material, other researchers can possibly conduct a study about how childhood sexual abuse trauma can shapes one's gender, gender roles and sexuality. Meanwhile, using queer sociological theory, future researchers can also analyze homosexual relationships in the heteronormative society.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE



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