كليـــة التربية للعلوم الانسانية
College of Education for Human Sciences

Lamiaa Ahmed Rasheed

Nidaa Abduljabbar Hasan

Tikrit University/ College of Education for Women

* *Corresponding author: E-mail* :
Lamia.ahmed62@tu.edu.iq.com
 07712715570

Normalizations of Cosmetic Surgeries: A Study of Body Alteration in Ellen Hopkin's Perfect Novel

A B S T R A C T

Over the last decades, cosmetic surgeries have grown in popularity. The majority of consumers in this lucrative industry are women. Normalizing cosmetic surgery and body alteration could lead to the homogenization of beauty and create a culture of people who look increasingly similar. Members of a society are particularly focusing on physical beauty and classifying people based on their physical features. The purpose of this research is to explore the reason behind normalizing cosmetic surgery and its psychological dimension and effects, and the concept of body image offered in Scott Westerfeld*'s Uglies*. The study investigates women's reactions to direct or indirect pressure of society on them to have cosmetic surgery and the ideology of the ideal beauty constructed by their culture. The concept of perfect beauty becomes interesting in this story because it can only be achieved by cosmetic surgery. Consequently, it will be appropriate to apply body image theory in studying this novel. It was found that society, media, family, school , and peers have an important role in creating the individual's body image and ways of thinking; the society's power to influence people makes it become the authorities that decide the "beautiful" and "ugly". The hypothesis proposes that there is a link between body image and cosmetic surgery, people who have a poor body image are more likely want to undergo cosmetic surgery than those who have a positive body image. The findings imply that an individual's body image is shaped by their cultural and social environments in order not to revolt against the government and the prevailing system by altering individuals' brain lesions during cosmetic surgery.

تطبيع عمليات التجميل / دراسة تغيير الجسد في رواية *القبيحون* للكاتب سكوت ويسترفيلد.

ا .م .د. لمياء احمد رشيد / جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية / قسم اللغة الانجليزية.

الباحثة: نداء عبد الجبار حسن/ جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية / قسم اللغة الانجليزية.

الخلاصة:

يعد الجمال أهم الصفات الأساسية للمرأة و يشمل كل من المظهر الخارجي و السلوك. يُشار الى هذه الصفات بمفهوم (الجمال المثالي) والذي يختلف تعريفه حسب ثقافة المجتمعات. انتشرت عمليات التجميل على مدى العقد الماضي و اصبحت شريحة النساء الأكثر استهلاكاً لهذه الصناعات المربحة. في هذه الدراسة سيتم تناول سبب انتشار عمليات التجميل و الأبعاد النفسية و الاجتماعية المترتبة على هذه الظاهرة و علاقتها بتقدير الذات. ان الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو الكشف عن مفهوم نظرية صورة الجسد و علاقتها بعمليات التجميل و تقدير الذات في رواية الكاتب الامريكي سكوت ويسترفيلد (*القبيحون*) وكذلك ردود افعال النساء المباشرة وغير المباشرة ضد الضغط الاجتماعي المتمثل بدفعهن لاتخاذ عمليات التجميل للوصول الى الجمال المثالي المبني على الأيديولوجية الخاصة بكل ثقافة .

في رواية (*القبيحون*)، ينظر افراد المجتمع لبعضهم على اساس الجمال الخارجي و يصنفون بعضهم على نفس اساس نفس المبدأ والذي لا يمكن تحقيقه الا من خلال عمليات التجميل الجراحية. وبالتالي فان تطبيق نظرية صورة الجسد ستكون الانسب في دراسة هذه الرواية. تصور رواية (*القبيحون*) الرفض و التهميش للنساء اللائي يرفضن الخضوع لمعايير الجمال المفروضة من قبل المجتمع. تشكل عدة عوامل في تكوين صورة الجسد لدى الفرد و اهمها العائلة، المجتمع، المدرسة، الاصدقاء و الاعلام. ان قوة تأثير المجتمع على الافراد في رواية (*القبيحون*) يجعل منه السلطة التي تقرر (الجميل) و (القبيح). تشير النتائج الى ان صورة الجسد تتشكل لدى الافراد حسب بيئاتهم الثقافية والاجتماعية بالترتيب وذلك من اجل عدم الثورة على الحكومة و النظام السائد من خلال التلاعب بأنسجة الدماغ اثناء عمليات التجميل الجراحية .

الكلمات المفتاحية : صورة الجسد , تقدير الذات, قبول الذات , اضطراب صورة الجسد , عمليات التجميل.

1.1 Introduction
1.1.1 Body Image Theory

In the 1920s, Paul Schilder, an Austrian psychiatrist, psychologist, and medical researcher, coined the phrase "body image," in his book *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*, published in 1935 defining it as "the picture of our own body which we form in our mind, that is to say, how the body appears to ourselves" (Schilder ,1950, p. 11). Since then, the concept has been broadened to encompass both perceptions and attitudes. Body image, according to Rudd and Lennon, is "the mental image we hold of our bodies." The perceptual component

deals with how we 'see' our size, shape, weight, features, movement, and performance, while the attitudinal component deals with how we feel about these characteristics and how our feelings affect our behavior. 153 (Rudd and Lennon, 2000).   The concept of body image is used in many areas, including psychology, medicine, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, philosophy, culture ,and feminist studies. Human culture has always put a high value on the attractiveness of the human body, although a person's perspective of their own body may differ from society's standards (Grogan, 2008). Since our early childhood ,body image has had a huge impact on our quality of life. It has an impact on our emotions, behaviors, beliefs, and even interpersonal relationships. The phrase is also commonly used in the media. It is thought that a person's personality, personal experiences, and a variety of socioeconomic and cultural variables all influence how they perceive their bodies. Body image is impacted by one's sense of physical appearance, which is commonly compared to others or to some cultural "ideal." Reich (1969) expressed it so beautifully: "Acceptance of the body image...depends on the reflections of it which he observes in the attitudes of those around him."

Through compliments and admonishments, through images and words, she discovers the meaning of the words pretty and ugly; she soon knows that to be pleased is to be pretty as a picture; she tries to resemble an image, she disguises herself, she looks at herself in the mirror, she compares herself to princesses and fairies from tales. (Beauvoir, 2010, 304) cited in (Aldory, A., & Salih, B. ,2023).

After all, if there are widespread negative attitudes, these individuals may suffer from a decline in their subjective well-being in addition to be unable to experience the promised improvement in social connections. Instead of adjusting their ideal pictures, many people seek surgery clinics to transform themselves in order to stand up to their dissatisfying feelings.

"The way women live their bodies as objects for another's gaze is rooted in society and

circumstances, rather than in anatomy." Aldory, A., & Salih, B. (2023).

Receiving negative feedback from family, peers, and friends can lower the self-esteem, especially in females, because a large part of female self-esteem is based on maintaining relationships and interactions. According to Perocheska and Nourkerass (2001), men generally exaggerate their skills while women tend to underestimate them. Females place a lot of importance on their appearance and

beauty. However, in recent years, social, physical, and cultural considerations, as well as the advancement of surgical procedures, have led to an increase in the use of plastic surgery.

When people regularly compare themselves to models or celebrities in the media, staring in the mirror to define flaws in their bodies and faces can turn into an obsession, to the point where their entire sense of self-worth is entirely distorted. Body dissatisfaction occurs from failing to meet the thin-ideal (Stice & Bearman, 2001).

Many recent investigations on the etiology of body image disturbance have focused on models with multiple components. The Tripartite Influence Model (van den Berg, Thompson, Obremski-Brandon,& Coovert, 2002) examines three major influences on body image development: parents, peers, and media. Individuals do not experience any of these elements independently; consequently, factors can have a simultaneous positive or negative influence depending on the signals sent (Thompson, 1996).

This is compatible with Festinger's (1954) social comparison concept, which claims that people define themselves through comparisons with others. The concept distinguishes between two types of social comparisons that people make: ability comparisons and opinion comparisons. Social comparisons of ability revolve around comparisons of achievements or performance, with a focus on how well an individual is doing relative to others, and are thus typically competitive in character.

Social comparisons of opinion, as opposed to social comparisons of competence, are often noncompetitive in nature and concentrate on the comparison of attitudes, ideas, and thoughts. Social comparison of opinion is often not competitive in nature and, in contrast to social comparison of ability, which concentrates on the comparison of talents, compares ideas, attitudes, and viewpoints. (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999).

Children and teenagers regularly compare their academic, athletic, creative, and musical abilities, as well as their physical attractiveness and popularity, to their siblings (Rieves & Cash, 1996). According to (Bellino, Izza, & Paradiso, 2006), various studies reveal that certain people are always preoccupied with their looks, and even if they have a normal appearance, they have a constant worry about being ugly or unattractive. The positive and negative consequences of body image have an impact on one's psychosocial attitude to life (Cash and Pruzinsky, 2002).

Body image has a wide variety of psychological and physiological implications. Throughout history, it has been incredibly hard for people to live up to societal expectations and their perceptions of what the ideal body is. People with distorted body images frequently attempt to alter their bodies in some way, such as through dieting or cosmetic surgery. Body image and life satisfaction were compared to post-plastic surgery satisfaction by Jakatdar and Williams (2004), and self-esteem in female and male adolescence; they found that there is no apparent distinction between men and women in the level of pleasure following surgery, and that this satisfaction is correlated with self-esteem, body image, and life satisfaction. Those who undertake cosmetic surgery seek a more appealing body or face and are likely to suffer psychologically more than other members of the community (Brown, 2001).

People who were interested in cosmetic surgery had a weaker body image than those who were not, according to a study on cosmetic surgery, body image, and attitudes of men and women in daily life (Frederick & Peplau, 2007). An unfavorable body image reduces self-esteem. In terms of adolescent self-esteem, Cash and Pruzinsky (2004) claim that body image is the most crucial factor. People who are unhappy with their bodies adjust how they perceive themselves until the gap between their real and ideal bodies is bridged. Cosmetic surgery seems to be more appealing to people who have a poor perception of their bodies (Swami, 2009). According to Breuning et al. (2010), the operations are performed to eradicate the majority of appearance discontent and boost self-esteem. Sometimes stress and worry, self-critical viewpoints or low self-esteem in body image induce people to alter their appearance and have plastic surgery. An influential social person who influences body image could be an important social figure. Obtaining community prestige has many practical consequences that allow people to accomplish their aims more effectively.

To grasp comprehensibly the reason and effects of the normalization of cosmetic surgeries, this paper will shed light on the body alteration through cosmetic surgeries and the impacts of these procedures on the characters presented in Scott Westerfeld*'s Uglies*. Westerfeld is an American author of eighteen books. He began his career writing adult novels before moving
on to Young Adult literature with his *Midnighters* series. He is the author of four New York City-set YA novels: *Peeps, The Last Days, So Yesterday*, and *Afterworlds. Yesterday* looks at popular culture and why certain tendencies are

considered 'cool.' The novels honor innovators who go outside the box and make their own fashion statements, the most well-known of which is the best-selling. His books have won the Philip K. Dick Special Citation, the Aurealis Award, and the Victorian Premier's Award, in addition to being named New York Times Notable Books and BBYA Top Ten Children's Books of the Year. He's had nonfiction published in Nerve, Book Forum, and the scientific journal Nature. Westerfeld's work is heavily influenced by the idea of free thinking and questioning authority.

1.2 Discussion

The first of three novels in the *Uglies* series, published in 2005, takes place in a dystopian future that follows a global environmental catastrophe brought on by the usage of oil as a source of *energy.* Sixteen-year-olds are forced to undergo cosmetic surgeries in order to conform to established criteria of beauty in society, reducing inequality and advancing uniformity. On this imaginary planet, the societal mandate that children must follow is to become "Pretty" throughout puberty and to remain "Pretty" for the rest of their lives. He sheds light on what can happen if humanity loses contact with its own bodies. The narrator, Tally Youngblood, is about to turn sixteen. She, like many other young people before the operation, was seen as "ugly."

Tally is determined to become "Pretty," leave Ugly ville, and spend her entire life with the beautiful and pristine young people of The New Pretty Town. Tally's close friend, Shay, refuses to conform to social conventions and flees to join a gang of revolutionaries who object to the imposed way of life and reject any form of surgery, choosing instead to live as "ugly" for the rest of her life.

The novel looks into the American myth of beauty and the desire to 'improve' one's external appearance through cosmetic surgery. In Westerfeld's story, the protagonist Tally is used as an example of an American adolescent girl who develops an obsessive and compulsive need to change her appearance through cosmetic surgery as a result of the cultural context in which she lives. 'In a world of extreme beauty, everyone normal is ugly.' (Westerfeld, 2005, Cover of the book).

Tally is intrigued by what happens in the New Pretty Town while living in a dorm in Ugly Ville, especially now that Peris, the boy she likes, has become "Pretty." She admires his new bright skin, which is beautiful and devoid of marks and scars. On her way back to Ugly Ville, she meets her friend Shay, with whom

she plays tricks on newly ugly youngsters and enters restricted areas outside the city limits. Despite Shay's efforts to persuade Tally that they are normal kids, not freaks, Tally still insists to be beautiful to see Peris again, attract attention, and live a luxurious life. Tally's obsession with her appearance is initially driven by the societal pressure to conform to the standard of beauty as a "Pretty."

The theory of upward and downward social comparison was developed by (Wills, 1981) and (Wood, 1989). The upward and downward social comparison theory focuses on the direction of social comparison, specifically whether people compare themselves to those they believe to be "better" than them in some way (upward comparison) or to those they believe to be "worse" than them (downward comparison). Depending on the direction of the social comparison, social comparison can have a wide range of outcomes. Depending on the direction of the social comparison, social comparison can have a wide range of outcomes. However, it frequently results in persons having lower self-esteem and feeling inadequate. Downward social comparison might make people feel bad since it shows how things could be worse (Aspinwall, 1997)

Throughout the story, Tally frequently compares herself to other characters, particularly her friend Peris, who has already undergone the surgery and become pretty. She constantly feels inferior and inadequate compared to him, highlighting her low self-esteem."Peris had been pretty for months now, and Tally couldn't help but compare herself to him. She hated the way her own face looked, the way her eyes were too small and her cheekbones too high." (Westerfield,2005, p.44).

She believes that undergoing the cosmetic surgery will make her accepted and happy, as she fears being rejected or left behind by her friends if she does not undergo the surgery and become pretty. This fear suggests a lack of confidence in her own worth and an underlying belief that she will not be accepted or valued as she is. Often doubts herself and feels unworthy of love and friendship, indicating low self-esteem. "If she didn't become pretty, they'd all leave her behind." (Westerfeld,2005).

It is predictable that social comparison has been discovered to have an influence on self-esteem because it is a technique used to evaluate oneself (Festinger, 1954). Research has shown that those who frequently compare themselves to others online have weaker self-perceptions, lower levels of self-esteem, and more depressing emotions. Tally constantly compares herself to others and feels inadequate and insecure about her natural appearance. " Tally couldn't help feeling jealous of

Peris's perfection... she wanted to be beautiful too, to have the same effortless grace and charm that seemed to come with being a Pretty." (Westerfeld, 2005, p. 45). This obsession with her appearance leads Tally to make impulsive and reckless decisions, such as betraying her newfound friends in the Smokies in order to gain access to the surgery. She becomes so fixated on becoming a Pretty that she loses sight of her own identity and the negative consequences of her actions.

Tally is worried about what to do about her upcoming surgery, which is only a week away. She spends a lot of time looking in the mirror since she has been "treated like a walking disease" (Westerfeld, 2005, p. 120). Her operation appears to be the only thing she is actually concerned about. "There was something magical in [the pretties'] large and perfect eyes, something that made you want to pay attention to whatever they said, to protect them from any danger, to make them happy," she believes. They were very... lovely" (Westerfeld, 2005, p. 8).

Moran says that "mandatory prettying would relieve young women of the pressure to meet specific beauty standards because the Pretty Committee establishes general guidelines." (Moran 2014). However, in Westerfeld's reality, the opposite is true. Young people are not only frequently reminded that they are ugly, but they are also victims of the beauty myth and subjected to the medical gaze. The medical gaze refers to the way in which the medical profession and society as a whole scrutinize and judge individuals based on their physical appearance.

Cosmetic surgeons follow medical establishment guidelines and often reshape patients' bodies and characteristics to fit patriarchal and Western cultural ideals (Balsamo, 1997). Although on the novel's imagined planet "both boys and girls become pretties," Westerfeld's choice of "a female protagonist reminds us that women and girls have been heavily influenced by beauty expectations" (Moran, 2014, p. 124).

It is well acknowledged that patriarchy molded the concept of beauty and that it favors the female sex. Wolf claims that "women must want to embody it, and men must want to possess women who embody it" (Wolf, 2002, p. 12). As a transcultural ideal, beauty defies time, "it is an imperative for women and not for men" (Wolf, 2002, p. 12). It bases its legitimacy on bogus biological arguments.

Tally was unaware of the impact her culture has on her, and the idea of beauty depicted is primarily subjective to Tally's perspective and ideas. Tally's desire to get cosmetic surgery to become beautiful is obvious at first because her society has

taught her from birth that she is unattractive, resulting in a sense of low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction.

Tally's parents do not directly influence her decision to undergo cosmetic surgery as a key to happiness. However, they indirectly contribute to the societal pressures and expectations that influence Tally's desire for the surgery. Her parents, like most adults in the novel's dystopian society, have already undergone the surgery and are considered "Pretties." They enjoy the benefits of beauty and live in a glamorous city called New Pretty Town.

Growing up in this society, Tally internalizes the belief that physical appearance is crucial for acceptance and fulfillment. She constantly compares herself to others and feels inadequate because she has not yet undergone the surgery.

Tally's desire for the surgery is driven by her longing to fit in, be accepted, and experience the happiness that she believes comes with being a Pretty. Tally's parents, being Pretties themselves, inadvertently create an environment where beauty is highly valued and seen as a pathway to happiness and success. Because the novel's concept is based mostly on beauty ideals, it is apparent that society (culture, parents, and peer group) produces the concept of beauty.

In her research of post humanism, Katherine Hayles asserts that body and culture have no separation: "The body produces culture at the same time that culture produces the body" (Hayles, 1999, p. 200). Our bodies serve as the foundation for our social relationships. We would not be able to identify our society without its distinguishing features—even a child's resemblance to her mother would fade. Even though people are aware that plastic surgery can be damaging to their health, it has become more common in the millennium age.

In the neighborhood where *Uglies* is based, the government attempts to suppress uniqueness by making everyone appear remarkably similar.. "They rubbed you raw, and you grew brand new skin that was flawless and clear. All the old scars from accidents, bad food, and childhood illness were washed away" (Westerfeld, 2005, p. 25).

Moreover, media plays a significant role in shaping the beauty standards that define the society in *"Uglies*," and it significantly influences Tally's decision to undergo cosmetic surgery. "The city wasn't ugly, but the images on the walls were the best of the best, the ideal of the ideal, and every time Tally looked at them she felt so unsightly." (Westerfield, 2005, p. 69). This quote shows how the media images create unrealistic standards and make Tally feel inadequate and inferior.

Media put intense pressure on Tally and made her feel worthless and has low self-esteem because of society's beauty standards, which causes her to question the value of her own appearance.

"The images of perfection that surrounded [Tally] every day made it hard to have any pride at all in being ugly." (Westerfeld,2005 ,p.71). Low self-esteem is one of the many psychological factors that may lead someone to undergo cosmetic surgery. "When someone has low self-esteem, they may feel unhappy with their physical appearance and believe that certain aspects of their appearance are the cause of their lack of confidence and social anxiety" (Davis,2017).

This dissatisfaction with their appearance can lead them to consider cosmetic surgery as a solution to their perceived flaws, with the belief that altering their appearance will improve their self-esteem and make them more confident.

Tally's perception of herself changed after undergoing cosmetic surgery to become a "Pretty". She sees herself as more attractive and feels like a completely different person, indicating that her self-esteem is tied to her external appearance. "Tally had been right: becoming pretty did change you. After years of waiting for this, she felt like a completely different person, so beautiful that it scared her." (Chapter 12).

Moreover, studies have shown that individuals who have self-esteem are more likely to be dissatisfied with the outcomes of cosmetic surgery. This can be due to unrealistic expectations and a belief that surgery will solve all their problems. Tally experienced the emptiness of beauty standards and how they cannot provide true fulfillment or happiness. "She had spent her whole life fighting for something she didn't want, but now she'd gotten what she wanted. And it still wasn't enough." (Westerfield,2005).

This, in turn, can lead to a cycle of plastic surgery and low self-esteem whereby the individual is never fully satisfied and constantly seeks more surgeries. Research by Sarwer proves that "cosmetic surgery may be seen as a way to boost self-esteem, but evidence suggests that individuals with low self-esteem may still feel dissatisfied even after undergoing cosmetic procedures." (Sarwer, 2019).

Seeking cosmetic surgery to improve one's body image and self-esteem can lead to a cycle of excessive surgeries and can be dangerous for an individual's physical and psychological health. Additionally, some experts argue that the normalization of cosmetic surgeries is partly the result of improved medical technology and techniques, which have made these procedures more accessible and affordable for

a wider range of people. As more people have access to these procedures, they may become more accepted and normalized as a routine or even a necessary part of overall beauty and self-care routines.

According to a recent study, women were concerned with their appearance and self-esteem and sought cosmetic clinics without a specific treatment in mind, leaving physicians with the option of picking therapies such as Botox (Abelsson & Willman, 2020). The cosmetic surgical procedures that Tally and others undergo to become "Pretties" are decided by the "Pretty Committee". The committee is made up of medical professionals who evaluate each individual's physical and biological makeup to determine what cosmetic procedures are necessary for them to conform to society's beauty standards.

During the process, each individual undergoes a specialized test to determine what exact cosmetic procedures they need. The results of the test are then analyzed by the doctors and the "Pretty Committee", who decide on the procedures necessary to transform each individual into a "Pretty." These procedures are tailored to each person's physical characteristics, so the specific surgical procedures that Tally undergoes may differ from those that her friend Shay, for example, undergoes.

In Chapter 8, Tally expresses concern about the potential for more drastic and painful procedures such as bone restructuring. Overall, the process is highly regimented and strictly controlled by the committee and the society to ensure that everyone conforms to the narrow beauty standards of society and achieves the idealized appearance of a "Pretty." In *Uglies* world, there is no autonomy, and the "Pretty Committee" decides the surgical procedures without any input from the patients. "They'd already determined exactly what sort of cutting she would experience, exactly which scars she would have for a few weeks afterward, and how much physiotherapy she would need to return the pinkness to her skin." (Westerfeld, 2005,p. 74).

Tally is told by Dr. Cable about the biochemical treatment that the doctors use in determining what kind of cosmetic surgery someone needs to become a "Pretty". Society rejects the individualistic approach of the past, known as the "Rusty era" when people would choose their appearances based on personal preferences. Instead, the surgical procedures are determined by a scientific method, which involves evaluating the individual's biology, physical appearance, and other factors to determine their necessary cosmetic procedures. "Dr. Cable had told her about

the biochemical treatment that allowed the doctors to test exactly what kind of surgery someone needed to be pretty. No need for the randomness of the Rusty era, when people had simply chosen whatever they liked. Better to have a scientific method that could remove the possibility of choice" (Westerfeld, 2005,p. 116).

The use of a scientific method in selecting the surgical procedures for each individual removes the possibility of choice and personal preference, minimizing individuality and uniqueness among citizens. The society values conformity to the idealized beauty standards and seeks to ensure that every person looks the same, without any variations or differences between them. By using science in this way, the society also aims to prevent people from making choices that deviate from the norm, which is one of the ways they maintain control over their citizens. (Hanisch, 1970).

Overall, it illustrates how the society's need for conformity supersedes personal choice and individuality. Women come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors, and it is this diversity that gives rise to the concept of true beauty. Without taking into account women's individuality, it would be simplistic to think there is only one form of ideal beauty.

(What Is the Real Definition of Beauty by Herrick). Every person has a distinctive physical look that distinguishes them from one another; this is referred to as bodily uniqueness. The most amazing thing is that everybody is distinct from one another in terms of their skin tone, hair color, and other physical traits. Because of this diversity, no culture or notion can ever define beauty, resulting in varied views of ideal beauty within society. Tally's explanation of the physical characteristics of pretties indicates that without taking into account the risks of plastic surgery to the body, the vision of perfect beauty consists of large eyes, full lips, a pointed nose, long eyelashes, smooth skin free of scars, tall, and skinny bodies. People under the age of sixteen will be housed in a dorm and educated on the concept of perfect beauty at *Uglies*.

Based on the premise, they are given an application to construct their own visions of ideal   beauty "Everyone made morphos, even littlies, too young for their facial structure to have set. It was a great waste of a day, figuring out all the different ways you could look when you finally became pretty" (Westerfeld,2005, p.44).

Schools also has a significant impact on shaping children's perceptions of beauty by providing a social environment where children interact with their peers

from diverse backgrounds. These interactions can influence their understanding of beauty as they observe and compare themselves to others. School-age children are taught about the issues that can occur from physical diversity. The justification provided to students by the school for the rule requiring plastic surgery to make everyone equal was that people killed one another because they had different skin hues (44–45). It is clear that schools play a significant role in educating kids about the dangers of physical diversity and encourage them to get plastic surgery to make everyone equal and prevent conflicts and jealousy. Additionally, the school organizes a field trip every year to Rusty Ruins. The old city's ruins, known as the "Rusty Ruins," served as a gigantic reminder of a time when there were far too many people and they were all horribly foolish and ugly (48). Children will embrace this belief because teachers have traditionally equated being ugly with ignorance, which will help them understand the relevance of plastic surgery.

This field trip aims to educate the next generation on the dangers of diversity, including incompetence and ugliness, and the need for plastic surgery to prevent interpersonal violence.. Children absorb this ideology better than the government's harsh actions because they do not accept it as a norm, but as their beliefs. The ideology's formation also involves Tally's parents. Since opinions held in private domains can be considered family beliefs or even personal beliefs rather than laws, Tally has declined to assist Dr. Cable. It demonstrates that schools and families play a role in establishing ideology (Althusser,2003,p. 144).

Tally has refused to assist Dr. Cable in entering Smoke City; nevertheless, when Tally listens to her parents' words, she believes that anything they say is correct and that she must do it for her good. "Tally, when we're young, we all make promises. Everything is exciting, passionate, and essential when you're an ugly, but you have to grow out of it. After all, you owe nothing to this girl. She's only been causing you problems." (Westerfeld, 2005. P.116). Tally unconsciously agreed with her parents since she trusted them.

According to Althusser, "The private domain may force ideology on someone without repression or violation because they accept it as their belief." (144). Psychologist Dr. Jean Twenge, suggests that societal factors play a role in the development and maintenance of low self-esteem, highlighting the need for a critical examination of societal norms and expectations (Twenge, et al 2021). While Dr. Albert Bandura highlights the importance of supportive environments

and positive reinforcement in building and maintaining healthy self-esteem (Bandura 1988).

In the novel *Uglies*, beauty standards play a significant role in the main character Tally's self-esteem becomes even more affected when she meets Shay, another "Ugly" who isn't interested in becoming a "Pretty". Shay challenges Tally's beliefs about beauty, and through their friendship. Surrounding herself with positive influences, Tally's friends; particularly Shay, provide her with positive and supportive influences that help her to develop and maintain her high self-esteem. "Shay had always been the one to challenge convention, to question why things were the way they were." (Chapter 5).

As Tally navigates through the challenges, she also gains new skills and abilities. By learning new skills and enhancing her abilities, Tally feels a sense of pride and accomplishment which contributes to her self-esteem. She realizes that the key to self-esteem is to find validation from within herself rather than from external sources such as society or media images. "When Tally looked in the mirror, [...] she realized that the operation hadn't made her pretty.
She was still the same girl. The only difference was that people saw her differently."(Westerfeld, 2005, P.189) .Tally learns that true beauty comes from within and that her value cannot be determined by external appearance. By embracing her own identity and worth, she learns to love and accept herself for who she is. "She knew suddenly that she couldn't go back to the city and be a Pretty. Being Tally was enough. She didn't want to be anyone else." (Westerfeled, 2005).

Overall, Tally's high sense of self-esteem comes from her journey of self-discovery and personal growth in which she learns to accept and embrace her true identity, face her fears, gain new skills, find positive influences, and realize that validation comes from within.

1.3 Conclusion

In the novel "*Uglies*" by Scott Westerfeld, the concept of cosmetic surgery is explored as a means to achieve societal beauty standards. The story highlights the negative consequences and ethical implications of such procedures. Tally's journey challenges the idea that physical appearance defines one's worth, emphasizing the importance of self-acceptance and individuality.

Ultimately, the novel suggests that true beauty lies in embracing one's unique qualities rather than conforming to artificial standards through cosmetic surgery. Throughout the novel, Tally Youngblood, the protagonist, initially believes that undergoing cosmetic surgery to become a "Pretty" is the key to acceptance and happiness. However, as she becomes entangled with a group of rebels known as the "Smokies," Tally begins to question the societal norms and expectations placed upon her. As Tally spends more time with the Smokies, she witnesses the negative effects of cosmetic surgery on individuals' mental and emotional well-being.

She learns that the operation not only physically alters a person's appearance but also manipulates their thoughts and suppresses their individuality. Tally realizes that true beauty lies in embracing one's unique qualities and accepting oneself as they are.

Throughout her journey, Tally encounters numerous challenges and obstacles that force her to confront her own insecurities and redefine her understanding of beauty. She witnesses the destruction caused by the pursuit of physical perfection and realizes that it is not worth sacrificing one's identity and freedom for societal approval.

As the novel progresses, Tally becomes determined to undo the damage caused by her previous actions. She seeks redemption and works towards dismantling the oppressive system that enforces cosmetic surgery as the standard of beauty. Tally's transformation is not just physical but also emotional and psychological. She learns to value herself for who she is rather than how she looks.

At the resolution of the novel, Tally's journey towards self-acceptance culminates in her decision to defy societal norms and refuse to undergo the final surgery that would make her a Pretty. Instead, she chooses to embrace her natural appearance and encourages others to do the same. By rejecting the notion that physical appearance defines one's worth, Tally inspires others to question and challenge the oppressive beauty standards imposed upon them.

Through her experiences, Tally acquires high self-esteem by recognizing her own worth beyond her physical appearance. She learns to appreciate her unique qualities, strengths, and flaws. Tally's journey towards self-acceptance and individuality allows her to develop a strong sense of confidence and empowerment.

In the end, Tally's transformation serves as a powerful message about the importance of self-acceptance and the detrimental effects of conforming to societal beauty standards. By challenging the concept of cosmetic surgery and emphasizing the value of individuality, "Uglies" encourages readers to question and redefine their own understanding of beauty and self-worth.

References

Abelsson A. & Willman A. (2020). Caring for patients in the end-of-life from the perspective of undergraduate nursing students. *Nursing Forum* 433–438. https://doi.org/10.1111/nuf.12448

Aldory, A., & Salih, B. (2023). Voicing Women's Marginalization and Activating Solidarity: The Pull of the Stars. *Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities, 30*(1), 69-82. ISSN: 1817-6798. http://dx.doi.org/10.25130/jtuh.30.1.2.2023.25

Althusser L. & Brewster B. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy and other essays*. Monthly Review Press.

Aspinwall, L. G. (1997). Future-oriented aspects of social comparisons: A framework for studying health-related comparison activity. *Health, Coping, and Well-being: Perspectives from Social Comparison Theory*, 125-165.

Balsamo A. (1997). *Technologies of the gendered body : reading cyborg women*. Duke University Press.

Bandura, A. (1988). Self-efficacy conception of anxiety. Anxiety Research, 1, 77-98.

Bellino S. Zizza M. Paradiso E. Rivarossa A. Fulcheri M. & Bogetto F. (2006). Dysmorphic concern symptoms and personality disorders: a clinical investigation in patients seeking cosmetic surgery. *Psychiatry Research* 73–78. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2005.06.010

Block, A. R., & Sarwer, D. B. (Eds.). (2013). *Presurgical Psychological Screening: Understanding Patients, Improving Outcomes.* Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/14035-000

Brown, B. (2001). *Body image and femininity.* British Journal of Medical Psychology, 74(3), 283–290.

Cash T. F. Pruzinsky T. & NetLibrary Inc. (2002). *Body image a handbook of theory research and clinical practice*. Guilford Press.

Festinger L. (1954). *A theory of social comparison processes*. The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations.

Frederick DA, Lever J, Peplau LA. Interest in cosmetic surgery and body image: views of men and women across the lifespan. Plast Reconstr Surg. 2007 Oct;120(5):1407-1415. doi: 10.1097/01.prs.0000279375.26157.64. PMID: 17898621.

Gibbons, F. X., & Buunk, B. P. (1999). Individual differences in social comparison: development of a scale of social comparison orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 129–42.

Grogan S. (2008). *Body image: understanding body dissatisfaction in men women and children* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Hayles, N. K. (1999). *How we became posthuman* (74th ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Heatherton, T. F., & Wyland, C. L. (2003). Assessing self-esteem.

Hanisch, C. (1970). The personal is political. In S. Firestone & A. Koedt (Eds.), Notes from the second year: women's liberation: major writings of the radical feminists. New York: Radical Feminists. (Reprinted in: D. Keetley; & J. Pettegrew (Eds) (2005), Public women, public words: A documentary history of American feminism. Rowman & Littlefield.)

Henderson-King D. & Henderson-King E. (n.d.). Acceptance of cosmetic surgery: scale development and validation. *Body Image* 137–149. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2005.03.003

Herrick, L. (2015). What is the real definition of beauty? [Video file]. Retrieved from https://youtu.be/kn9xabAsnKA

Jakatdar T. A. Cash T. F. & Engle E. K. (2006). Body-image thought processes: the development and initial validation of the assessment of body-image cognitive distortions. *Body Image* 325–333. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2006.09.001

Marsh H. W. & Parker J. W. (1984). Determinants of student self-concept: is it better to be a relatively large fish in a small pond even if you don't learn to swim as well? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 213–231. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.47.1.213

Moran, J. M. (2014*). The Three Faces of Tally Youngblood: Rebellious Identity Changing* in Scott Westerfeld's "Uglies" series". In S. K. Day, B. Dowd, S. M. Hoechsmann, and G. Walton (Eds.), *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction* (pp. 123-139). Surrey: Ashgate.

Napoleon A. (1993). The presentation of personalities in plastic surgery. *Annals of Plastic Surgery* 193–208.

Perocheska, S., & Nourkerass, S. (2001). A Look at Our Obsession with Dieting, Body Image. *Women's Health Matters*, 65, 12-35.

Reich J. (1969). The surgery of appearance: psychological and related aspects. *The Medical Journal of Australia* 5–13.

Rieves, L., & Cash, T.F. (1996). Social developmental factors and women's body-image attitudes. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*.

Sarwer D. B. & Crerand C. E. (2004). Body image and cosmetic medical treatments. *Body Image* 99–111. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1740-1445(03)00003-2

Sarwer D. B. & Spitzer J. C. (2007.). Reference module in neuroscience and biobehavioral psychology. In *Cosmetic surgical and minimally invasive treatments*. essay Elsevier Inc. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-91497-0.00024-2

Sarwer D. B. Wadden T. A. Pertschuk M. J. & Whitaker L. A. (1998). The psychology of cosmetic surgery: a review and reconceptualization. *Clinical Psychology Review* 1–22.

Sarwer, D. B., Crearand, C. E., & Gibbons, L. M. (2005). Body dysmorphic disorder. In F. Nahai (Ed.), The art of aesthetic surgery (pp. 33-57). Quality Medical.

Sarwer, D.B. (2019). Body image and cosmetic surgery. In A. Rutherford & D. T. K. Li (Eds.), Handbook of transdisciplinary research on the psychosocial aspects of working and applying cosmetic surgery (pp. 73-87). Routledge.

Schilder P. (1935). *The image and appearance of the human body*. Paul Ferdinand Schilder.

Thompson J. K. & Smolak L. (1996). Body image eating disorders and obesity in youth: an integrative guide for assessment and treatment (1st ed.). American Psychological Association.

Van den Berg P. Thompson J. K. Obremski-Brandon K. & Coovert M. (2002). The tripartite influence model of body image and eating disturbance: a covariance structure modeling investigation testing the mediational role of appearance comparison. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 1007–20.

Wolf, Naomi. (2002). *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc.

Wills T. A. (1981). Downward comparison principles in social psychology. *Psychological Bulletin* 245–271. https://doi.org/10.1037//0033-2909.90.2.245.

Wood, J. V. (1989). Theory and research concerning social comparisons of personal attributes. *Psychological Bulletin, 106(2), 231*. *https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.106.2.231*