
INNER CONFLICT AS THE EFFECT OF BODY SHAMING IN THE FILM *TALL GIRL* (2019) BY SAM WOLFSON

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Abstract	Article Information
<p><i>This research focuses on inner conflict as an effect of body shaming in the film Tall Girl (2019). There are two objectives of this research, namely; to identify the types of body shaming present in the film Tall Girl 2019 by Sam Wolfson and to describe the impact of body shaming on inner conflict in the film Tall Girl (2019) by Sam Wolfson. The theory used in this research is the analysis of psychology of literature approach using Dolezal's body shaming theory and Kurt Lewin's inner conflict theory. The methodology used is qualitative research where the researcher presents the problem descriptively. The results show two types of body shaming experienced by Jodi, namely Acute Body Shame and Chronic Body Shame. When body shaming affects inner conflict, there are influences of inner conflict found in this study, namely approaching, avoiding, and approaching-avoiding.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>psychology of literature, body shaming, inner conflict, impact of body shaming, Tall Girl</i></p>	<p><i>Received:</i> 15/02/2025</p> <p><i>Revised:</i> 20/02/2025</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> 25/02/2025</p>

INTRODUCTION

In this study, the researcher chose the film *Tall Girl*, which tells the story of a child who has experienced body shaming since childhood, leading to inner conflict within herself. This film tells the story of Jodi, a high school student at Ruby Bridges High School in the United States. Jodi is a 16-year-old teenager who is 185 cm tall and very insecure about her appearance, as she is often dropped out as a student who is always lacking in confidence and very reserved. Jodi grew up to be an insecure teenager and only had two close friends, Fareeda and Duncklemen.

Jodi often hides her height by wearing loose clothing and avoiding activities that require her to be in the public eye. Jodi's embarrassing body makes her feel inferior and insecure. This is one of the consequences of body shame. This impacts their daily lives, such as starting to lose confidence in front of many people due to frequently experiencing verbal

abuse. The negative effects on mental health, such as depression, are closely related to the internal conflicts that arise from physical shame. Inner conflict is one of the aspects of psychological literature. This conflict refers to the inner turmoil experienced by an individual in a literary work, whether emotionally, morally, or mentally, as stated by Alwi & Hasan:

"inner conflict is a conflict caused by two or more differences or opposing desires to dominate oneself, thereby enhancing behavior." (Alwi & Hasan, 2005, p. 587).

Inner conflict occurs when a character is torn between two or more conflicts. Inner conflict is a condition where a person experiences two or more conflicting desires, values, or beliefs. Inner conflict is referred to as a problem that arises in a mental condition or psychological issue. The conflict that occurs within a character in a story, namely the problem they experience with themselves, is an internal issue that triggers the emergence of conflict. For example, due to the clash between two desires, beliefs, different choices, hopes, or other problems that occur within them. The researcher is interested in studying this film about the inner conflict resulting from body shaming because in everyday life, whether among artists, the general public, or schoolchildren, cases of body shaming often occur. Unbeknownst to them, verbal violence in the form of extortion or slander often targets physical appearances, whether of fat people, thin people, tall people, or short people. The researcher chose this film because it depicts a reality in the real world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study uses a literary psychology approach. The researcher also explained how body shaming can trigger inner conflicts as a result of the body shaming above.

Body Shaming

Body shaming is the act or practice of criticizing and shaming someone by making fun of their body shape or size or making negative comments. As Dolezal said,

"Body shaming is the act of criticizing, commenting on, or comparing the physical appearance of another person or oneself."

According to (Dolezal, 2022, pp. 743- 745), body shaming consists of the following consists of two types: acute and chronic body shaming. For example, as found in the character of Jodi in the film *Tall Girl* where Jodi experiences excessive body shaming caused by her height that is not like other children.

Inner Conflict

Inner conflict is one of the essential parts of a story, the two essential elements that build a plot: conflict and climax. Every work of fiction has at least one 'internal conflict' (pronounced), which is present through the desires of two characters or characters with their environment. One main conflict, which can be external, internal, or both, underpins these specific conflicts. Conflict is an essential part of almost any plot in the form of fiction, short story, drama, narrative, poetry, or novel, providing interest and suspense. Conflicts occur in

human life, which varies according to one's social background. Conflicts arise in literary works that make the reader to keep reading to know the story till the end. The inner conflict in this film expresses the complexity of life today, especially the lives of women and in the school environment who have to face pressure due to body shaming. As Lewin said,

“inner conflict can drive a person in achieving two or more goals simultaneously. Inner conflict is one of the psychological factors that can be managed.” (Lewin, 1997, pp. 213-216)

When dealing with disputes generated by impulses in one's psyche, inner conflict is defined as a quarrel that occurs within the individual.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the methodology used by the researcher is the qualitative descriptive method. To facilitate the researchers, they used this method so that data could be collected according to classification using descriptive words. Qualitative methods can provide a means to develop context-rich descriptions and understanding of phenomena. Researchers use qualitative research methods to develop descriptions and understanding of the phenomena being studied with paragraphs that are easy to understand. Qualitative methods are appropriate when researchers want to gain a clearer understanding of a known phenomenon, develop knowledge based on the object being studied, or provide explanations for theories used in a new field. To collect data, the researcher takes several steps. First, the researcher determines the type of research and the theories to be used, and then the researcher studies those theories. Then, the researcher watches the movie *Tall Girl* repeatedly and carefully to find quotes that can answer the research question. After that, the researcher classified the findings in the film. Data is images containing related dialogues or scenes. The researchers then sorted all the quotes as evidence of findings in the film *Tall Girl*. The researcher also found more information about the film and theory from the internet by reading journals and articles. Additionally, the researchers gathered data from films and triangulation theory relevant to the topic.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Types of Body Shaming

Based on the chart, the research data revealed two types of body shaming: acute and chronic body shame. The analysis showed that acute movement contributed 25%, acute speaking style contributed 19%, acute behavior 9%, acute comfort related to self presentation 12%, explicit chronic 20%, implicit chronic 15%. These types were further examined to identify and interpret the body shaming the effect of inner conflict

The Body Shaming the Effect of Inner Conflict

After identifying the types of body shaming in Sam Wolfson's film *Tall Girl*, the researcher analyzed *The Body Shaming the Effect of Inner Conflict*. The researcher found 12 movement out of approach-approach conflicts, 16 speaking style out of approach-approach

conflict, 8 behavior out of approach-approach conflict, 10 comfort related presentation out of approach-approach conflict, 18 explicit chronic out of approach-approach conflict, 7 implicit chronic out of approach-approach conflict. 6 movement out of avoidance-avoidance conflict, 8 speaking style out of avoidance-avoidance conflict, 7 behavior out of avoidance-avoidance conflict, 16 comfort related presentation out of avoidance-avoidance conflict, 20 explicit chronic out of avoidance-avoidance conflict, 27 implicit chronic out of avoidance-avoidance conflict. 12 movement out of approach-avoidance conflict, 18 speaking style out of approach-avoidance conflict, 11 behavior out of approach-avoidance conflict, 23 comfort related presentation out of approach-avoidance conflict, 8 explicit chronic out of approach-avoidance conflict, 9 explicit chronic out of approach-avoidance conflict conflicts.

Types of Body Shaming in the Film Tall Girl

The types of body shaming found by researchers in the character Jodi are acute body shame and chronic body shame, which make Jodi feel inner conflict.

1. Acute Body Shame

Acute body shame is a temporary feeling of shame or humiliation associated with your body caused by breaching a threshold of appropriate behavior, appearance or performance. In this film, it does not only discuss the issue of body shame but also relates to the behavioral aspects of one's body.

a) Movement



(Figures 1 screenplay 03:12-03:15)

Jodi: Now I'm just trying to get through the day with as few people as possible asking me

Schnipper: Well, how's the weather up there?

Jodi, a 6ft 1.5in student, was walking through the classroom hallway when her schoolmate, Schnipper, teased her and said, 'How's the weather up there?'

Body movement reaction Jodi goes limp and hunches her shoulders. This indicates an element of body shame, especially acute body shame because of the sudden and strong feelings of shame towards the body. Acute body shame is usually experienced in social situations, which can cause a person to fail to present themselves. In the context of body shaming according to Dolezal, how a person feels physically embarrassed and intense physical response coupled with a sense of withdrawal and hiding. It is important to understand the broad psychological impact of body shame and how it can greatly affect individuals.

b) Speaking style



(Figures 2 screenplay 03:58-04:26)

Student: How's the weather up there?

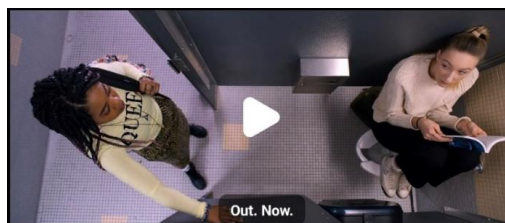
Fareeda: Hey, what'd you say to my best friend?

Jodi: Fareeda, please

Fareeda: Quick, you think you got jokes? Say some more funny stuff. Dazzle us

Jodi was packing books in her wardrobe, and then Fareeda approached her. Then a student passed by them both and said, "How's the weather up there?" The student said it to insult Jodi because of his height. Then Fareeda defended Jodi, and later Jodi interrupted, but Fareeda silenced Jodi with her body language. As in the previous quote, in this quote there is also a speaking style that uses sarcastic humor. Jodi then showed deep shame towards her body because of the questions that embarrassed her feelings and disrespected her individuality, and Fareeda defended her. This could make Jodi feel more relieved. Dolezal stated that acute body shame is a sudden and intense feeling of shame towards the body that is often experienced in social interactions and can cause someone to fail to present themselves.

c) Behavior



(Figures 3 screenplay 29:50-30:50)

Fareeda: Out now

Jodi: Excuse me. I'm reading

Fareeda: You're hiding

Jodi: I don't want to run into Kimmy

Fareeda: She prank called you, Jodi

Jodi: So what? Easy for you say. Okay, nothing rattles you

Fareeda: Plenty of stuff rattles me. I just roll with it

Jodi: Well, this is how I roll. I like your outfit, by the way. Might be one of your best design

Fareeda: Don't change the subject

Fareeda, Jodi's friend, approached Jodi who was hiding in the bathroom. There was a slight disagreement between them regarding Jodi's hiding behavior. Fareeda tried to encourage and support Jodi but failed. There is a quote that describes acute shame, "I don't want to meet Kimmy." This quote provides a clear picture of how acute body shame can affect a person's daily behavior. Avoidant behavior, fear of judgment, and social isolation are some examples of behaviors that often emerge in individuals with acute body shame. Dolezal argues that acute body shame is an acute shame caused by body shape. This body shame is

often experienced in social interactions, which can lead someone to fail to present themselves.

d) Comfort related to self-presentation



(Figures 4 screenplay 24:11-25:18)

Jodi: I look like Grandma's couch

Mother Jodi: Or a beautiful mermaid princess! Okay, no. Harper, no!

Mother Jodi: Now we're talking! You look great

Jodi: Thank you, Mom, but it's just...it's not me

Mother Jodi: Okay

Jodi's mother told her to wear the dress she chose; seeing herself in the mirror wearing that dress made her feel insecure. The first dress Jodi tried on felt like her grandmother's sofa, but her mother kept praising it. This quote clearly illustrates how social pressure and unrealistic expectations can exacerbate comfort related to self-presentation acute body shame. When individuals are forced to present themselves in ways that are not comfortable for them, it can trigger feelings of insecurity, low self-esteem, and even depression. Dolezal argues that acute body shame is acute shame caused by body shape. This body shame is often experienced in social interactions, which can cause someone to fail to present themselves. These concerns are temporary and often occur suddenly.

2. Chronic Body Shame

Chronic body shame is deep and prolonged feelings of shame towards one's own body. This feeling is often related to negative perceptions about physical appearance and comparisons with others. In the film *Tall Girl*, Jodi experiences chronic body shame because her height stands out compared to her friends.

a) Explicit chronic shame



(Figures 5 screenplay 39:15-39:48)

Jodi: Height reduction surgery. Let's see. Costs \$150,000. "But I know a guy in India who will do it for cheap. Very long recovery time, extremely painful, but when I learned to walk again, it was worth it. Why couldn't I have just been normal?"

Jodi showed frustration over the severity of her condition. Jodi is alone in her room and searching for information about height surgery on the internet. The act of

searching for information about the surgery shows that Jodi's shame has reached a very deep level. She feels so pressured by her height that she is willing to take the risk of surgery to change it. Jodi is very aware that she has a problem with her height and this makes her unhappy. This quote illustrates how explicit chronic shame can drive someone to take extreme and potentially dangerous actions. It is important to remember that explicit chronic shame often manifests deeper issues, such as low self-esteem or feelings of unworthiness. As Dolezal said, chronic body shame is a chronic physical shame related to a person's body that is more persistent or permanent, such as weight, height, or skin colour.

b) Implicit chronic shame



(Figures 6 screenplay 02:58-03:07)

Jodi: I continued to grow at a rapid pace and guess what? Having back row, center placement in all of your class photos isn't exactly a self-esteem booster.

Since Jodi was little, she felt the difference between herself and her friends, and she grew up quickly. One of them is that every time there is a photo session, Jodi is always placed in the back row in the class photo. Being consistently positioned in the back row of the class photo is a strong non-verbal message. Jodi might feel unimportant or less attractive compared to her friends. This feeling of shame may not always be consciously recognized by Jodi, but gradually it shapes a narrative about herself that is less valuable. This quote illustrates how seemingly trivial childhood experiences can have a very significant impact on a person's psychological development. Jodi's experience serves as a classic example of how implicit chronic shame can form early on and affect a person's life in the long term.

The Body Shaming the Effect of Inner Conflict

1. Approach-approach conflict

In this study, the researcher found several quotes that consist of inner conflicts, with an in-depth exploration of inner conflicts during adolescence. This inner conflict is depicted through the character Jodi, who has experienced inner turmoil due to body shaming since childhood, which then affects her life in her teenage years.

The first excerpt found by the researcher in the film depicts Jodi experiencing conflicting approaches. She has two equally compelling desires. Jodi is clearly interested in Stig and wants to attract his attention. This is the main goal that drives her to seek Harper's help. On the other hand, Jodi might feel uncomfortable with the idea of making drastic changes to her appearance.



(Figures 7 screenplay 16:00-16:30)

Jodi : How do I get a guy to notice me?

Harper: Oh..my..God! Okay, I've been waiting for this day to come my entire life and I never thought it would, but I'm so glad it's finally here!

Jodi: What day is that?

Harper: (inhales) Um, the day that you finally come to your big sister and ask her about love to finally embrace the sublime splendor that is a woman, and to stop dressing like a, no offense, very large little boy

This conflict can cause changes in Jodi's behaviour. She might become more self-conscious or even more insecure. This quote illustrates the complexity of teenage girls' feelings, especially regarding identity and social acceptance. The conflict of approaches experienced by Jodi illustrates how difficult it is to make a decision when faced with two equally appealing options but with different consequences.

2. Avoidance-Avoidance Conflict

Jodi was packing books in the locker, and then Fareeda approached her. Then a student walked past both of them and said, "How's the weather up there?" The student told him to insult Jodi because of his height. Then Fareeda defended Jodi, and later Jodi interrupted, but Fareeda silenced Jodi with a gesture. Jodi was faced with two equally unpleasant choices: if Jodi responded to the insult, she might get involved in an unwanted conflict or worsen the situation, whereas if Jodi chose to remain silent, she would feel insulted and her self-esteem would be hurt.



(Figures 8 screenplay 03:58-04:26)

Student: How's the weather up there?

Fareeda: Hey, what'd you say to my best friend?

Jodi: Fareeda, please

Fareeda: Quick, you think you got jokes? Say some more funny stuff. Dazzle us.

Jodi was packing books in the locker, and then Fareeda approached her. Then a student walked past both of them and said, "How's the weather up there?" The student told him to insult Jodi because of his height. Then Fareeda defended Jodi, and later Jodi interrupted,

but Fareeda silenced Jodi with a gesture. Jodi was faced with two equally unpleasant choices: if Jodi responded to the insult, she might get involved in an unwanted conflict or worsen the situation, whereas if Jodi chose to remain silent, she would feel insulted and her self-esteem would be hurt.

3. Approach-avoidance conflict

Jodi is reading a book in the library. Then she talked to the boy sitting in front of her. Jodi's interest in the boy's character changed instantly after seeing Jodi stand up. The student immediately stopped his speech and was slightly surprised to see Jodi's height. Then the student just left him and met with his friends to talk about Jodi. Jodi was initially attracted to the boy because of the interesting conversation. This interaction gave Jodi the opportunity to get to know the student better, but the boy's shocked reaction and immediate departure after seeing Jodi's height made Jodi feel uncomfortable and rejected. This incident can trigger feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem in Jodi, especially related to her height.



(Figures 9 screenplay 01:36-02:00)

Student: Hey, look, you know... I know I've only known you for, like, two minutes, but would you maybe wanna...

Jodi: Would I maybe wanna what? (chuckles)

Student : (scoffs) Um, never... never mind. Never... Never mind.

This quote describes how the approach-avoidance conflict can trigger various negative emotions and reinforce feelings of insecurity in a person. In Jodi's case, this conflict is closely related to self-image, social acceptance, and fear of rejection.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the body shaming depicted by Jodi in the film *Tall Girl*, the researcher can conclude how the experience of body shaming can trigger deep inner conflicts in individuals. Through the character of Jodi, this research shows how social pressure to meet unrealistic beauty standards can damage self-esteem and cause individuals to avoid social relationships and opportunities for growth. Jodi's inner conflict between the desire to be accepted and the fear of rejection becomes the focus of this research. This study concludes that body shaming not only affects a person's physical appearance but also has significant psychological consequences, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation. The findings of this study indicate that body shaming has a significant impact on an individual's mental health. Jodi experiences anxiety, depression, and social isolation due to prolonged inner conflict. In

addition, this research also highlights the importance of social support in helping individuals cope with the negative impacts of body shaming.

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