



**BULLYING IN HIGH SCHOOLS
REFLECTED IN A *GIRL LIKE HER* FILM
BY AMY S. WEBER**

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
For S- 1 Degree in Literature
In English Department, Faculty of Humanities
Diponegoro University

Submitted by:
Bahriyatul Ulum
13020115140082

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY
SEMARANG
2019**

PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly confirms that she compiles this project by herself and without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3 and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains that she does not quote any material from other publications or someone's paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, 11th September 2019

Bahriyatul Ulum

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“Have your dreams, because God will always embrace it”

Andrea Hirata

“Man Jadda Wa Jada”

Arabic’s Quote

*This thesis is dedicated to
my beloved family and everyone
who have supported and helped me to accomplish this thesis.*

APPROVAL

**BULLYING IN HIGH SCHOOLS
REFLECTED IN A *GIRL LIKE HER* FILM
BY AMY S. WEBER**

Written by

Bahriyatul Ulum

NIM: 13020115140082

is approved by the project advisor

On 6th August 2019

Thesis Advisor

Dra. R. Aj. Atrinawati, M.Hum.
NIP. 196101011990012001

The Head of the English Department

Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A.
NIP. 196408141990011001

VALIDATION

Approved by

Strata 1 Project Examination Committee

Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

On 11th September 2019

Chair Person

First Member

Ratna Asmarani, M.Ed., M.Hum
NIP. 196102261987032001

Drs. Jumino, M.Lib., M.Hum
NIP. 196207031990011001

Second Member

Third Member

Drs. Siswo Harsono, M.Hum
NIP. 196404181990011001

Dwi Wulandari, S.S., M.A.
NIP. 197610042001122001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Alhamdulillah. All praises are to Allah Swt, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, the One who has given me strength, health, and spirit to accomplish this final project entitled “Bullying in High School Reflected in “*A Girl Like Her*’s Film by Amy S. Weber”. May peace and blessing be upon Muhammad SAW. On this occasion, I would like to thank all those people who have contributed to the completion of this research report.

The deepest gratitude and appreciation are addressed to Dra. R. Aj. Atrinawati, M.Hum., my project advisor who has given her continuous guidance, helpful correction, moral support, advice, and patience, without which it is doubtful that this final project came into completion.

My special thanks are given to the following:

1. Dr. Nurhayati, M.Hum., the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
2. Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A., the Head of English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
3. All of the lecturers in English Department who has shared their precious knowledge and great experiences.
4. My beloved parents who always give me endless love, prayer, and support. My sister and brother who are always my playmate and my mood booster at home.
5. All my big family who continuously support me.

6. My best friend who always share love and motivation to finish this research.
7. All friends who always support me.

Finally, the writer expects that this final project will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about bullying in high school, especially in America.

Semarang, 11th September 2019

Bahriyatul Ulum

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	i
PRONOUNCEMENT	ii
MOTTO AND DEDICATION	iii
APPROVAL.....	iv
VALIDATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
ABSTRACT	x
1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1. Background of the Study.....	1
1.2. Research Questions	2
1.3. Purposes of the Study.....	2
2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK	
2.1. Intrinsic Elements.....	3
2.1.1. Characters.....	3
2.1.2. Conflicts	3
2.2. Extrinsic Elements	4
2.2.1. Bullying.....	4
3. RESEARCH METHOD	
3.1. Method of the Study.....	5
3.2. Method of Data Collection.....	5

4. DISCUSSION	
4.1. Intrinsic Elements.....	6
4.1.1.Characters.....	6
4.1.2.Conflict.....	8
4.2. Extrinsic Elements	10
4.2.1.The Types of Bullying Faced by Jessica Burns	10
4.2.2.The Effects of Bullying Faced by Jessica Burns.....	13
4.2.3.The Resolutions of Bullying Faced by Jessica Burns	14
5. CONCLUSION	15
REFERENCES	16

ABSTRACT

A Girl Like Her by Amy S. Weber is an American drama film about high-school bullying. The main character, Jessica Burns, 16 years old is bullied by her previous best friend, Avery, and she ends up attempting suicide. The aim of this study is to analyze the bullying faced by Jessica Burns as the main character of the film. The analysis includes the types, effects and resolutions of the bullying towards Jessica Burns. The writer uses contextual method supported by the theories of bullying by Sandra Harris and Garth F. Petrie, and Ken Rigby to analyze the bullying issue in the film. This study shows that any types of bullying is able to affect its victims' mental state. The writer concludes that bullying should be everyone's concern as bullying can lead its victims into suicidal actions.

Keywords: bullying, types, suicidal actions, resolutions.

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

A Girl Like Her (2015) is a drama film written and directed by Amy S. Weber, an American screen writer and director. The film revolves around the story of bullying faced by a 16-years-old girl namely Jessica Burn, a high school student of Brookdale School. Jessica Burns, the main character, is bullied by Avery Keller, her classmate, and she ends up attempting suicide.

Bullying is an act of bothering or insulting other people (Harris, 2003: 17). It involves interactions between a powerful person or group with the powerless ones. There is a tendency of students in high school to be the victims of bullying. National Center for Education Statistics states that about 21 percent of students ages 12–18 is reported being bullied at school in 2015 (2017: 74).

The bullying issue reflected in *A Girl Like Her* involves the interactions between powerful and powerless sides portrayed through the characters of Jessica and Avery which attract the writer to analyze the film. Bullying in this film happens in a school which is part of social institutions and it also encourages the writer to do the analysis.

The writer finds a previous study by Mina Yasuda Park on the same film. Her study focuses on the consequences of bullying faced by Jessica Burn which leads Jessica to attempt suicide (2017). Therefore, the writer does not only focus

on the consequences of bullying but also another aspect of bullying in the film which is types of bullying faced by Jessica Burns.

1.2. Research Questions

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What are the types of bullying faced by Jessica Burn?
2. What are the effects of bullying faced by Jessica Burn?
3. What are the resolutions of bullying faced by Jessica Burn?

1.3. Purposes of the Study

The purpose of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze the types of bullying faced by Jessica Burn.
2. To analyze the effects of bullying faced by Jessica Burn.
3. To analyze the resolutions of bullying faced by Jessica Burn.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Intrinsic Elements

2.1.1. Characters

According to Holman, a character is a short description of a figure in a literary work that symbolizes certain qualities (1980: 74). Characters in a literary work can be divided into several types. Based on the role to drive the plot of a story, characters can be divided into protagonist and antagonist characters. Protagonist is the main character or the center of a story while antagonist is a character who opposes the protagonist (Potter, 1967: 7).

Characters can also be grouped into flat and round character, based on the character developments. Round character has changes in its character, including its ideology, belief, and value, as the cause of the conflict she or he faces. Flat character, on the other hand, remains stable and has no changes in its character from the beginning to the end of the story (Abrams, 2011: 53).

2.1.2. Conflicts

Conflict is a struggle between at least two sides or forces that oppose with one another in a plot. It can be a conflict between a character againsts himself or so called internal conflict, and a character againsts external forces which can be called external conflict (Holman, 1980:98).

2.2. Extrinsic Elements

2.2.1. Bullying

According to Harris and Garth F. Petrie, the definition of bullying is an act of annoying other people, and an offensive behavior from one person or group that has a power to the person that has less power (2003: 17). This act of bullying creates fear, pesimism, depression, and even suicidal actions. Bullying itself can be caused by some reasons such as superiority, hate, differences, and contradiction with the others, and it has two basic forms which are physical and non-physical bullying (Rigby, 2007: 20).

2.2.1.1. Physical Bullying

Physical Bullying is an offensive behavior which involves a physical attack like pushing, slapping, punching, hitting, kicking, and throwing things to the victim. Physical bullying may develop or reach high levels of violence like knifing (Rigby, 2007: 20).

2.2.1.2. Non-physical Bullying

Non physical bullying mostly uses the power of words that can hurt the victim. The behaviors that can be included as non physical bullying are mocking physical aspects, spreading hates and rumor, or even ignoring someone in a group of society. It can also be classified as non physical bullying when someone underestimates or even calls the others with bad names (Rigby, 2007: 20).

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Method of the Study

To analyze the film, the writer uses contextual method which includes the analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic elements as the literary work analyzed in this paper reflects the reality of real world (Beard, 2001:2). The analysis of the intrinsic elements in this paper focuses on the characters and conflicts while the analysis of the extrinsic elements focuses on the types, impacts, and resolutions of bullying.

To support the method, the writer uses the theory of bullying by Sandra Harris and Carth F. Petrie. The theory is covered within *Bullying: The Bullies, the Victims, the Bystanders* (2003). The writer also employs the theory of bullying by Ken Rigby to define the types of bullying portrayed in *A Girl Like Her*.

3.2. Method of Data Collection

In order to collect the data of the study, the writer uses library research method. The method involves the act of gathering and identifying sources of the information related to the research question (George, 2008: 6). The data and information needed by the writer in this study are gained from several sources such as reliable books and websites. The writer has mentioned each source used in this study to support and make the analysis more valid.

DISCUSSION

4.1. Intrinsic Elements

4.1.1. Characters

There are several characters presented in *A Girl Like Her*. However, in this analysis, the writer focuses on the analysis of two characters of the film namely Jessica Burns as the victim of bullying and Avery Keller as the bully.

4.1.1.1. Jessica Burns

Jessica Burns is the protagonist in *A Girl Like Her*. She can be classified into this type of character as the film itself mainly tells about Jessica Burns who faces bullying in school. Jessica can be said as the main focus or center of the film.



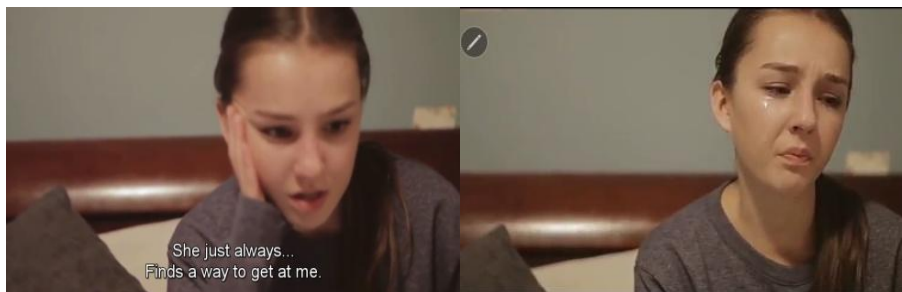
A1.00:53:47 [Disc 1]



A2. 00:53:49 [Disc 1]

Jessica Burns is a 16-year-old American high schooler of the South Brookdale School. She is a cheerful girl who comes from a happy family. Pictures **A1** and **A2** show how lovely and cheerful Jessica is as she receives love from her mother. The pictures also shows that Jessica has a good relationship with her mother.

However, there is a change in her character after she is bullied in the school by Avery Keller. The bullying begins when Jessica and Avery are having an exam in the class. Avery tries to cheat on Jessica's exam but Jessica covers her exam with her hand accidentally. After that moment, Avery starts to hate and bullies Jessica for around six months. Although Avery bullies her in the school, Jessica does not tell her family about the bullying she faces, and keeps it in secret to the point that she can not bear the pressure any longer.



B1.00:30:42 [Disc 1]

B2. 00:30:49 [Disc 1]

Pictures **B1** and **B2** are ones of the scenes which depict Jessica's condition after getting bullied. She cries and becomes depressed because of the bullying. She eventually decides to attempt suicide by drinking a handful of pills. From the change in Jessica's character, it can be said that Jessica a round character.

4.1.1.2. Avery Keller

Avery Keller is the antagonist in *A Girl Like Her*. She is the one who bullies Jessica in the film after Jessica refuses to help her in an exam. The character of Avery herself is portrayed as a popular girl in her school, superior in the school.

Avery Keller is showed as a high-tempered girl. She gets angry easily, and her acts and words can be rude. This personality is probably influenced by her parents who are told being angry at her and scolding her often.



C1.01:05:49 [Disc 1]

C2. 10:06:08 [Disc 1]

Pictures **C1** and **C2** above, shows the scene when Avery is angry and uses bad or rude words. Furthermore, it is not only her words which are rude, but also her acts especially towards Jessica. She is portrayed not only bullying Jessica verbally but also physically. However, as the end of the film, she realizes her mistake after watching the video of herself bullying Jessica. She cries and regrets for what she has done to Jessica. From the realization of her attitudes, Avery can be classified into round character.

4.1.2. Conflict

There are some conflicts portrayed in *A Girl Like Her* such as internal conflict between Jessica Burns againsts herself as the victim of bullying, and the external conflict between Avery Keller againsts her own family. However, the conflict analysis in this study focuses on the analysis of external conflict between Jessica Burns and Avery Keller.

At the beginning, Jessica Burns and Avery Keller have good relationship. Their relationship starts to change when Jessica do not want to help Avery in an exam. As the result, Jessica Burns is bullied by Avery Keller until she decides to attempt suicide because of the pressure she gets.



D1.00:43:09 [Disc 1]

D2. 00:43:17 [Disc 1]

Brian, Jessica's best friend who knows about the bullying, reveals to the journalist team that the bullying starts after Jessica refuses to show Avery her answers in an exam. Pictures **D1** and **D2** show the scenes when Brian tells that Jessica blocks her test when Avery tries to cheat off it. That particular act of Jessica hurts Avery's pride until she develops hate towards Jessica.

After the exam, Avery starts bullying Jessica in the school verbally and physically. The bullying occurs for six months, and Jessica never tells her parents about it. Furthermore, besides Brian, no one else knows about what happens to Jessica because she is not able telling about her problem to someone else. Jessica becomes depressed of the bullying she faces.

The conflict of bullying in this film comes into its resolution after Jessica is attempting suicide. People around her including the teachers and students' parents become aware of the bullying issue. Avery regrets her acts towards Jessica and apologizes to Jessica for everything she has done to her.

4.2. Extrinsic Element

In this study, the writer focuses on the analysis of the bullying faced by Jessica Burns. There three aspects of bullying reflected in *A Girl Like Her* namely types, impacts, and resolutions of bullying.

4.2.1. The Types of Bullying Faced by Jessica Burns

Jessica Burns is the victim of bullying done by Avery Keller. She is told facing both physical and non-physical bullyings which occur for six months.

4.2.1.1. Physical Bullying

Physical Bullying is an offensive behavior which involves a physical attack like pushing, slapping, punching, hitting, kicking, and throwing things to the victim. There are three kinds of physical bullying faced by Jessica, pushing, pouring water, and throwing a paper.

1. Pushed



E1. 00:49:44 [Disc 1]

E2. 00:49:45 [Disc 1]

Picturea **E1** and **E2** show the scenes when Jessica falls down after being pushed by Avery deliberately. This incident happens when Jessica goes to the classroom and she meets Avery in front of the door. Avery opens the door for Jessica and suddenly pushes Jessica's body.

Avery pretends that she does not do it on purpose. As Jessica about reaches Avery's hand which seems to offer help, Avery and her friends just leave her when she falls down. Avery is pretending to help Jessica.

2. Poured with Water



F1.00:51:44 [Disc 1]

F2. 00:51:45 [Disc 1]

One of physical bullying experienced by Jessica is when Avery poured some water into her body. It happens when Jessica goes to bathroom to change her uniform from physical education class. In the bathroom, she meets Avery and Avery says to Jessica that she smell something strange on Jessica's body. After saying that, Avery drags Jessica's body to go to the toilet and poured her with water from the shower. Pictures **F1** and **F2** show the scene when Avery drags Jessica into the bathroom. She pours water to Jessica's body then leaves Jessica crying alone in the bathroom.

3. Thrown with a Crumpled Paper



F1. 00:50:16 [Disc 1]

Throwing a crumpled paper at someone with a purpose to mock him or her, is a kind of physical bullying because it involves physical attack and it hurts Jessica physically, Avery does this kind of act to Jessica. Picture **F1** shows the scene when Avery and her friends sit in front of Jessica in the canteen on purpose. Avery throws a paper to Jessica. This scene portrays that Avery shows her superiority to intimidate Jessica.

4.2.1.2. Non-Physical Bullying

Non physical bullying mostly uses the power of words that can hurt the victim. There are two kinds of non-physical bullying faced by Jessica, calling with bad names and underestimating.

1. Called with Bad Names



G1. 00:49:19 [Disc 1]

Calling someone with bad names is part of non-physical bullying. This non-physical bullying happens when Jessica is watching a basket ball competition in the sport center at her school. She records the competition using a camera. While she records the competition, Avery comes and said “How’s my little bitch doing?” to Jessica. The words ‘little bitch’ which can be seen from picture **G1**. It can be said that Jessica is bullied verbally.

2. Underestimated

Non-physical bullying experienced by Jessica is being underestimated. Avery always shows her superiority in front of Jessica. She thinks that Jessica is not in the same level as her.



H1. 00:50:47 [Disc 1]

The scene in picture **H1**, shows that Avery orders Jessica to use another bathroom. She does not want Jessica to use the same bathroom as her. The incident starts when Jessica goes to the bathroom and inside the bathroom there are Avery and her friends. Avery glares at Jessica and stops her from going to the bathroom and says “well, your bathroom, it’s down there”. The scene emphasizes Jessica’s powerlessness in front of Avery.

4.2.2. The Effects of Bullying Faced by Jessica Burns

Bullying can create fears, pessimisms, depressions, and even suicidal actions to its victims because bullying will affect its victims’ mental state. In this study, the writer finds that Jessica as the victim of bullying also experiences such feelings.



I1. 00:52:39 [Disc 1]

Jessica is suffering from depression because of the bullying. Picture **I1** shows Jessica and Brian sit in the corner of the school. Jessica cries and confesses that she can not bear the burden of being bullied by Avery any longer.



J1. 00:04:08 [Disc 1]

J2. 00:04:08 [Disc 1]

Jessica eventually attempts suicide because of the bullying towards her. Picture **J1** shows the time when Jessica attempts suicide by drinking a handful of pills from her mother's cupboard. She is found unconscious by her mother in the bathroom, and is rushed to a hospital after that. She is told laying in a coma for several days because of the pills, picture **J2**.

4.2.3. The Resolutions of Bullying Faced by Jessica Burns



K1. 00:56:03 [Disc 1]

K2. 00:56:03 [Disc 1]

After the information of Jessica's suicide attempt which is caused by a bullying spreads out around the school, the headmaster and other teachers invite the students' parents to discuss about the issue together. Pictures **K1** and **K2**, shows that they come into a conclusion that the bullies shall not only be punished but also be embraced and advised. This action is to make the bullies realize their wrong attitudes and can be a better person aheads.



L1. 01:23:18 [Disc 1]

L2. 01:23:32 [Disc 1]

Avery realizes her mistakes and apologizes to Jessica. Avery records her apology to Jessica, and uploads it to all of her social media. Pictures **L1** and **L2** show that Avery feels guilty and says sorry for her bad attitudes to Jessica. Avery states that she is ready to face the consequences of her acts and get punishments from all her friends and her teachers in the school.

CONCLUSION

A Girl Like Her by Amy S. Weber is a film which portrays a bullying issue. She sets up the conflict of bullying through the character of Jessica Burns as the victim of the bullying and Avery Keller as the bully. The bullying issue in the film itself is analyzed in this study by using the theory of bullying by Sandra Harris and Garth F. Petrie, and Ken Rigby.

The writer finds that the bullying faced by Jessica Burns happens as Jessica refuses to help Avery in exam which makes Avery develops hate for Jessica. The writer finds also that the bullying done by Avery which leads Jessica to attempt suicide has several forms involving physical and non-physical bullyings.

The physical bullyings experienced by Jessica include pushed, poured with water, and thrown with a paper while the non-physical bullyings are called with bad names and underestimated. Those forms of bullying causing Jessica depressed and decided to attempt suicide.

This study shows that any forms or types of bullying are able to affect its victims' mental state. This suggests also that bullying should be everyone's concern, especially schools as a social institution, as bullyings can lead its victim into suicidal actions.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M. H. (2011). 10th ed. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Boston: Cengage Learning Houghton
- Beard, Adrian. (2001). *Text and Context: Introducing Literature and Language Study*. London: Routledge
- George, Mary. (2008). *The Elements of Library Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Harris, Sandra & Petrie Garth F. (2003). *Bullying: The Bullies, the Victims, the Bystanders*. USA: Scarecrow PressInc
- Holman, C. Hugh. (1980). 4th ed. *A Handbook to Literature*. Indianapolis: The Bobs-Merril Company
- Klarer, M. (2004). *An Introduction to Literary Studies Second Edition*. London: Routledge
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice
- Potter, J. (1967). *Elements of Literature*. New York: The Odyssey Press
- Rigby, Ken. (2007). *Bullying in School and What To Do about It*. Melbourne: Australia Acer Press
- Yasuda, Mina Park. (2017). *A Girl Like Her Film Analysis*. Oakland: University of California