

Inferiority Complex of the Main Character in *Tall Girl* Movie by Nzingha Stewart

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Abstract. *Tall Girl* is a romantic comedy movie directed by Nzingha Stewart in 2019. It tells the story of a tall girl who hates her physical appearance. This research aims to analyze the inferiority complex in the main character of the *Tall Girl* movie. The writer uses a contextual method in analyzing this movie. The writer analyzes intrinsic and extrinsic aspects to show the inferiority complex experienced by Jodi Kreyman, as the main character. The intrinsic aspects analyzed contain character and conflicts. Meanwhile, for the extrinsic aspect, the writer analyzes the inferiority complex using Inferiority Complex Theory by Alfred Adler. The result shows that Jodi has an inferiority complex because of the problems experienced by her tall body. However, she can overcome her inferiority through her ways eventually.

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1 Introduction

Humans have carried low self-esteem since they were born, but this sense of inferiority must be reduced daily. As humans get older, they need a confidence to make big life decisions. The term inferiority complex refers to an aberrant inferiority complex (Adler, 1927: 30). If humans are inferior, it will be difficult for them to maximize the potential that exists within them. In the movie, characters experience feelings of inferiority complex as in real life.

This is a study of *Tall Girl* movie, the main character of this movie faces many conflicts in her life that affect her characterization. Jodi Kreyman, the main character in this movie, has a different physical size from an average person. The significant difference in body size between her and others make her feel inferior. The inferiority feeling that Jodi experiences over the years has so many effects on her character and behaviour. The process of self-acceptance is an obstacle and challenge in Jodi's life.

The writers choose this work because they want to go deep into psychological theory, especially regarding the inferiority complex in literary works. In addition, this movie implies an important message about self-acceptance which many people in this digital era need. Individuals do not have to be someone else to be praised. Every individual is created differently, and those differences make each human being unique.

The writers want to know how the main character's inferiority complex influences in this movie's story. Hence, they choose the title of this study "Inferiority Complex of the Main Character in *Tall Girl* Movie by Nzingha Stewart". The writers hope this paper can inspire and provide more information to the readers about the values of life, especially the *Tall Girl* movie.

2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will explain several theories and expert opinions as the pillars of the analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects in *Tall Girl* movie. The intrinsic aspects discussed are characters and conflicts. The extrinsic aspect is Alfred Adler's inferiority complex theory to analyze the work from a psychological point of view.

2.1 Characters and Characterization

Characters play an essential role in the storyline. According to Abrams (2015: 42), characters are the individuals portrayed in a dramatic or narrative work whose moral, intellectual, and emotional attributes are inferred by the reader from what they say and how they say it (dialogue) and what they do (action). Characters can be divided into two groups: major or main characters and minor characters. The major characters can be further analyzed into two groups: the protagonist or the very central character and the antagonist or the enemy.

The author describes the characters with characterization. Characterization can be defined as any action within a work by an author or used to describe a character (Reams, 2015: 4). A deeper understanding of characterization makes the readers closer to literary works.

According to George and Thomas (2017: 143), the author either directly or indirectly shows its characterization. In direct characterization, they explain the character's personality, physical attributes, profession, etc. directly via exposition or analysis, or they make other characters in the tale describe them. In indirect characterization, the author reveals the characteristics of the characters by their actions.

2.2 Conflicts

Conflict is often found in human life. According to Dennen (2005: 3), conflicts can be defined as dissonance of interests, goals, values, needs, expectations, and social cosmologies (ideologies). Conflict is a problem created by the author's story to make the storyline intriguing. In acting, conflicts can give more attention to the movie's audience.

According to Jhonson and Thomas (2017: 98), conflict can be in the form of physical, mental, emotional, and moral that can occur between the main character and other characters and between the main character and himself. It can be concluded that there are two types of conflict, internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict occurs between a character and herself, while external conflict occurs between one character against another character or things outside herself.

2.3 Adler's Inferiority Complex Theory

Inferiority is a term that describes someone when they feel they are weak and do not have the same ability or are better than other people (Schultz,

2017: 133). This feeling of inferiority arises when individuals want to compete with the strengths and abilities of others. For example, children feel they are lacking in everything when compared to adults (Adler, 1992: 60). This pressure is driven the children to reach a higher level of development. If they have reached a certain level of development, then there is a sense of struggle to reach the next level. The pattern is always the same until they grow up. Individuals with low self-esteem harder to achieve their goal.

Adler's theory of feelings of inferiority stems from his observations of his patients who feel pain in several parts of the body, the pain suffered by individuals is actually an attempt to solve non-physical problems. This situation, according to Adler, is caused by imperfections of the body, which he says there are organs inferiority (Adler, 1917: 4). Humans are born imperfect and potentially have weaknesses in their organs. In the other side, everyone always tries to compensate his weaknesses with superiority.

Inferior feelings arise when a person fails to compensate for the deficiencies he has. This compensation is determined by lifestyle and efforts to achieve perfection (superior). Children with inferiority organs, improper parenting, and unfavorable environment tend to be selfish, inconsiderate, lack social interest, courage, and self-confidence (Adler, 1964: 118). Individuals with an inferiority complex exhibit a number of symptoms, including poor self-esteem, insecurity, failure to accomplish a goal, a propensity to give up, a tendency to retreat from society, frequent feelings of sadness, anxiety, and melancholy.

Every problem that occurs in humans has a causal factor behind it. According to Rattner (1969: 28), there are five main factors that cause a person's feelings of inferiority. These factors are divided into five groups, they are physical deficiency/difference, social and economic status, family situation, gender, and parenting style.

The way parents raise their children greatly influences their children. In children who are neglected, children often develop feelings of worthlessness and humiliation, depression, and anxiety, while children who are spoiled tend to have poor self-esteem, develop narcissism, and lack empathy (Schultz, 2017: 125). Good or bad parenting style has a big impact on children's development.

There are many different ways in which a person's birth position, whether they are the oldest child, second child, last child, or only child, it

influences their personality (Schultz, 2017: 128). Regardless of the sequence in which they were born, having older or younger siblings may have an effect on one's personality. This birth order has an effect on everything from a person's sexual orientation to their ability to function socially.

3. Result and Discussion

Inferiority complex may be experienced by individu in him/her life. This is reflected in *Tall Girl* movie, experienced by Jodi Kreyman, as the main character in the story.

There are three causes behind Jodi's inferiority complex. The causes of Jodi's inferiority complex are physical differences, the youngest child, and pampered parenting style. The physical differences that Jodi is suffering become the main cause of her inferiority. Jodi's height is is too tall to compare with other girls. She has 187 cm tall at 16 years old of age.

3.1 The Cause of Jodi's Inferiority Complex

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Every day, what Harper does is preparing the beauty pageants. That is what Jodi sees every day, so Jodi thinks her sister is too busy for herself. As a younger sister who needs the love of an older sibling, Jodi doesn't feel that way for Harper. The last child does have a tendency to be spoiled.

Richie and Helaine are Jodi's parents. Richie had been worrying too much about Jodi's growth since childhood. Pampered parenting styles from her father contributes in making Jodi becomes inferior.

Richie : I thought it would be nice hanging out with other tall people. And... And then you could see that they're perfectly okay being tall. Jodi, I just want you to feel normal.

Jodi : Don't you realize that... that every time you try to make me feel more normal, you just end up making me feel like more of a freak?

(*Tall Girl* (2019): 38.25-38.58)

One night, Jodi's father invites a tall club named Tip Toppers that consist of people who are taller than normal people. Jodi feels uncomfortable with the presence of these tall people in her house and she chooses to lock herself in her room instead of socializing with these strange people.

3.2 The Cause of Jodi's Inferiority Complex

Jodi experiences insecure, shyness and melancholy. Jodi is insecure with her height. She often compares herself to other normal girls. Jodi said "I mean, Kimmy's... She's perfect. I'm... this." (*Tall Girl* (2019): 45.58-46.06) She compares herself to Kimmy.

Jodi, who has been bullied since she was a child, feels that she is being neglected by the rest of her friends. She choose to be silent and does not care if her friends bullies her. Although her friend, Fareeda, always encourages to fights again those people, and Jodi never listens to her..

A boy : How's the weather up there?
Fareeda : Hey, what'd you say to my best friend?
Jodi : Fareeda, please.
(*Tall Girl* (2019): 03.48-04.04)

Jodi is very easy to get emotional about things that make her sad. Even small things can provoke Jodi's emotions. Anyone can trigger Jodi's melancholy feelings, one of which is her parents

Mom : You just have to be strong in the face of adversity. I mean, that's how I got through high school.
Jodi : Mom, everyone loved you in high school. Oh. Ten guys asked you to prom. I mean, what adversity did you face, exactly?
(*Tall Girl* (2019): 06.56-07.10)

3.3 The Effect of Jodi's Inferiority Complex

Jodi's inferiority complex leads her to be a person that lack of social interest, timid, and selfish. Jodi's inferiority complex is emerged when she was a child. The peak of her feeling of inferiority is that she tends be

alone. She withdraws from her social circle. She chooses to run away and hides from the problem she is facing. Jodi has been hiding in the toilet all day long after being pranked by Schnipper and Kimmy the night before.

Jodi is a timid person. She does not be the center of attention. She does not have much courage to get what she wants. She knows with her height, she looks more prominent than the other students. Therefore, she likes to be alone and get away from crowds.

Jodi : I'm going in.
Fareeda : You are?
Jodi : No, of course I'm not... going in.
(*Tall Girl* (2019): 20.13-20.20)

Jodi who has an inferiority complex does not socialize much with people. She chooses to be friend in a small circle. The only friends she has are Jack and Fareeda. Her inferiority complex has led her to be selfish. She does not like when her friends leaves her or breaks their friendship because the two of them are the only friends that Jodi has. Jodi said to Jack “So, what, am I not cool enough for you to sit and have lunch with anymore?” (*Tall Girl* (2019): 56.15-56.20)

3.4 Jodi’s Ways to Overcome Her Inferiority Complex

Jodi is finally able to overcomes by fixing her family problem, improving communication with friends, being confident, and staying away from toxic people. Jodi prefers to be alone than communicates with her sister who is just taking care of herself and her beauty pageant. When she asks her sister for help, unexpectedly for Jodi, her sister gives a good impression of Jodi’s request.

Jodi : Well, I... I wanted to, you know, talk to you about stuff but...
Harper : Why didn’t you?
Jodi : I don’t know, just because you were just busy with all your pageants, and I just figured that you weren’t interested.
Harper : You mean more to me than any stupid crown.
Jodi : Then I guess I will come to you about stuff, then

(Tall Girl (2019): 01.08.00-01.08.24)

In addition, Jodi also knows that her father really loves her after knowing her father's reaction when Stig does not come with Jodi to the final of Harper's beauty pageants. Her father is very disappointed to Stig and he feels very fond of her daughter. That is a touched moment for Jodi's heart. Since that moment, Jodi begins to play the piano again with her father.

Jodi's father : I'm gonna kill that kid when I see him.

Jodi's mother : Don't talk like that.

Jodi's father : I'm serious. I'm gonna run over Stig with the car.

Jodi's mother : Okay, then you'll go to jail.

Jodi's father : Yeah, well, then I'll do my time like a man,
because no one stands up my daughter, you hear
me? No one stands up my daughter!

(Tall Girl (2019): 01.12.00-01.12.11)

Jodi feels sorry after Fareeda is angry with her for several days because of Jodi's ignorance to Fareeda's invitation, when she invites to watch a movie. Fareeda is angry with Jodi since Jodi just joins Escape Room with popular gang and Jack rather than accept Fareeda's invitation. However, Jodi still needs her to solve Jodi's problem. Fareeda is too special for Jodi so she is the first person that Jodi approached after finishing her speech. Jodi approaches to Fareeda for what she has done to Fareeda earlier.

A fight in Jack's house party opens Jodi's eyes wide. Jack fights with Stig to defend Jodi. Stig's slander against Jodi makes Jack furious. Jodi who knows Jack defending her in front of all their friends is very touched. The day after the party, Jack comes to Jodi's house to give her high heels as a sign of love and apology. Jodi wears those beautiful high heels on homecoming night. After Jodie gives a speech on homecoming night, Jack and Jodi are officially dating.

After many problems that have occurred in Jodi's teenage years, she realizes that she will never get out of inferiority if she is still being the same person. Therefore, she tries to strengthen herself by accepting herself as she is. She realizes that being a tall girl is not something to be

shameful of because it is a grace from God. She will be always confident and inspiring to all people throughout her life.

4 Conclusion

Inferiority complex may be experienced by individual in their life. This is reflected in *Tall Girl* movie, experienced by Jodi Kreyman, as the main character in the story. The inferiority complex suffered by Jodi Kreyman can inspire the reader to increase self-love without comparing themselves with others because every individual has differences in physical appearance and personality. In the end, Jodi with some inferiority complex finally able to overcome her fears.

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