

**Towards Extraversion: A psychoanalytical Reading of
the Disabled in R. J. Palacio's *Wonder***

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Abstract

This paper seeks to delineate R.J. Palacio's vision of the disabled child through displaying different youth perspectives of the story events in *Wonder*. Within the theoretical framework of C. G. Jung's psychoanalysis, this paper explores instances of achieving psychological stability for both disabled and nondisabled characters, and turning the central character into an extravert. It applies the term Bildungsroman to the intellectual, social and psychological development of the novel's central character, Auggie, who, after going out into the world, joining the preschool and experiencing both rejection and acceptance, comes to a better understanding of the self. The paper also addresses a pressing need to investigate ways to help children build an acceptance of people who may look different. It concludes that the way society responds to the disabled changes their bad experiences and improves their lives. If others actively engage the disabled and encourage their participation in, and ensure their access to, daily activities, they will heal their psychological dilemma. People need to change their perspectives of the disabled as failing to fulfill their ascribed roles in society. The paper proves that a child with disability or deformity is able to shoulder responsibility and interact in a better way than expected from him. The novel has successfully given a positive image of disability for readers and other nondisabled children. It proves that deformity is not an impediment in the development of the protagonist's *bildungsroman*. It changes the way people look at anyone with disability, deformity or a mark of difference.

Key Words: Disability studies, R. J. Palacio, *Wonder*, psychoanalysis, Extraversion, *bildungsroman*

نحو الانبساطية: قراءة تحليلية نفسية للمعاق في رواية آر ج بلاسيو "المعجزة"

تسعى هذه الورقة إلى تحديد رؤية الكاتبة بلاسيو عن الشخص المعاق من خلال عرض وجهات نظر شبابية مختلفة للأحداث القصصية في رواية "المعجزة". من خلال الإطار النظري للتحليل النفسي لسي . ج. يونغ، تستكشف هذه الورقة حالات تحقيق الاستقرار النفسي للشخص المعاق ، وتحويل الشخصية الرئيسية إلى شخصية انبساطية. يطبق البحث مصطلح رواية التشكيل من خلال التطور الفكري والاجتماعي والنفسي للشخصية الرئيسية للرواية ، أوجي ، الذي ما لبث أن رأى العالم الخارجي، وانضم إلى فصول مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة وهو يعاني من الرفض والقبول على حد سواء، فتوصل إلى فهم أفضل للذات. كما تتناول الورقة البحثية الحاجة الملحة إلى التحقق في سبل مساعدة الأطفال على تقبل الأشخاص المختلفين. ويخلص البحث إلى أن الطريقة التي يستجيب بها المجتمع للمعاقين تغير تجاربهم السيئة وتحسن حياتهم. وإذا شجع الآخرون المعاقين على مشاركتهم في الأنشطة اليومية وضمن وصولهم إليها، فإنهم سيعالجون مشكلتهم النفسية. ويحتاج الآخرون إلى تغيير وجهات نظرهم المسبقة بشأن المعاقين التي تجزم فشلهم في أداء أدوارهم المنسوبة إليهم في المجتمع. وتثبت الورقة أن الطفل ذا الإعاقة أو التشوه قادر على تحمل المسؤولية والتفاعل بطريقة أفضل مما كان متوقفاً منه. وقد نجحت الرواية في إعطاء صورة إيجابية للقراء عن الإعاقة. مما يثبت أن التشوه ليس عائقاً في تطوير تشكيل بطل الرواية. فهو يغير الطريقة التي ينظر بها الناس إلى أي شخص ذي إعاقة أو تشوه أو علامة اختلاف. كلمات البحث: دراسات الإعاقة - آر ج بلاسيو - "المعجزة" - التحليل النفسي - الانبساطية - رواية التشكيل (التعليم)

Towards Extraversion: A psychoanalytical Reading of the Disabled in R. J. Palacio's *Wonder*

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Disability Studies has recently become a growing worldwide area of academic endeavor. It is an interdisciplinary field that draws upon “a multitude of influences including history, sociology, culture, media and the arts”(Connor, 2018,p. xvi).In this sense, its roots can be dated back to the 1970s with the movement of a group of British activists with disabilities (Shakespeare, 1998,p.1). Such a field of study reflects the efforts of disabled scholars and some nondisabled ones to interpret the common complaints of people with disabilities and their families. This paper explores instances of achieving psychological stability for both disabled and nondisabled characters and turning the central character into an extravert. It applies the term Bildungsroman to the intellectual and social development of the novel’s central character, who, after going out into the world, joining the preschool and experiencing both defeats and triumphs, comes to a better understanding of the self.

This paper argues that though growing up with disabilities is damaging and traumatizing, it can be psychologically amended through the others’ positive interactions. The paper also addresses a pressing need to investigate ways to help children build an acceptance of people who may look different. The rationale for choosing this particular author, Palacio, and this particular novel *Wonder* has to do with the fact that Palacio’s text exhibits unexpected and various shifts across different viewpoints and thus are likely to cause some difficulty with interpretation.

Review of Literature

Disability Studies is a relatively new field of study. It evolves in the last three decades. The history of the emergence of the inquiry in the area of disability studies captures the attention of some scholars recently. Literature of children with disabilities has not started until last decade. Scholars initiate new lines of inquiry. Before embarking on my reading of Palacio’s *Wonder*, let me introduce the previous studies in this field.

Biklen, A. Ford and D. Ferguson (1989) stressed the significance of examining the meanings of disability in culture so as to understand the issues of disability and schooling. They investigate the relationship of regular and special education (pp.108-140). What is bad is that the young learn early in life to assume that people with disabilities are more different from than similar to persons without them. They believe those differences lessen their abilities and set them apart. Erving Goffman indicates this piece of information arguing that people hold negative

views of the disabled; whenever we see a disabled person, he/she is "reduced in our minds from a...usual person to a tainted...one" (p. 3). The consequences of such beliefs lead to negative responses and attributes (Biklen, Ford & Ferguson, 1989, p. 135).

Adrienne Asche (1984) in "The Experience of Disability: A Challenge for Psychology" has proven that acquiring a disability later in one's life is less destructive to the social interplay and less traumatic to the self than is growing up with an impairment of a physical difference (pp.531-534). This entails that the experience of a child born with disabilities is traumatic and growing up with a deformity cannot be easily psychologically amended. Contradictory enough, the present study argues that choosing a child with deformities as the main character is to prove that everything can be amended from the very beginning and that disability is not that damaging and is no more tense to the self.

Rosemarie Garland Thomson in *Extraordinary Bodies* (1997) calls us to recognize the disability we find in texts and to adopt a critical stance in relation to it. She indicates that cultural standards such as "beauty", "fitness", "competence", and "normalcy" exclude disabled human beings. It is the social environment that determines the degree of disability or nondisability, ordinariness or extra-ordinariness. Those who are visually different are marked as inferior and those who are similar are normal (p. 6). It is the duty of parents and school alike to instill in their children positive attitudes instead of negative ones regarding deformity and psychical difference, something the present reading proves.

In *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (2007) Ato Quason thinks that authorial, cultural and historical context are salient aspects to the individual depictions of disability. When a disabled character appears in a literary text, that appearance hastens some crises in the "dominant protocols of representation". The disabled character poses problems for "aesthetic nervousness" since a disabled character is rarely a pure aesthetic creation (p.26). Will the disabled character be seen as the same as the nondisabled characters in Palacio's *Wonder*? Or will the deformed character be seen as having a degraded position in the text? In fact, disability must be examined in relation to time, place, culture and individual from which it issued. Many other researchers have indicated that the degree of visibility of the deformity and the age at which it was acquired significantly influences the psychological consequences and the social situations of the disabled (Goffman, 1963, pp. 71-72, Davis, 1961, p. 122).

Some authors have tackled the picture of the disabled fictional character such as J. D. Salinger's novel *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) and Dickens's hobbling urchin Tiny Tim in *Christmas Carol* (1843), Herman

Melville's crippled captain Ahab in *Moby-Dick*(1851), and the hunchback Quasimodo in Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*(1831). Later on, Mariana Ruybalid's main character, Martin, in *Coyote Healer Coyote Curandero*(2011), is born with cerebral palsy. The repeated quoting of these characters as central physical disability and depicting them as stereotypes using negative images is a true evidence that disability exists in fiction. Even in non-western contexts, the representation of the disabled is the same negative image. (see Bukowski, 2020). Yet, this field has been neglected as an area of critical tradition. Rarely have any literary works appeared to offer disabled persons or deformed characters in positive portraits. Other disabled and deformity writings "fell for short of realistic portrayals of human complexity" (Mitchell & Snyder, 2001, p. 3). The present reading of Palacio's *Wonder* will fill in these gaps in literature.

A work of art discussing disability does not merely reflect the culture of its production but it can influence the attitudes and the exact realities of its readers. The author brings new voices into already existing conversations about disability studies. The essence of fiction lies in that an author's writing reflects his/her personal vision of things. The psychology of the writer, too, reveals itself in the writing.

Approach

C. G. Jung formulates his famous theory of extraversion and introversion in his *Personality Types* (1921). These opposite variables are examples of psychological attitudes of the consciousness (Enani, 2019) and they are applied to Palacio's *Wonder*. Extraversion is defined as "the flow of psychic energy outward toward the exterior world" while "introversion draws psychic energy towards one's interior psyche" (Jung, 1921, p.452; Enani, 2019, p.299). The introvert tend to confuse the ego with the self and to exalt the ego (Enani, 2019, p.346). They relate portions of the worlds to themselves (Jung, p.475). The introvert need plenty of alone time because their brains process social interaction differently. Introversion is confused with shyness which implies fear of social interactions or an inability to function socially. The Introvert tend to "reflect before acting, have an ordered life, carefully control their feelings and to be calm, retracted, introspective and reserved" (Meira, 2018, p.226). On the other hand, extraverts have the tendency to be sociable, talkative, and fond of change (p.226). Extraversion, a trait of a multidimensional personality, comprises a number of facets such as "impulsivity, assertiveness, activity level, the tendency to engage in excitement-seeking behavior, the experience of positive emotions and feelings of warmth towards others" (Lucas, 2007, p.334). In addition to preferring gatherings, liking people, and favouring excitement and

stimulation, the extraverts, according to Costa and McCrae (1980), tend to be cheerful in disposition. They are upbeat, energetic and optimistic (p.668-678). They have immediate reactions to the objective features of the environment and they can deal with changing external environment. (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007, p.334)

In a variety of contexts, there are significant differences between introverts and extraverts. For example, Joseph Kasof (1997) recognized the differences in terms of range of attention (see pp.303-315). Hans J. Eysenck (1997) indicates extraverts' superiority in performing assignment (1224-1237). While the introvert are inclined "to inspect," the extravert are inclined "to respond" and to show faster responses on short tasks (Brebner & Cooper, 1978, p. 306). A number of studies (Lucas et al 2000; Lucas and Diener 2001) are done regarding the features of extraversion. Though happiness comes from the sociability and enjoyment of interpersonal interactions, a new generation of scholars refute that sociability is not a central aspect of extraversion. MC Ashton, K Lee K and SV Paunonen (2002) indicate that "reward sensitivity" is the central feature of extraversion (p. 245).

Discussion

Wonder, a children's novel published in 2012, is the first work of art written by the American author Raquel Jaramillo Palacio. It is narrated from the perspective of August Pullman, nicknamed Auggie, his sister Via, his friend Summer and her friend Miranda. In Palacio's Wonder, Auggie is born with severe craniofacial condition which is a genetic disorder causing deformities that necessitate numerous surgeries. His face is not fully developed. He suffers from underdevelopment of jaw and cheek bones. Yet these facial anomalies are not associated with brain function. He has severe hearing impairment. His eyes are coming down too far. His cheeks look punched in. His mouth looks like tortoise (Palacio, 2012, p. 60). He needs several surgeries to rebuild the cheekbone while in infancy. He has already undergone plastic and craniofacial surgeries. He is doing well in his study. He is homeschooled till he finishes his fourth grade because of his constant surgeries and medical problems. Auggie survives "twenty seven surgeries" on the structure of the head and face to improve his appearance and to have a positive effect on his self-esteem and social interactions. He still needs many corrective surgeries to treat his cleft palate. He has an abnormality of the external ear. Hearing loss is expected in his case and the sound is quite muffled. He needs a hearing aid. His parents most often check his hearing as he grows.

It is customary for the "typical" parent of a child with a disability to be characterized by certain qualities. "Hostility, denial, grief, guilt, defense

mechanisms of all types, and a positive goal of acceptance are all prominent terms in the traditional profile of parental reactions” (Ferguson,2001,p. 9). Yet, since the day of Auggie's birth, his family members have the competence to cope with his initial feeding difficulties and medical problems, and they do take great care of him. They adopt an overprotecting parenting style. While Auggie is a sleep, they secretly negotiate the matter of sending him to Beecher Prep. School, “We can’t keep protecting him,” Mom whispered to Dad, who was driving. “We can’t just pretend he’s going to wake up tomorrow and this isn’t going to be his reality, because it is, Nate, and we have to help him learn to deal with it. We can’t just keep avoiding situations that...”(p.10) They avoid open discussion of the matter for fear of upsetting him. They do not consider having a disabled child as misfortune; rather they consider him a blessing. For a number of years, Auggie lacks the salutary feed-back of daily social intercourse with others. His parents encourage him to be independent and autonomous. Both are subject to additional strain by worries about the child's treatment and decisions. Yet, the boy is unwilling to add burdens to his parents by expressing concerns. Some questions pop into the minds of the readers:

How does Auggie feel about his condition? What do you think might be hard for him? Will oversympathy be of great benefit for him or will compassion and pity harm him? Do we have to change perspective towards those with disabilities? To answer these questions and to ensure the validity of the paper, I apply the psychoanalytic approach through linking it with Bildungsroman. In a narrative, picturing consciousness, according to Violeta Sotirova (2007), “means capturing the minutest details of a fictional mind and presenting them so that they retain the quality of verisimilitude with what we experience in our minds”(p.8)

According to Jung, the conscious mind apprehends reality through four different ways, namely, sensation, intuition, thinking and feeling. Regarding sensation, Auggie is fully aware of his difference. He is psychologically and emotionally exhausted. He has difficulties when he encounters others. Portrayed with a strikingly visible facial difference, he is to be relegated to the margins. The fear that others can disrespect him because of his very different looks means that he is always insecure in his contact with people. He cryingly said, “Everyone will stare at me at school”(p.10). Surprised to know that his parents were on a tour to the school a year ago, he said, “So you’ve been thinking about this for a whole year and you didn’t tell me?”(p.11). His insecurity arises from something that he knows he cannot fix though he undergoes many surgeries. Being a child with unusual face, he experiences more social

difficulties than his peers. These difficulties are a combination of shyness and social avoidance.

Like other children with disabilities, Auggie shows internalizing problems such as shyness, depression and introversion and sometimes externalizing problems such as fits of anger and mini disruptive conduct. Though Francis Bacon (1561-1626) announced a long time ago that deformed persons are commonly even with nature and as nature had done ill by them, so are they commonly vengeful and ill-tempered (1661,p. 99), Auggie as a deformed child is on the whole docile. As unusual appearance or visible difference leads to social isolation, Auggie used to put on a helmet to hide his deformities. He is used to shunning himself in, with no friends, no community except for his pet inside his room which plays a great role in the spiritual world of the child. It is notable that love for animals and kindness to them has been associated with normal personality traits.

One of the difficulties experienced by Auggie as a visibly different child is social encounters with others. Auggie's problem is how people respond to his anomalies. Gelya Frank in "Beyond Stigma" quotes the words of an amputee called Craig Vick who says: "My disability is how people respond to my disability"(p.111). He becomes aware of people's stigmatizing reactions to his physical deformity late in his childhood. In such a case self-other relationship is crucial. According to Sotirova, "self-consciousness is predicated on an orientedness towards another consciousness"(Sotirova, 2007,p.8). The self here is constituted with one's own and other's eyes (p. 8). Similarly, Auggie receives negative self-perception through the others' gazes, their deep stares and astonishing reactions to his facial appearance. He is embittered by his initial encounters with strangers. His deformity is central to his self-definition. If Auggie evaluates his appearance negatively, it is because he receives negative responses to his disfigurement. He is avoided by others. People usually tend to distance themselves from the disabled assuming that he/she lacks a function they own. Othering those with disabilities hurts them psychologically because they are rejected from the realm of the self. They are singled out by others.

All that his mother wants to do is to let her disabled son, Auggie, reach psychological stability and to be in contact with the outside world. She sticks with Auggie to develop his sense of satisfaction that he carries throughout his life. She does play a great role that positively influences the psychological makeup of the child. She forgets all about her personal dreams and her aspirations. She homeschooled him for almost 10 years because he has been subjected to medical surgeries. Like Palacio herself, Auggie's mother is a graphic designer, a children's books illustrator.

According to Auggie, “he has never seen her draw anything in a long time because she is too busy taking care of him and via”(p. 4).The mother’s self-denial is magnificently illustrated through the words of her appreciating children. She forgets all about her work that she had registered in a floppy disc. She decides that he has to go to Beecher Prep School and to face the outer world.

Though she knows that this is a tough decision for the boy who always tries to hide his disfigured face, his mother tries her best to let him communicate with the outer world. The child’s problem is both social and psychological. Auggie faces many challenges such as marginality, uncertainty of social acceptance, rejection and ambiguous social response. He responds psychologically to such situations. Since children with disabilities and deformities are perceived as examples of those who are ever in need of help and social support (Deutsch, 1985), the headmaster asks some boys in Auggie homeroom to take care of him and be around him.

In *Wonder*, Palacio privileges the disability voice which necessitates multiple and complex representations of the disability experience. Auggie's facial deformity affects psychologically all those surrounding him. Each one of them achieves different psychological stability through narration. For example, Auggie's sister, Via, considers him the sun and all their family orbit around him since he is “special and has special needs”(Palacio,2012,p. 82). He is the main source of light and he illuminates their lives just as the sun does to the world. She loves him deeply and she cares for him throughout the course of the novel. The girl understands that he needs lots of medical and personal care, yet she feels insecure and has social stigma having a disabled brother. She tries hard to hide this piece of information and not to let anyone know that she has a disabled brother. She confides her loving mother that she does not want to let Auggie attend her school play. When she has a school party, she does not let him accompany her to achieve psychological stability in front of her friends and classmates. She confides to her friend that she hasn’t told her parents about the show and that she doesn’t want them to come to the show. She cryingly interprets the matter saying:

If they come, they’ll bring Auggie with them, and I just don’t feel like... It’s just been so nice being in in a new school where nobody knows about him...nobody’s whispering about it behind my back. It’s just been so nice...but if he comes to the play, then everyone will talk about it, everyone will know....I don’t know why I’m feeling like this....I swear I’ve never been embarrassed by him before(Palacio,2012,p. 203).

In order to achieve psychological stability, Via has to hide her deformed brother and never let him show up in front of her new schoolmates. It

does not mean that the girl hates her brother; rather she loves him deeply but she feels insecure because of the other's stares, gazes and gossips. She does not understand why "strangers seemed so shocked when they saw him. Horrified. Sickened. Scared. She's just got mad. Mad when they stared. Mad when they looked away"(p.85). Also she has to take care of herself since her parents are always absorbed in taking care of Auggie.

On the other hand, Summer, Auggie's most faithful friend in Becher Prep school, acts as though Auggie's facial deformity does not exist. Tanned and green-eyed as her name denotes, Summer is an eleven year old girl with a mature mind. When no-one else would sit next to him at lunch, Summer volunteers sitting next to him and wittingly chatting with him, "only kids with summer names can sit here"(p.52). She sees that he is a new student in a brand-new school and with a deformed face. At first, she feels sorry for him, but eventually she likes him and strikes a deep friendship with him. The way she accepts Auggie and welcomes him on his first day at school elevates Auggie's utter faith in humanity at large. Her extreme kindness enhances Auggie's sense of self-worth. She chooses to relate her story account from the point of view of Auggie. Palacio wants to reveal a message through Summer's character, namely, accepting the other's differences makes a great wonder.

Near the end, Palacio's *Wonder* switches to the perspective of Miranda, Via's friend, who plays a little role in the novel. Having divorced parents, suffering from familial issues, Miranda decides to go to the Camp with unknown students. In order to achieve psychological stability in front of the other students, she invents stories and tells lies whenever someone asks her about her personal life. She actually chooses an alternate story about her life. To attract their attention and to seem more interesting, she tells them that she has a younger brother who has a deformed face as if she is describing Auggie, her friend's brother. She considers things from Auggie's perspective. As a result, she becomes popular. Unlike Via, who hides the presence of her deformed brother to strike more friendships and to achieve psychological stability, Miranda makes use of Auggie's medical condition for the same purpose.

Auggie is Palacio's powerful creation who transcends his deformity and his specialness. For him going to school is his second birth. He undergoes many experiences and encounters various situations. He gets the meaning of his physical self. Though Auggie's visible difference is salient for his normal schoolmates, the child is self-reconciled. He says: "I feel ordinary inside. But I know ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. I know ordinary kids don't get stared at wherever they go" (Palacio,2012,p.3). August Pullman's deformed face bestows upon him an identity opposed to the one he should have had at

birth. He always hides his face with an astronaut helmet which he considers a refuge from the other's astonishing gaze. He uses it to isolate himself from the outer world. He is somehow imprisoned and subject to the others' gaze and stares. The others deny him treatment that could alleviate his medical problems. He is left with permanent disabilities that no treatment would cure.

Wonder as a bildungsroman

Closely linked to the psychoanalytical reading of Palacio's *Wonder* is Bildungsroman, a German term for a type of novel that "focuses on the development of a character moving from childhood to maturity" (Gray, 1992, p. 43, Quinn, 2006, p. 53). It is usually defined as "a novel about the moral and psychological growth of the main character" (Sammons, 1991, p. 26). The form of Bildungsroman usually "charts from a movement from innocence to knowledge" (Quinn, 2006, p. 53) and focuses on "the relationship between experience, education, character and personality" (Gray, 1992, p. 43). *Wonder* gives an account of the youthful development of one character in the outside world and within himself. Being in contact with others means leaving 'separation, dissociation and enclosure within the self' (in Sotirova 2007). He reclaims his self at last.

Wonder deals with the growth, education and upbringing of Auggie through describing the ups and downs of the life he faces. Palacio depicts "slices of life" in *Wonder* to let others see how various domains of education intersect with each other. The lived experiences of the disabled child in the various domains of education help reshape his psychological makeup. Auggie goes through psychological and moral growth and development throughout one whole academic year. He is initiated into the outside world through a series of adventures in search for the self and his place in society. His initiation is seen as development and evolution. Palacio's *Wonder* deals with such a process. He is being educated and trained in the outside world. The central character finds himself in a better and happier place by the last page of the novel. Mr. Tushman, the headmaster, called Auggie into his office telling him: "I know academically it's been a great year for you. You're one of our top students. Congrats on the High Honor Roll" (Palacio, 2014, p. 285). Auggie shows enthusiasm with academic involvement. He makes great progress much more than his classmates. This genre of development and education depends on a linear plot. Like Brad Cohen's Tourette's syndrome* which inspires the world, *Wonder* has a moral educating impact on children as they help them accept the others' differences.

It is Auggie's account about his life and not Palacio's account that is narrated in *Wonder*. His intensive development throughout the novel takes place over just one whole academic year. The novel comprises eight

parts, three parts are narrated by Auggie, and some reminiscent events on the part of his sister Via and a third part from the perspective of Summar, Jack, Justin and Miranda. Each writes from his respective position. The adoption of many perspectives for each issue illuminates facts. Yet, Auggie, is first person narrator relating his life accounts from the start of the novel. He is the center of his narrative and he is the storyteller endowed with the authority of narrating everything related to his life. He relates his medical case and eventually reveals his inner feelings to this case, something which gives a direct appeal to the readers.

Auggie's beginning in the world is marked with the others' interpretations of and reactions to his physical appearance. Auggie relates his personal account as a ten-year-old child with anomalies. He explains his case with humorous awareness: "I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse"(p.3). The others see that he possesses a mark of difference, namely, his deformed face which is always associated with suddenness, surprise and estrangement. Doctors call it "small anomalies"(Palacio,2012,p. 6). When he attends his first class at school, he has been psychologically instable. He tries whole-heartedly not to draw attention to himself but in vain. Auggie is a different child with deformities.

If people consider Auggie having just a mere difference rather than a bad difference, their reactions will not form him any psychological problems. When Ms. Petosa calls his name in order that he takes his lock, Auggie feels "everyone's eyes burning into my back for the few seconds I stood in the front of the class, everyone looked down when I walked back to my desk" (Palacio,2012,p.39). He knows that his classmates are not doing these things in a rude way. Never does anyone laugh when they see his face. He wishes to tell them "I'm weird-looking, take a look, I don't bite" (p.62). He wishes to convince other classmates that he is ordinary. He is so observant that he can analyze the others nonverbal reactions such as avoidance of eye contact and physical distance. Yet, he can see that Ms. Petosa "smiled at everyone, though he felt like she was smiling at [him] the most"(p.40). Her eye contact and warm smile during the class indicates an increase of intimacy which helps improve the child psychological makeup. It takes his classmates one week to get used to his face and it takes two weeks for the other children in the school to get used to his weird face. Auggie's inner thoughts reveal his genuine suffering:

They would sneak peeks at me from behind their notebooks or when they thought I wasn't looking. They would take the longest way around me to avoid bumping into me in anyway, like I had some germ they could catch, like my face was contagious.(Palacio, 2012,p.61)

Psychologically speaking, Auggie is tormented and feels instable whenever he sees the other children trying to take the longest way around him to avoid bumping into him in anyway. His classmates assume that his deformity is contagious and will be spread to them if they have tangible contact with him. That is why they feel uncomfortable around him. They are horrified and disgusted seeing his deformed face. They abhor his facial deformities as if he is a monster. They are frightened whenever they come across him. They regard him grotesque since his unfamiliar presence surprises them. He is subject to ignominy, embarrassment and humiliation created by his deformed appearance.

Like all those with visible differences, Auggie "yearn[s] for privacy and anonymity, the kind of civil inattention that most of us enjoy" (Mac Gregor, 1974). He would be calm, if others accept him the way he is. Yet, they do not accept him as a deformed child and they retreat in disgust. According to Auggie: "I kind of felt everyone's eyes burning into my back for the few seconds I stood in the front of the class"(Palacio,2012,p. 39). The children are not ready to make contact with Auggie on equal grounds. Sometimes, he sees some girls "whispering with their hands cupped over their mouths, but they looked away when they saw me notice them (p.36). Auggie is misperceived with a stereotypical identity than his real one. When opening his lunch box, Auggie could describe the reactions of his schoolmates: "I could tell I was being stared at without even looking up. Palacio's keeps us shocked and at the same time sympathetic to his psychological plight. It is not until Jack, the student whom Mr Tusham asked to hang around with Auggie before the start of the academic year, sees Auggies' positive features as a cool dude, pretty funny, really smart, and friendly(p.142).

In his book *Stigma*, Erving Goffman indicates that the "stigmatized individual tends to hold the same belief about identity that we do"(p.17). He goes on explaining that the stigmatized person's "deepest feelings about what he is may be his sense of being a normal person, a human being like anyone else"(p.17). In this sense, he "deserves a fair chance and a fair break" (p.17). Auggie embarks on a self-improvement programme in which he tries to remake both his face and his mind to conform to his new identity as a new member in brand-new prep school. The boy knows how to live physically and morally amongst all those surrounding him. Auggie strives for integrity in social relation and self-relations. All he needs to maintain psychological stability is the friendship of healthier children his own age to feel fully human. Moreover, the teachers at Prep school celebrate and welcome him through their endearing smiles.

Auggie tries to maintain his calm demeanor when he sees the others frightened looking at him. He wishes to tell them “I know I'm weird looking but I don't bite. Have a look”(p.62) .Though he is teased by some, and ridiculed by others at school for his anomalies, he never complains nor does he report. Despite his external deformities, he is fully human. He combines beauty and ugliness. On his tenth birthday, he insists that his loving mother invite all his classmates, including Julian, the one the principal has commissioned to help Auggie in his first days at school and who rudely asks Auggie about the deal with his face once he has seen him. He emphasizes: “I have to invite everyone because I don't want anyone to get their feelings hurt if they find out other people are invited and they aren't okay?”(p.66) Auggie transforms how others understand his position in relation to privilege. He proves kind and able to forgive and help others.

His parents avoid opening discussion on Auggie's condition for fear of upsetting him. Though Auggie's emotional state is tranquil, he sometimes gets wretched and emotionally distressed, depending on his current level of adaptation. In one of the most pitiful and pathetic occasions, Auggie desperately breaks into fits of anger asking his loving mother “why do I have to be so ugly, Mommy?”(p.60) It is impossible not to feel sympathetic for Auggie here. Auggie's emotional distress tends to diminish over time. On the occasion of his graduation, his father opens discussion about how much he loves Auggie's face and he reveals that he is the one who hides the helmet Auggie used to put on. Yet, the idea that Auggie can still work his way out and go to school to be educated astonishes his parents. He experiences profound improvements in his wellbeing as soon as he goes to his middle school and realizes that he has a mission to do and that he can rely on himself. His involvement process appears natural as it takes place gradually when he grows comfortable with his academic status.

Auggie is as intelligent as other children his age because he is given the appropriate care and devices to hear properly in school. Auggie functions flawlessly if not better than the normal children his own age. Yet they push him out of their realm of self. They are inclined to overlook him in a very severe way. He feels marginalized. Consequently, he prefers to be socially isolated. He has fears regarding the reactions of strangers. Though he is able to initiate social communication, he does not receive a positive response. His craniofacial anomalies restrict his social activity. His classmates at school think him freak. Whenever a classmate bullies or teases Auggie, he avoids discussing the problem with his parents nor does he report it to his teachers. According to Murphy, since the disabled are caught in a transitional state between isolation and social emergence, they

are not regarded as proven citizens of the culture (Murphy et al. 1988). Auggie feels "liminal" and shunned out of the formal social system until he proves worthy of membership. He feels confined no matter how successful and autonomous he may become.

Auggie proves a competent individual who is able to speak for himself. Palacio portrays him as full of emotions, anger, joy, love, shame, and pride. She attributes most of all positive images to him. She does not artificially portray him. During his first grade year, Auggie undergoes some development. He becomes a multidimensional and round character. A case in point is the Halloween party when he was in disguise and heard his best friend speaking ill of him. Auggie feels exhilarated at the Halloween party, being masked in Bleeding Scream. He wants to be seen with his "head up, looking around"(p.76), after being seen with his "head down, trying to avoid being seen". Yet his classmates' true colours show up. His friend, Jack Will, proves to be mean because he utters bad remarks about Auggie unknowing that Auggie is there in the party. Auggie overhears his best friend Jack making fun of his deformed face saying: "If I looked like him, seriously, I think that I'd kill myself"(p.77). This incident reveals that Jack Will, Auggie's best friend, superficially treats Auggie as equal. This surface acceptance of him limits his future relationship with Jack Will. Auggie takes in information and perceives the situation. He gets deeper perception of inner feelings. He feels that he is broken off from the whole of society. He is distanced from others. This act of othering him overlooks him severely. Auggie never tells Jack that he knew what he said, yet his attitude towards him changes a bit to the surprise of his friend. He perceives the direction in which things are moving. His true 'friend' is not a friend anymore. Yet, later on Auggie goes through the thinking process and starts evaluating things around him. Jack comprehends his friendship with Auggie, and the latter understands reality through logical inference. Using the technique of "E-Pistolary"(Gheorghiu,2014) which means e-mail exchange in a narrative, Palacio lets the two friends bridge their gaps of differences and they are reunited.

Palacio describes the amount of discomfort, hard work and self-denial that Auggie tolerates to assure other classmates in the journey that he is just fine. For the first time, Auggie goes to a three-day-camp in a Nature Reserve and he abandons his teddy bear. He no longer wishes to stay inside his room alone. He starts overcoming his introvert habits. By involving himself in normal activities, Auggie succeeds to break through the group of the others. He moves closer to the demands and joys of ordinary children his own age. They eventually assume his rightful place in their worlds.

The scene taken place in the woods after the bullies' sudden encounter is entirely horrible to Auggie and Jack. Auggie's otherness fades through this scene. His colleagues must reevaluate their notion of the self. They can relate to him as if he were one of them with no deformity. Auggie, Jack, along with the other schoolmates Amos, Miles, and Henry, escape through cornfields and they take a moment to rest. In that moment, Jack thanks the other boys for saving them, and he high fives them. Auggie wants to thank them too, and he lifts his hand in the air to give a high five, even though he has no idea if anyone will high five him back, given that these were the same boys that had avoided getting near him for months since the first day in his prep school. That Auggie could find the courage to raise his hand for the high five—not knowing if it would be reciprocated—is such an extraordinary act of courage. In this sense, he shows an “outward looking attitude”(Stein,2010). Surprisingly enough, the boys do reciprocate it to Auggie. They show him for the first time in that entire school year some genuine kindness and sympathy. This act reveals that they build solidarity with him. That moment moves everyone. For the first time, Auggie manages to construct psychological stability through the others' acts of kindness. He looks to others for healing. When he weeps those same boys, who used to avoid him, comfort him. They experience an internal sense of guilt. Auggie proves to be a normal human being with much more affinity to his colleagues than they initially recognize.

His emotional healing takes place only when he as an afflicted child comes into contact with other nondisabled children his own age. Jack Will plays the role of a catalyst; he acts as a model for Auggie to emulate. The friendships that spring between Auggie and Jack on the one hand, and between Auggie and Summer on the other hand suggests that both Jack and Summer are essential to Auggie's psychological makeup. Though disability studies indicate that disabled persons would be "worse off than the nondisabled if we consider comparing them in terms of similar socioeconomic and personal circumstances"(Barnes,2014,p. 91), this paper proves that a disabled person is more likely to have fulfilled wishes than his normal ones in similar circumstances. Auggie, as a disabled child, urges all to see issues within themselves that they could rather not see as they create the binary opposition of self and other. He possesses great intellectual gifts which compensate for his deformity. Despite his deformity, he participates in every activity. His participation is more strongly related to quality of life than to the disability. He judges the values of things thing on the basics of his likes. His one-academic-year experiences are evaluated in terms of good, bad, pleasant, accepted, and unaccepted.

From a psychological perspective, if one asks what exactly determine the particular type that Auggie grows into, Jung gives three main factors that would be involved, namely, “heredity”, “parental typology,” and “developmental perseveration”(Stevens,1999,pp.95-96: Enani,2019,p. 211).With the passing of time, all surrounding Auggie discovers his hidden capabilities and talents. During one academic year, Auggie is quite perseverant and he relies increasingly on his capabilities till he achieves the best results which lead to developing his psychological makeup. By the end of the year, his perfect innocence endears him to everyone. He is rendered civilized and normal. His classmates forget about his difference and his physical distortion. Auggie’s facial abnormalities are finally accepted by normal observers. His visible difference turns out to be something to appreciate rather than something to fear and to despise. It turns out something to love rather than to hate. He is greeted with dignity and cordiality. His emotional healing takes place only when he as an afflicted child comes into contact with other nondisabled children his own age. Palacio's choice of Auggie as a ten-year-old child is done intentionally in Palacio's Wonder.

It is fair to speculate on why Palacio has chosen a ten-year-old child with disabilities to be the protagonist of Wonder. It is not a chance, actually it is done intentionally for the sake of showing that everything can be adjusted from the beginning. Every deformity and each disability and their repercussions can be modified if we care emotionally for the disabled while they are still young. If people care about the disabled 's state of mind, they turn out to be a wonder. The meaning Palacio wants to achieve is that if we care about the state of mind of the disabled, they can be a wonder by the end. They will fascinate, impress and influence the others well. The root cause of Auggie's elevation is the decision on the part of the mother that Auggie should see the outside world and should deal with children his age without being ashamed of his deformity, and stop being homeschooled. The child has secret torments and sufferings related to the other's gaze and sudden states and his parents fear for his safety. Yet, he proves worthy and reliable. Being kind and tolerant, he gradually gains acceptance.

Palacio wants to deliver a message to the whole world. Whatever one looks, whatever one has, one needs to accept it and move on and hope the world is kind. If people cannot accept you for who you are, not for what you look like, then it does not worth it. One should not worry about his/her looks. Palacio wants to pry our eyes open to the ways we view and treat the disabled and how we as normal people marginalize the disabled in our circle. To show the universality of her message, she voices thoughts of a plethora of characters, not just one simple

perspective. The uneasiness all the normal observers experience when encountering Auggie is internalized and systematically used.

The way society responds to the disabled changes their bad experiences and improves their lives. If one actively engages the disabled and encourages their participation and ensure their access, one helps them to lessen their psychological ordeal. People need to change their perspectives of the disabled as failing to fulfill their ascribed roles in society. The disabled are able to shoulder responsibility and interact in a better way than expected from them. Society has to blur the gap and bridge the divide between self and other, especially in matters of disability. Deformity is not an impediment to psychological maturity. Wonder proves deformity to be integral to the psychological development of the protagonist's bildungsroman. The novel has successfully given a positive image of disability and a moral educating impact for readers and other nondisabled children. It changes the way people look at anyone with a disability, deformity or a mark of difference and helps them accept others' differences.

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*This paper follows APA style of documentation.