

“13 Reasons Why” gets mixed reviews

New Netflix show focuses on the reasons for one teen’s suicide

by Olivia Stensberg

After being released only 3 weeks ago, the hit Netflix series “13 Reasons Why” is taking over New Trier.

The show was originally a book by Jay Asher, which Universal Studios was planning on making into a movie with Selena Gomez as the lead.

Netflix took the idea in 2015, making it a series with Gomez as an executive producer instead.

“I started watching because a lot of people are talking about it at school and Selena produced it and I’m a fan of hers,” said Junior Haley Hoover.

The book also brought a lot of attention to the series.

“I think people are talking about it because everyone’s heard of the book,” said junior Jane Lombardo.

The story follows Clay Jensen (Dylan Minnette) who received a package with 13 tapes in it. The tapes are from Hannah Baker, a friend of his who recently killed herself. Each tape consists of a reason for her death.

Each episode is 1 tape and the viewer follows along with Clay as he listens to the tapes learning more about himself, his classmates, and her death.

The 13 episodes were released

all at once just like the tapes. There are other “rules” to listening, causing the story to become more dramatic as the episodes/tapes continue.

While the rules and twists in the plot cause some viewers to become hooked on the show, others think the show is making light of suicide and turning it into a game taking away from the seriousness of the issue.

“They really romanticize suicide at times,” sophomore Alice Bowe said.

Senior Jimmy Lipsey agreed. “It makes a game of suicide when she makes the tapes and holds them above everyone’s heads, which irks me. I think it shows the wrong message about depression.”

While some are not complete fans of the show, others are obsessed with the show and support its message.

“It’s hard to watch at times, but it reflects a lot of stuff that happens at New Trier accurately,” Hoover said.

The show is also a realistic depiction of high school because the characters are relatable and may remind a viewer of someone else they know.

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The show has actors and actresses that most people have never heard of and aren’t recognizable,

which helps make the show realistic.

In addition, it takes place in an environment that high schoolers live in.

“I think it’s incredibly real and shows a good point of view of someone who’s incredibly hurt. I love that it shows a teen’s point of view and I finished it in one night,” junior Caroline Alcock said, who binged the show.

“It’s deep and hard to watch sometimes but it’s a good show and I finished it in three days,” senior Lillie Reardon said.

“13 Reasons Why” highlights the fact that you never know what someone else is going through, so joining in on a “joke,” starting a rumor, or making fun of someone could be more detrimental than one may think.

The show also tackles the difficult topic of making it unique. There aren’t many other movies and shows that talk about suicide and depression.

“The point of view of someone who’s suicidal makes it unique. Suicide isn’t talked about very often so it’s a new point of view. You just don’t get that awareness anywhere else,” continued Alcock.

Students aren’t only talking about this show because of the message but also for the mysterious plot itself. In each episode dozens of new secrets are uncovered and the story thickens with every tape.

“I like watching it to find out the real reason Hannah killed herself but it’s frustrating they take so long to figure it out sometimes,” junior Catherine Morris said.

Though the show isn’t perfect,



Clay Jensen (Minnette) as he listens to a friend’s suicide tapes | Netflix

it’s gained a lot of popularity since it was released March 31 and has a relatively positive message.

“I think it shows how much

mental illness can effect someone and how little people notice until it’s too late,” said Junior Juliette Lewis.

Kendrick Lamar releases new album

New songs show Lamar’s internal struggle with the effects of fame

by Tia Rotolo

Kendrick Lamar released his fourth album “DAMN.” on Good Friday, a poignant reflection on his life and fears as he both struggles and embraces the God-like figure he has become for rap music.

On Mar 30, a music video for Lamar’s main single, “HUMBLE.,” was released. Lamar first appears dressed as the Pope. When the song starts, he asks, “Wickedness or weakness?”

Repeated images show Lamar in a religious light, specifically in the moment where he takes Jesus’ seat at a recreation of the final supper.

One thing is clear, Lamar has surpassed humility.

This arrogance is apparent throughout the entire album, proving one thing, Lamar has finally confronted himself: his talent, his upbringing, and the juxtaposition of his lifestyle now. If anything, he’s not humble, and he’s not sorry either.

He understands his platform and the nature of his success, an awareness that will only allow him to speak honestly about how his life affects him.

The album begins with “BLOOD.” Listeners are confronted his question, wickedness or Weakness? And continues with “You decide / Are we going to live or die?” The question of wickedness

and weakness follow throughout the album, but so does the confrontation with living and dying, specifically the immortality of Lamar’s legacy.

The questions follow with a story, told by Lamar, as he attempts to help a blind woman. “So I was taking a walk the other day,” he begins. The woman, a figure of weakness, shoots and kills Lamar, ultimately asserting herself as a figure of wickedness.

From the background, a news report becomes clear of a FOX reporter critiquing Lamar’s lyrics of police brutality, mocking his rhymes and the validity of his words.

“DNA.” follows as Lamar reclaims his blackness. “I got loyalty, got royalty inside my DNA.” Lamar raps.

Halfway through the song, the listener is confronted with a similar voice, the FOX News reporter, who claims, “This is why I say hip hop has done more damage to young African Americans than racism in recent years.”

“FEEL.” follows as Lamar struggles with his own fame, and the isolation that comes with it. The boasting attitude is still present, but with a slight glance into Lamar’s insecurities regarding his family and friends, contradicting much of the album so far. “Ain’t nobody prayin’ for me,” Lamar repeats.

In “PRIDE.” Lamar struggles with his values of humility and his proud executions. He solemnly remarks, “Sick venom in men and women overcome with pride / A perfect world is never perfect, only filled with lies.”

Lamar is not succumbing to the deadly sin, he’s immersing himself in it, progressing the God complex that

he’s developed.

“XXX.” most resembles “Old Kendrick.” Lamar details the story of how a friend’s son wanted to follow in his footsteps, disregarding books and schoolwork in hopes of making it as a famous rapper. The boy gets killed, and the friend goes to Lamar for guidance, another image of his godliness.

Lamar has finally confronted himself: his talent, his upbringing, and the juxtaposition of his lifestyle now.

This is where Lamar’s God complex reaches its limit. Lamar has no forgiveness. Very honestly he tells his friend, “I can’t sugarcoat the answer for you, this is how I feel: / If somebody kill my son, that mean somebody gettin’ killed.”

Maintaining his newest confrontation with his own morality, Kendrick expresses his most prominent weakness, “FEAR.” specifically in three stages of his life.

The first, as a young boy in a house of domestic violence, consistently being threatened with, “I’ll beat your ass.”

In the next verse, Lamar struggles with the danger of his neighborhood, especially as an adolescent. “I’ll prolly die,” Lamar repeats, staging various scenes of normal teenage life: parties, street corners, and grocery stores. Reminding listeners that these seemingly normal assets of life can

become areas of potential demise for black teenagers.

In the third verse, Lamar shares his fear at 27 (right at the release of the his previous album To Pimp a Butterfly) in which the entire fortune and fame that he had worked so hard for could be lost in a second due to judgments and fear.

In the fourth verse Lamar summarizes the previous songs and his fears regarding their meaning.

The boasting bravery of the album up until now is only surface level. Beneath the Godly concept that Lamar has created for himself, the fear that resided in a Compton kid can’t fully escape.

As Lamar transitions to his final song, “DUCKWORTH.” the listener is confronted with a final reminder, “What happens on Earth stays on Earth!” Potentially limiting the claims that Lamar makes of his godliness.

Lamar takes the last song of the album to share a story of the nature of coincidence.

The street tale details Anthony Tiffith, “Top Dawg,” as he robs a local KFC in Compton, sparing the life of “Ducky,” a worker and father of young Lamar. Lamar would go on to get signed to Top Dawg Entertainment, Tiffith’s label, at fifteen, many years after.

Lamar uses this moment to discuss the nature of good karma and the obscurity of the universe.

He finally states, “Whoever thought the greatest rapper would be from coincidence? / Because if Anthony killed Ducky / Top Dawg could be servin’ life / While I grew up without a father and die in a gunfight.”

The song makes Lamar’s fears of losing it all so real, because the circumstances were already so arbitrary.

There’s a gunshot. Then rapid rewinding of familiar beats and Lamar’s voice, until it settles, “So I was taking a walk the other day.”

As if it was a manic dream or as if it could all happen again. It leaves listeners with uncertainty, but masterfully comments on the recurring, chance-like nature of life itself.

Lamar has consistently been under the watchful eye of his fellow rappers.

“Good Kid, M.A.A.D City” made rap music about the struggle again, allowing cinematic elements to pervade rap albums. Many rappers followed by creating entire albums, detailing the realities of black America.

“To Pimp a Butterfly” made rap music political, and rappers followed by unapologetically asserting their stance on police brutality and the mistreatment of black people in America.

But Lamar creates something completely new in “DAMN.” He can’t be recreated because the album is reliant on who Lamar is and how he’s established himself in the genre. For once, his album is completely his, and his God complex is sustained throughout.

Rap music is in an especially influential and effective place right now, and Kendrick Lamar has confidently asserted himself as dominating it all.