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Empathy in R. J. Palacio's Works *Wonder* (2012) and *Auggie & Me* (2015)

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Dedication

To my parents,

And to my siblings,

Thank you

For always being the source of endless joy, strength,

and encouragement.

And to my faithful friends,

Thank you for your constant support.

Acknowledgments

Abstract

Literature is considered as one of the effective tools that teach people about life. It is quite vital for readers from different ages to be selective regarding the literary works they engage with. As a matter of fact, children literature is loaded with valuable themes and subjects which are likely appreciated by children and adults. Thereby, children's books highly tackle themes that help in the building of a good personality or to develop a growing one. Indeed, empathy is a strong motif in such works, and any author who wishes to convey a message of compassion and kindness generally adopts the empathetic narration in his or her work to allocate the reader of a vivid imagination. Recently, children's literature is receiving more interest in the mainstream of literature in general. Consequently, the research work is concerned with the very first novels of R.J. Palacio *Wonder* (2012) and *Auggie & Me* (2015) which focuses on empathy as a major theme. As a matter of fact, the author employed more than one narrative point of view to put the reader in a lifelike experience of the centre character of the story. The protagonist represents a little kid of ten-year-old who has facial deformity. Starting from his rough challenges and dealing with people's reactions, the reader can develop the sense of empathy and sensitivity to behave kind in the right moments. Thus, the literary works which are concerned with such matters can relate with people whose faces are abnormal real life, so, it can be translated as a healing process for readers with facial deformities.

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General Introduction

Children's literature is addressed to kids and young age readers. It is loaded with themes and topics that boost children's knowledge, awareness and imagination because it always carries a deep content. It serves at teaching children about themselves; self-awareness and personality, their surroundings, people's thinking and others' experiences along with life values and courage aspects to face certain disadvantageous circumstances. It is also referred to as the juvenile literature which is shaped in all forms of literature, either in the portrayed ones with illustrations or those in the style of the ordinary common form of the novel. Furthermore, children's books can be selected by adults, who are primarily parents or teachers for children. Certain books' protagonists in children stories are animal characters, yet, a good number of other books deal with kids or teenagers, such as middle-grade kids. It is written with a simple and clear language that can be read by all age readers.

Wonder is written by R.J. Palacio and it is considered her debut novel. It was published in February, 2012. The novel's characters are, as most, kids and teens that are facing life impediments. Additionally, *Auggie & Me* is written by the same author and it was published in December, 2014. It is considered as a companion book to *Wonder*, and generally described as the book of Auggie and his friends. It contains three related short stories that were published first separately as e-book format and later published all together in one printed work.

In fact, Palacio always waited for the right time to start writing as it was one of her biggest dream. Utterly, both her works were inspired from a real incidence in an ice cream store that she experienced with her two sons. Her intention was to rise self-awareness and kindness towards the others for both children and adult.

Since both novels are related, they deal with the same story and characters. The protagonist is a middle-grade kid who has a severe facial deformity that prevented him from living an ordinary life. The novels are divided into sections according to each main character. The author uses the multiplicity of voices by presenting every section with each character's first person view point. The story focuses on the kid's inconvenient conditions and the difficulties he encounters from his surrounding, and

the different reactions he gets from his family, close friends, classmates, and some bully kids. In such cases, typical social and personal skills are required to deal with those situations, such as empathy, kindness, compassion, as well as sympathy in certain other situations which are the elements tackled in this research work.

Palacio's work focuses on the facade appearance and presented the protagonist's different face due to a genetic disorder and a number of surgeries to fix abnormal parts. She also presented a disable persona in *Auggie & Me*, yet the character was minor regarding to the story as whole.

The aim behind this dissertation is to give more attention to the children's books along with their effects on the readers' learning. In addition to the most important theme that the author has triggered in the novels which is empathy and the ability to act in a kind way towards each other to establish a better social relationship regardless who and how the target person is. It is thoroughly expressed through each character of the two novels. The originality of this research work lies on depicting children's literature for its themes and subjects. In fact, empathy represents the ability to feel and understand the feelings and emotions of the others in their inconvenient experiences that are, most of the times, traumas, difficult and hard to fit in. Additionally, the research focuses on the empathetic perception of kids and young people and how they reacted and expressed their feelings.

In order to reach a sound understanding, this research work tries to answer the following questions:

* What are the children books that can be highly recommended for adult readers?
* Does children literature foster the empathic consciousness in its readers' mind?
* To which extent can the works of R. J. Palacio; *Wonder* (2012) and *Auggie & Me* (2015) be a healing process for "different" readers?

The supposed hypothesis suggests for the first question that certain children books are not only devoted for kids but also for adults because they may tackle subjects that have been drowsed by adults. The following question assumes the

hypothesis that literature, including children literature, can evoke emotional connection between the reader and the character, thus building an empathic person. Moreover, regarding the last question, studying the stereotypes and shaping them in a literary work can encourage readers to change reactions to more empathic ones, and by this way "different" readers can relate and experience character's situations the same as his situation.

Thereby, the dissertation will be divided into two chapters. The first one is mainly theoretical which will deal with the major concepts' definitions that help to build consciousness entitled *Empathy and Children's Literature*. Whilst, the second part frames an analysis of the two children books *Wonder* and *Auggie & Me* in accordance to the theoretical framework of chapter one under the title of *Empathy through Wonder and Auggie & Me*.

Chapter One

Empathy in Children's Literature

Contents of Chapter One

1.1. Introduction

Children literature can be a means to raise the mind's awareness since it has always been a source to improve critical thinking through fictional experiences, and to stimulate creative imagination along with spreading emotional and affective understanding. It is loaded with substantial issues and life matters that the reader may come across in reality. As a matter of fact, children's literature transmits certain life values, attitudes, the sense of responsibility of those attitudes towards the others and in the actual situations. The chapter is concerned with children's literature and providing a considerable coverage to the concept of empathy as a theme seriously tackled in a number of fictional writings devoted for children, with a special focus on the human facial differences that can result in disparate reactions of the individual.

1.2. Children's literature

It might be difficult to formulate an exact definition of children's literature because of the lack of interests about it, yet, the explications must introduce the word children. The term embodies from the age of young literates to the age of around 14 or 15, and children's relation with literature as well as adults can take two considerations into account. The first includes nowadays' circumstances and environment which requires from young people to gain early maturity to cope with life, so, they are exposed to both children and adult literature, and the second matter is that within each adult survives a child, therefore, children's books can be read by both children and adults. (Fadiman, 2017).

Children's literature has multiple representations and it can be seen in different materials. It was also referred to as juvenile literature, that exists as stories, books, illustrated magazines and poems, in both oral or written form. Thereby, the age of the readers of such literature can stretch as much from the child birth to 24 years. In fact, Carol Lynch-Brown and Carl Tomlinson (2005, p. 3) agreed that "children's literature is a good quality trade books for children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interests to children of those ages, through prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction." in addition to theatre, cinema and television which means that the content

of the books is similarly important as the value of children and their growth, it is related to the goodness of subjects as well as the interests. Children's literature can be read overwhelmingly by children and surprisingly by adults as well. In another sense, as Barbara Stoodt (1996, p. 4) said "children's literature is a part of the mainstream of all literature." It cannot be separated from the art of literature. At first, children's literature was a neglected topic to be tackled in serious academic circumstances, but the British literary critic and academic Margery Fisher (1964, p. 9) made a considerable contribution to the field pointing the fact that "[people] need constantly to revise and restate the standards of this supremely important branch of literature."

Foremost, In *Children's Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (2011), children's literature was generally referred to those books and stories written to be read by children and young people and published by children's publishers. (Reynolds, 2011). Furthermore, the determination "lies at the heart of its endeavour" (Oberstein, 1994, p, 34) which means the genre of writings that have a purpose specified and directed to its children audience that carry a sense of knowledge, awareness, or lessons that any kid needs in his or her in life.

From this idea, the professor Karín Lesnik-Oberstein (1994) also assumed that good books which must be read by children are those works that enrich the emotional tank and have more valued package. Extensively, Carol Lynch-Brown, and Carl Tomlinson (2005) also consider that "the best children's books offer readers enjoyment as well as memorable characters and situations and valuable insights into the human condition." (p. 4) which can be extended to the idea of the right selection of books for children and to the authors themselves to focus on production of worthy books. Yet, from the early appearance of the child literature, some of the literary works carried no specific messages but entertainment. So in this matter, the Canadian critic Michele Landsberg (1987) in his book *Reading for the Love of It: Best Books for Young Readers,* considers that:

> Good books can do so much for children. At their best, they expand horizons and instil in children a sense of the wonderful complexity of life…No other pastime available to children is so conducive to empathy and the enlargement of human sympathies. No other pleasure can so richly furnish a child's mind with the symbols, patterns, depths, and possibilities of civilisation. (p. 34)

It is neutrally affirmed that children's literature is not only beneficial and suitable for little kids and young people but also for adults, because "there's something about immersing oneself in the best books of young people that is interesting, informative, and even inspiring." (Vardell, 2014, p. 1). Above all, children's books are believed to strengthen the emotions, language and creative art.

It is perplexing to base on a steady categorization of certain literary works. Perry Nodelman (2008) explains that literary writings are, as a rule, defined and dominated under their writers rather than the audience. He gave an example of the Victorian literature[1] and Women literature[2] explaining that the first is written by Victorian writers, and the latter is commonly written by women. So in this concern, Roger Sale (1992) summarized and confirmed that children's literature is "the only literary category that defines an audience rather than a subject or author." (cited in Stahl, 1992, p.12) Thereby, children's books are named because of their type of audience not the origin of the writer.

Fairy tales are imaginative for young children, whilst, folktales are inspirational for adults. In her work *Children's Literature* (1996), Barbara Stoodt also relates the similarity of adults' learning process from literature as being important as much as the children's one, so she assume that "like adults, children learn about the breadth and depth of life from literature." (p. 4) That way, the Australian educator and critic Maurice Saxby and the Australian author Gordon Winch (1987) emphasis on that "it explores, orders, evaluates and illuminates the human experience- its heights and depths, its pain and pleasures." (p. 19) Children at a young as well as an advanced age

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[1] Victorian Literature refers to the literary works which were written by authors who lived during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). (newworldencyclopedia.com)
[2] Women Literature has been often defined by the publications which were written by the female writers. (Rivera, 2017).

seek to feed their minds by fulfilling the curiosity gaps. They tend to imagine themselves within the events of the stories they read or those narrated by adults; parents or teachers. So, in this concern the author Masha Kabakow Rudman (1995) affirms that:

> Books serve as mirrors for children to see characters who look like themselves and have feelings and experiences similar to their own. Books also serve as windows through which children learn about their world by looking beyond their immediate surroundings and seeing characters and events that occur in other communities or other parts of the world. (Rudman, 1995, p. 205)

In fact, regardless the age of the reader, the genre depends on the value it carries. It is true that children's literature is not only concerned with only fictional works which vary from realistic, historical, science fiction and fantasy as well as poetry, mystery, fable, folk tales, fairy tales, and myths; but also non-fictional writings that include biographies and autobiographies.

Nevertheless, some theorists argue on whether children's literature exists as a genre separated from adult literature or as a part of it. Many critics were made because of the complexity of the true position of the child literature. The Canadian professor Perry Nodelman is one of essayists who explains the fact that a literature for children is a more than a literary type but rather a genre which cannot stand alone. He states that:

> Children's literature is not just literature written for children in mind, nor is it just literature that happens to be read by children. It is a genre, a special kind of literature with its own distinguishing characteristics. Identifying those characteristics and defining that genre are the major tasks immediately confronting serious critics (cited by Gannon, 1992, p. 59).

Likewise, children's literature cannot have a definition apart from adult one since it goes in the same mainstream of literature as a whole and the real endeavour behind this is to entertain but before all, to teach, and to prepare children to the outside world that is experienced, written and narrated by adults which actually can be beneficial for them in parallel. (Stoodt, 1996).

So, the evolution of the child literature carries both children and adult interests, indeed, any literary work is believed to devote small utility in the reader's awareness. Children's literature has developed through history, and like any other type of literature, it has known several changes as well as certain critics over its effectiveness and value.

1.2.1. A Brief History of Children's Literature

Literature has always been a remarkable approach to provide various opportunities to experience fictional life events. It is vital to take a very brief look back to the timeline from children's literature appearance going through its evolution as way to explore a deeper understanding of its composition and authorship. In fact, during the Roman and Greek period, children and adults shared a common literature. Besides, it is common that children literature, like all the other forms of literature, went from the oral stories to written and printed ones. It emerged at the first place to instruct and guide them as a tool of a pedagogic intention, "ever since there were children, there has been children's literature." (Lerer, 2008, p. 22).

The fine origin of children's literature dates back to the second half of the eighteenth century when it started to gain a unique place in the literary framework, it is assumed that its history "first clearly emerged as a distinct and independent form of literature." (Fadiman, 2017). Notwithstanding, the root of the child books have been founded upon many various exporters because it varies according to the origins and the backgrounds of the literature tackled in this concern such as the Arabic, African, Asian or British Literature.

In the respect of a number of sources, including *Discovering Children's Literature* (2003) by Judith Hillman, the history of children's literature can be divided mainly into five phases. Before sixteenth century, in general, literature had known different forms that were based on oral tradition of the story-tellers and ritual. It was generally the time of myths and legends. Around the years of 1440, the invention of the printing machine facilitated the publication of works that interest the society. The

first publications of children literature were *Aesop* (1484) an ancient Greek fable, *Morter D'Arthur* (1458) and *History of Reynard the Fox* (1481).

The next phase was between the sixteenth and seventeenth century when the pictured books and fairy tales were generated, such as the German textbook for schooling *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* that was published by John Comenius in 1657. The first children's book carried religious and instructional intention and which was in the shape of chapbook[3] and hornbook[4]. Progressively, during the eighteenth century, the age of modern literature boosted scientific didacticism to replace the religious ones. It was the period when childhood aspects in literature were appreciated.

As following the Golden Age during nineteenth century, children's literature became richer, as a result, the illustration flourished because of the technology that helped output better picture books. Ultimately, the twentieth century was the stage of the manifestation of different literary genres in children's literature such as fantasy, historical fiction, realistic fiction, and poetry too. Several books were written out of these genres that became famous among many readers like *Peter Pan* (1904) by James Matthew Barrie, *The Hobbit* (1937) by J.J. Tolkien as well as *Harry Potter* (1997-2007) books series by J.K. Rolling, *Wonder* (2012) by R.J. Palacio, *Falling Out the Sky* (2001) by Deborah Pope and so many others which can be shared between children and young adult too.

Moreover, a strong argument was presented by Nancy Larrick (1965) who generalized the very beginnings of kids stories. She said:

> Centuries ago before printed books were common, fairy tales and legends were repeated by travelling story-tellers, who altered events' and -characters as they went along. Even so we find the same basic stories in the folklore of many countries, for example, Cinderella- sometimes with pumpkin coach and sometimes, without – appear in folktales of Germany, France, England, Greece, Egypt and Scandinavia. (p. 35)

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[3] Chapbook is a small pamphlet containing tales, ballads, or tracts that were sold by pedlars. (merriam-webster.com).
[4] Hornbook is a leaf or page containing the alphabet, religious materials, etc., covered with a sheet of transparent horn fixed in a frame with a handle, formerly used in teaching children to read. (dictionary.com)

Eventually, there have always been controversial disagreements upon the standard definition of children's literature, and its history development. Actually, the historical representation and determination may vary according to the cultural and societal background, such as the African, British, American, or Asian field of literature.

At most, writers of children's books are mainly concerned with the educational intentions which centre the subjects' themes. Memorable books are those ones that can reach the emotional intent. In addition, readers relate to stories that make them receive social and personal experiences of characters who may be similar to them. In fact, the themes control the author's story objectives. One of the themes that are devoted for children's literature is the theme of empathy. Ultimately, the notion of empathy has been studied by different categories of scholars such as doctors, psychiatrics, psychologists, teachers and authors.

1.3. Defining Empathy

At the first glance, empathy can be considered as a concept that does not need a dissolved definition, yet, it is a complex concept that has known various perspectives from its determination to its value, and often being debatable over its nature. In addition, it is a notion that is tackled as a theme in several literary works, especially those for children and young readers.

Before the word has been coined in European languages, or at least in English, it was contained within the wider concept of sympathy. The origin of the word empathy dates back to the 1880s, when German psychologist Theodore Lipps coined the term *einfühlung* which literally means "in-feeling" to describe the emotional appreciation of another's feelings, thereby in 1909 the English psychologist Edward Bradford Titchener translated the term from Germany to English (Eisenberg, et al., 1990). Empathy is often defined by the metaphor of standing in someone else's shoes, so that one can see or feel through the other's eyes or heart.

The Merriam Webster dictionary (2002) generalized the concept and states that empathy is the "action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present." Furthermore, in her research paper, the professor of psychiatry Helen Riess (2017) at Harvard university explained "empathy plays a critical interpersonal and societal role, enabling sharing of experiences, needs, and desires between individuals and providing an emotional bridge that promotes pro-social behaviour" (p.74) emphasizing on a comprehensive and solid communication skill that affects the individual's behaviour towards others and ameliorate social relations. In the broadest sense empathy refers to the reactions of the individual to the observed experience of another (Davis, 1994).

Meanwhile, the psychologist Daniel Batson (1991) restricted the term to be resulted in specific acts such as compassion, warmth, and concern, while it is centred around others feeling in the first place. He defined empathy as feeling a vicarious emotion that is congruent with but not necessarily identical to the emotion of another (Batson, 1991). So, it is purely related the emotions and feelings evoked due to certain others' experiences.

Empathy is regarded as the central concept in the psychology studies, hereafter, it gained considerable attention from neurosciences studies as well. The two clinical psychologists Carl Rogers and Heinz Kohut have been considered pioneers in the study of the phenomenon of empathy (Bohart & Greenberg, 1997).

On the other hand, in terms of medical determination, Jeannette Gagan (1983) indicates that being empathic person means having the ability to perceive one's feeling on one hand, while transmitting them on the other, which means, the capacity to understand the emotions and appreciate the feelings of others.

Additionally, in the words of the professor of English literature and author Suzanne Keen (2007) empathy can be shaped in literature as "recognizing others' feelings, the causes of these feelings, and to be able to participate in the emotional

experience of an individual without becoming part of it." Empathy in literature can be transmitted in terms of joy, sorrow, excitement, misery, pain and confusion through engaging the readers with the event of the story for the sake of conveying the reality matters, while a German philosopher Edith Stein (1989) simplifies these definitions by generalizing it as "the experience of foreign consciousness in general" (p.11).

Empathy is usually confused and closely related to sympathy, and it is also thought to have the same definition, yet, they are slightly separated and each one has its own representation that can make differences when using them.

1.3.1. Empathy Vs. Sympathy

It is quite significant to dive into the etymology of the utterance by focusing on conceptual differences between empathy and close related terms such as sympathy. It may be reckoned that *empathy* and *sympathy* are two similar concepts, yet, there is a fine variance between them. The distinction has been described as "feeling as and feeling for the other" (Hein & Singer, 2008, p.157) and empathy is described as feeling the same as the other does which is sometimes, but not necessarily, related to an experience one has previously went through, and sympathy is closely related to feeling a sort of pity towards the others. An example to be given is when perceiving sadness in another, the observer will feel sadness as the target does, while being sympathetic will only engage feeling of concern. (Singer & Lamm, 2009)

In the other hand, before empathy was coined, sympathy was closely defined as feeling emotions the same as someone else's feelings in predicament, yet, now it is more about taking a step to help that person as a result of having slight feelings towards his difficult situation. According the *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology* (2007) imagining oneself in the other's situation and understanding the exact evoked feelings as if it is his own experience is declared as empathy, whilst, "a distinction is maintained between self and other, sympathy manifest in the fact that involves the experience of being moved by, or responding in tune with, another person." (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007).

Whereas, Jodi Halpern (2003) clarified that the emotional sympathetic reaction is instant and cannot be controlled which results in the suspension of care and alleviate ethical actions, and empathy on the other hand is a skill that can be easily learned or an attitude of life which facilitate communication and understanding of other's experiences and feelings. Thus, sympathy is defined as "vicarious emotional reaction based on the apprehension of another's emotional state or situation, which involves feelings of sorrow or concern for the other." (Eisenberg et al., 1991, p. 65).

Thereby, empathy and sympathy are sorted according to people's reactions and intentions. Basically, empathy is believed to have two main sides in the human brain and it works dependently to the the emotional and logical of the situation's engagement.

1.3.2. Types of Empathy

The empathic behaviour is recognized to be divided into sections. Some researchers such as Jean Decety (2011) in one hand, estimates that empathy has a great relation with the human cognition and the ability to receive the experience, as he explained "it is a cognitive phenomenon, emphasizing on the ability to engage the cognitive process of adopting another's psychological point of view" (Decetry, 2011, p. 215) which is known by the process of cognitive empathy. Indeed, this process may involve perspective taking and theory of mind. On the other, other researchers such as Mark Davis (1994) intensify on the emotional system, which is the affective empathy that refers to the capacity to encounter certain emotional reactions to the experience of the others. (Davis, 1994).

Some definitions lie on either affective (emotional) or cognitive as being separated components, yet, many representations include both. Substantially, the critical difference between them is that the former which means cognitive empathy is the ability to cognitively understand the world's perspectives of another person and to derive beliefs and intentions, whereas, the latter, is the capacity to share feelings and emotions of others. (Blair, 2005).

Psychology theorists of empathy were influenced by affective view of Theodore Lipps and Edaward Bradford Titchner, nevertheless, Doris Bischof-Kohler is one of the first scholars to argue in a more cognitive way. He focused on the understanding of the other's feelings and sharing them effectively with other's experiences. (Hakansson, 2003). Since the middle of the 1980's, a trend of conceptualizing empathy in solely affective terms have been developed. These researchers usually also restricted the term empathy to refer to affective reactions similar to those of the target (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987). Moreover, Joseph Strayer (1987) suggested that the effective component is the content of empathy, while the cognitive component is the process via which this content if formed.

In fact, a number of neurological studies have expounded regions of the brain that allow the creation of the emotion related to empathy in accordance to each section. Yet, the overall interrelation between the two concepts has been rejected by some other researchers. (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). To further explain, Claus Lamm, Daniel Batson, and Jean Decety (2007) relate that affective empathy is educed, on the other hand cognitive elements can be shaped through the affective ones. For this point, it is viewed that affective and cognitive components can be separated but it is also vital to interact between the two processes. (Heberling & Saxe, 2005). Ultimately, Joseph Strayer (1987) concluded that the affective component is the content of empathy, whereas the cognitive component is the process via which this content is formed. Thus, the affective and cognitive empathy cannot stand separated in so many situations but rather related to engagement of an effective reaction towards the others.

As a matter of fact, including empathy into the literary works has recently been increasing in novels especially those for children that contain educational purposes. Indeed, narration has a deep relation with empathy as it transports the reader into another world of imagination that may be concerned with people's life challenges.

1.4. Narrative Fiction and Empathy

It is crucial to develop a critical analysis to explore the connection between the notion of empathy and narration, specifically fiction because of the resulted experiences that one can undergo within. Stable social relationships are shaped through the firm understanding and comprehension between individuals. So, engaging oneself with literature, typically fictional stories and novels, can evoke certain feelings and thus help develop a recognition of empathy towards others. In fact, fictional narrative experiences are not concerned only with reading books, but it is also shaped in movies and plays (Brock, Strange, & Green, 2002).

Fiction in literature is created from the imagination, and it is not presented as a fact, though it may be based on a true story or situation (cited in Britannica Encyclopedia, 2019). The process of narration can be extended as a conversation between the narrator and the reader to deliver certain intentions from the story that has been told, and it explained as a conversation between the narrator and the reader as a way to formulate a closely related relationship to engage the reader with the events of the story, thus, it is "the activity of being a narrative, and it is a dialectical process between narrator and reader through which is realized a narrative." (Branigan, 2012, p. 39). It gives the reader the chance to live fictional events close to reality that may capture his mind with the story, to clarify the endeavour behind it. The narration development and the narrator's position are loaded with emotions. (Cohan & Shires, 2013, p. 1). One can define the process of narration "as the representation of an event or of a sequence of events." (Genette, 1982) Furthermore, it is also explained as the succession of fictional events (Rimmon-Kenan, 2003).

It plays an important role to establish solid communication values. Consequently, it is quite significant to rate stories as being the layout of the individual's imagination. So in this concern, "reading fiction can be a deeply absorbing experience" (Stansfield & Bunce, 2014). Moreover, one can become inglorious in the portrayed world he encounters when reading a book or watching a movie (Nell, 1988) so he is being fully transported to an alternative world of new acquaintances which Richard Gerrig (1993).

referred to as "being lost in a book" factually, transportation is defined as a convergent process, where "all mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative" (Green & Brock, 2000). The novelist Keith Oatley assume that: "when we read about other people, we can imagine ourselves into their position and we can imagine it is like being that person, and that enables us to better understand people, better cooperate with them." (Cited in The Washington Post, 2016) Therefore, it is proved that readers of fiction have higher ability of empathy and theory of mind.

Abbott (2002) claims that the process of narration is the fact of telling the story events sequentially which is consisted of story and its events and narrative discourse that is the way the events are represented. Even more, he explains that a story without events or action can only stand as a description, an exposition, an argument, or lyric, "some combination of these or something else altogether, but you don't have a narrative" this can be explained in the difference between story and narrative which both mean the progression of events, either real or fictional. Additionally, reader experience and response to the conflicts and relationships of story characters to relate to a deeply-felt simulation of social experience (Oatley, 1994), and so, it marks sequels of the actual social world (Mar, Oatley, & Djikic, 2008).

In a research done by P. Matthijn Bal and Martijn Veltkamp (2003), the result of the relationship between reading fiction and empathy is generalized in the deep story transportation experience. They found that the more the reader can be transported with the narration the higher an empathic person he becomes. Additionally, their studies show that it has a high impact on one of social skills which is empathy.

Suzanne Keen (2014) reports that the philosopher Martha Nussbaum believes that the empathy induced by reading literature can have an influence on a person's moral development and even prompt altruistic behaviour in the real world. (Keen, 2014). As literature university professor, Keen developed a theory concerning the narrative empathy which is the core of her book *Empathy and the Novel* (2007) where she related the feelings and emotions with literature as a way to feel the sense of imagination and to trigger the reader into another world.

1.4.1. Narrative Empathy

In the vast majority of the literary works, themes are the ones that cover addressed matter by the writer. Empathy has been considered as a major and important element to be tackled in novels, especially those for children. To substantiate this point, empathy or narrative empathy, refers to the process of traveling into another world and living its atmosphere through the author's words and narrative and it is as explained "the sharing of feeling and perspective-taking induced by reading, viewing, hearing, or imagining narratives of another's situation and condition" (Keen, 2013).

Susanne Keen (2007) defines narrative empathy as a spontaneous vicarious sharing of feeling and perspective-taking evoked by external sensory inputs or by purely imagining another's situation. It depends on the power of transportation prompted by the author to form a strong connection which; eventually, enhance the emotional reaction of empathy. In fact, she reinforced the notion of narrative empathy into a theory in literature.

Moreover, in his work *The Passionate Muse* (2012), Keith Oatley provided an insightful account of the role of emotions attachment to literary fiction. He summarized:

> Fiction is based on narratives in which characters act on their intentions and encounter vicissitudes. Readers enjoy entering into the lives of characters, following their projects, and coming to empathize with them as their plans progress or meet obstacles. Readers enjoy, too, meeting characters with whom they sympathize, and, being reminded of emotional episodes in their own lives. (p. 15).

He claims that engaging with fiction is an empathic act because grapping a book pushes the reader to not only read lines but also to read the minds of the character who will stimulate him into a different social world. Thus, Keith Oatley (2011) concluded his idea by two points, the first one deals with "the plans and concerns of a fictional character, and empathically imagine what that character might feel." and the second one the emotions experienced are matched with those of the character's concerns,

plans and actions. (Oatley, 2011). Thereby, Martha Nussbaum believes that the empathy developed by reading fiction "can have an influence on a person's moral development and even prompt altruistic behaviour in the real world." (Keen, 2003).

Furthermore, since narration has a great deal with fiction, the latter is defined as a subtle art which "demands the reader to experience what the characters' experience and thereby gain empathy for them, and it is from this human empathy that the readers learn of the story's thematic concern." (Knorr & Schell, 2001, p. 207). Frederique de Vignemont and Tania Singer (2006) has defined empathy as having an emotion, that is in some way similar to that of another person that is elicited by observation or imagination of the other, and that involves knowing that the other is the source of one's own emotion. They demonstrate that the same areas in the brain that stimulate when experiencing someone's else feelings as well as reading and imagining character's feelings. Indeed, narrative empathy educates our behaviour and attitudes. As Fritz Breithaupt (2016) asserts "there would probably be no fiction if we did not have the ability to imagine how it feels to be another or to be in another's situation" (p.2).

In the respect of Keith Oatley's researches in the University of Toronto, reading fiction drive to a better understanding and prompt empathy in the reader, he elaborates:

> The most important characteristics of being human is that our lives are social. What's distinctive about humans is that we make social arrangements with other people—with friends, with lovers, with children—that aren't pre-programmed by instinct. Fiction can augment and help us understand our social experience. (Oatley, 2006).

Some researchers upon several experiments concluded that "seeing or reading about another person experiencing specific emotions and events activates the same neural structures as if one was experiencing them oneself, consequently influencing empathy." Thus, reading children's literature is often considered important for developing children's ethical and empathic understandings of society and its people, (Kerry Mallan, 2013) since it is proved that literary reading may be of great importance to increase empathy and/or affective theory of mind. Based on these

findings, it is more and more frequently suggested that literary fiction fosters interpersonal skills and pro-social behaviour, and that it does so to a greater extent than both non-fiction and so-called popular fiction. (Kidd and Castano, 2013).

1.4.2. Narrative Point of View

Narrative point of view determines the position of the narrator in the story, and, it is the voice perspective the observing story-teller of the events in the story. The point of view can be known from who is telling the story, that is, the viewer through whose eyes the readers see the action. Point of views includes the first person, second person, and third person.

Prose writings requires a storyteller who is called the narrator, with a condition that he is completely different from the author himself. Indeed, the variety of narrators represent multiple perspectives of the story events that differ from one persona to another, thus "even how they interpret the main action of the story will vary greatly among different narrators" (Bodden, 2008,) and the engagement of the reader relies on the choice of that point of view.

The first person point of view makes the reader experience a direct encounter of a single character's narration, yet it provides limited information about the story as well as the other characters. Likewise, the process gives "a sense of intimacy and connection with the character's mind-set, emotional state and subjective reading of the events described" (Bates, 2017).

The selection of an appropriate point of view is essential in creating an understanding to the story for the readers. Thereby, in most of the narrative productions, the use of the first person (I or we) or the third person (he, she, or they) helps the reader not only to build an imagination to experience what the narrator think and feel, but also to convey the message that the writer is transmitting, so that conducts them into the narrator's head and makes them "feel close to and more sympathetic towards, or distant from and judgmental of, the narrator" (Bodden, 2008).

Additionally, the first person point of view gives a better view to the story then the third person point of view because the latter does not transfer the characters' complete feelings, thoughts, and actions. So, the reader is pulled back; he can only perceive the incidents objectively. (Donovan, 2017).

In her book *Telling the Tale: Narration and Point of View*, Valerie Bodden (2008) gives a clear determination of the effect on characters' point of view over all story, indeed, it dives the reader into the head of the character and allows him to be immersed in narrator's thoughts, feelings and attitudes, since he is recounting his journey, day events, and adventure without telling a direct account about himself. Moreover, this provides a close and unique relation between the reader and the narrator, thus, creating a more emotional character. (Bodden, 2008).

1.5. Appearance Differences

Being attractive or not is one of the most critical characteristics constitute with the biological and social relevance of the human face in the community. As a matter of fact, Society is given more value to the facial standards, and that induces acceptance and approval base on the face appearance models, which is making the human facial traits categorized under the two concepts of beauty and ugliness. The face, as an external human image, can probably be seen as the representation of the individual's identity and attractiveness level in the social, yet it is merely a system chart "registering all the body mechanism: digestion, sight, hearing, respiration and thought" (Kundera, 1984, p. 7). People's faces have certain similar features, but every face has its different unique ones. The role of people's appearance in society transfers into literature that represents literary characters with physical differences which may be turned into stereotypes in the personality of these personas.

In fact, people's body image includes facial abnormal traits and impaired body frame; either differences which they were born with or acquired from a trauma or any incident. Taking into consideration the medical representations of the face and body,

literature has presented certain different characters in its books, yet, very few concern is turned to about the content.

It is believed that the individual's age and the developmental stage are the oriented factors of both body image and facial one's readjustment in disability and deformity cases, as such explained in the given example, young children have the ability to adapt with the loss of a limb as compared to teenagers, while a child who was born or experiences the trauma in their early age may formulate certain remembrance of his appearance before the incidence. Thus, it may be perceived as normal at a certain degree. (cited in Encyclopedia of Body Image and Human Appearance, 2012).

1.5.1. Beauty and Ugliness

The level of attractive appearance is based on beauty and ugliness which have controversial standards. It is difficult to shape fully definition of the concept of beauty because of the several views and thought about it along with its cultural variation and changes through time and place. The term beauty was derived from Anglo-French *Beute* and it was first used in the fourteenth century as physical attractiveness or also goodness. In fact, it is acknowledged that "the history of the Western cultures reveals that many concepts of beauty have been celebrated at different places and times." (Fuente del Campo, 2002, p. 267).

The representation of beauty may differ from one culture to another with more attention to females than the males one. Beauty is usually connected to how people look like. In fact, today's society imposes features of beauty which are aligned with the beauty models that the media sets for the public and which is "all about looking a certain way and following the crowd to fit in." (Price, 2017, p. 1). Moreover, society becomes the medium that is directing and controlling people's minds to worship the outside appearances which can be fake regarding human's value. It has raised the competition of the facial beauty, especially between women, which is becoming engaged in different studies such developmental psychology, evolutionary biology, sociology, cognitive science and neuroscience (Thornhill & Gangestad, 1999).

An article on the *The Huffington Post* newspaper stated: "Society has become inherently more intelligent - we can find the answer to almost anything at the click of a button. Those at the cutting-edge can now gain previously unimaginable insight into human tendencies and interests" (Purrler, 2017). It is true, yet, it is unsecure and inadequate because of the negativities that can be seen as an infringement of different cultural beliefs concerning the standards of beauty and ugliness. However, it is believed that ancient facial traits were always a subject of curiosity and research, and so, it is "from ancient Greek canons, a countless number of studies have focused on unfolding what is behind the beauty of the face and body" (Berganza, Amico & Loreto, 2019).

Beauty is defined as "a combination of qualities, such as shape, colour, or form that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight." (Price, 2017, p. 2). So, it follows certain elements which can defer from one to another as the senses cannot be managed under one basic rule. Additionally, Kathrine Schwarzenegger states in an article (2010) that beauty is "quality present in a thing or person that gives intense pleasure or satisfaction of the mind" (Schwarzenegger, 2010) which can be extended in the sense of the aesthetic representations that can be detected under the features attractiveness. However, she also added that beauty is not always concerned with the outer appearance but it symbolizes the inner and the overall picture of an individual. Indeed, the definition of the concept of beauty can vary from the beliefs and background of one person to another and from one culture to another.

On the other hand, the term ugly is usually defined according to its opposite of beauty. Likewise, ugliness is generally referred to everything which is not beauty (Chinchilla, 2012). The term is usually related to dark characteristics such as evil, fear, villains and monsters. Nevertheless, Alison Pearce Stevens (2016) gave the attention to the stereotypes that human beings make to satisfy their vacuum or to protect them from the unknown. Thus, appearances can never translate people's inner side which can be uncovered through one experiences with another. She states:

> We all know we shouldn't judge people based on their looks. Beauty is only skin-deep, as the saying goes. Moreover, someone's appearance doesn't tell us anything about how kind they are. Or how dependable. Or anything else about their personality. (Stevens, 2016, p. 67).

As a matter of fact, Aditya Shukle (2019) generalized the issue by stating that "beauty and ugliness could both co-exist depending on the granularity or how deep we look" (Shukle, 2019). Whilst, people reject and avoid those persons who have certain abnormal body features. Eventually, human different facial or body image features are related to some facial deformities and body disabilities which can be as the result of an accident or born with.

1.5.2. Facial Abnormality and Disability

Facial differences and disability both represent the individual body image to himself and the other. In fact, it centres around how one thinks, evaluates, or perceives oneself along with the response of others to the self. (Rifkin, et al. 2018).

A definition to disfigurement can be as a misshapen appearance or referred to as ugly, it can be related to words such as flawed, deformed, blemished, distorted and damaged, but the neutral definition is attributed as facial difference that is "the element or factor that separates or distinguishes or a characteristic that distinguishes one from another or from the average." (Shaw, 2013). Moreover, based on clinical features demonstrated by Gerald M. Fenichel in *Clinical Pediatric Neurology*:

> The facial deformity is present at birth and becomes worse during infancy. The skull is usually widened anteriorly secondary to premature closure of the coronal suture. The eyes are widely separated and prominent, but the lower face appears recessed." (Fenishel, 2009, p. 3).

In addition to this point, it is true that "the obvious but nonetheless necessary observation: in real life, when people have any physical mark or imperfection, it means nothing thematically, metaphorically, or spiritually" (Foster, 2009). In other words, someone with different physical characteristics have to be recognized as an ordinary person.

Furthermore, syndromes' differences can be acquired through trauma, burns or treatment of facial tumours, or people can be born with facial deformities, these differences can have as big an impact on life as loss of a limb or a chronic illness. Children born with *Treacher Collins Syndrome;* a genetic disorder that affects the development of the skull, jaw and cheekbones and causes facial defects and hearing loss.

In that matter, Anthony Penington (2018) urges that "by studying how people with facial difference overcome their challenges, we may not only find ways to help other such children, but also learn how to help all young people be comfortable with how they look and who they are." So, it is vital to include these subjects into literature as it is one of the best ways to teach and to convey an emotional strong message to the readers. Additionally, Robert John Newell (1998) claims that "body image is central to the consideration of facial disfigurement and to many elements of the literature on attractiveness, disfigurement and its treatment." (Newell, 1998, p. 9), and he assert that literature tackle certain common concepts of attractiveness.

In the other hand, disability can be varied from one society group to another according to the the cultural variation. Yet the most common one is determined to the body difference which leads to "some sort of prejudice that is often connected to social disadvantages." (Helman 2001, p. 50). Nonetheless, that standard definition of disabilities is covered as:

> An umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. (Antelius, 2009, p. 2).

In fact, two distinct concepts may be highlighted in this concern which are disability or impairment. The former, is mainly indicated to the social difficulties that are as the result of people's impairments, while, the latter refers to the body loss or

lack of a limb, defective limb, or a part of a limb. (Helman, 2001). Thus, the disability is about the difficulties resulted in the impairment which is the physical state of the body. In this matter, the social concern has to focus on the individual's obstacles. (Oliver 1990). Furthermore, Simi Linton (1998) emphasizing on the controversial social construction over the causes, effects, representations, and implications of disability. So, the obstacles that may face the disable person in society rather than focusing on the kind of his malady.

In this respect, little researches and studies were made to show how readers, especially children, response to literary books with characters with disability and many researchers evaluated certain works of these representations. (Prater, 2003). In the past ten years, literature for children and youth depicts increasingly positive attitudes towards people with disabilities (Prater & Dyches, 2008) and, on the whole, portrays characters with disabilities as independent, equal, and socially active (Gervay, 2004). Thus, reading fictional children's books changes the attitudes of stereotypes into positive ones and fighting prejudices through teaching readers about differences.

In reality, depicting disability and facial differences in children's books have increased in the past decade because many writers started to deal with these subjects in their writings. Ultimately, reading about different people in books can teach, the readers regardless their age, to empathise and to devote certain amount of compassion and care towards those people who are disabled or have an abnormal face and especially those who cannot change their reality.

1.7. Conclusion

Children's literature has been defined as the literary work devoted mainly for children which is loaded with valuable content. Its history development went through different stages and it is quite vital to go through as a first concern to understand the children's literature. Thereby, the second concern focuses on the social emotional skill as an important theme to be tackled which is empathy. The concept is represented from medical to literary view, in order to give a better understanding, empathy was closely explained in regard to the notion of sympathy. Next, the effectiveness of

children's books relies on the efficiency of its narration which is induced by the ability the author to place the reader within the story events.

Chapter Two

Empathy in *Wonder* and *Auggie & Me*

Content of Chapter Two

2.1. Introduction

The following chapter first sheds lights on a brief representation of the author R.J. Palacio to shape a valuable entrance to her remarkable children works, with a respectful summary of two of her successful productions *Wonder* and *Auggie & Me*. The chapter's aim is to examine the characters' reactions, who are basically children, towards stressful situations when encountering a person different in shape from them. In addition to giving a special attention to the importance of the theme of empathy throughout both novels in building a reasonable narrative piece of writing that implants respecting other's feelings as well as self-acceptance as a matter of personality growth and enrichment. It also encompasses the analysis of certain main characters' story versions from their own standpoint.

2.2. A Brief Biography of the Author

R.J. Palacio, her birth name is Raquel Jaramillo; Palacio is her mother's maiden name, is an American author who was born on the 13th of July, 1963 in New York city, U.S.A She has Colombian origins from her immigrant parents. Palacio attended The high school of Art and Design in Manhattan, and then majored in illustration at the Parsons School of Design. She spent her junior year at The American University in Paris. Palacio is currently living in Brooklyn, NYC with her husband and two sons: Caleb and Joseph.

Before becoming an author, Palacio was an editorial director, an art director and book-jacket designer. She designed covers of books for countless different book genres and for well-known and not so well-known writers such as Salman Rushdie, Sue Grafton, and Louise Ehrdrich, and later, designed children's book covers too. In August, 2009, she became a director of children's books at Workman. She illustrated several children' books that were published under her birth name such as: *Ride Baby Ride* (1998), *Peter Pan*: *The Original Tale of Neverland* (2000), *The Night Before Christmas* (2001), *Last Summer* (2004), and *The Handiest Things in the world* (2010). She also invented a toy for infants called The Bobo Glove (2008). Palacio always

wanted to write a novel as she spent her career with books publications and book covers illustrations, likewise children' subjects.

R.J. Palacio first wrote *Wonder* and published it in 2012, and followed it by *365 Days of Wonder: Mr. Browne's Book of Precepts* which was published in 2014. Subsequently, she extended *Wonder* story in a new work entitled *Auggie & Me*, which was released as a printed a hardcover book in 2015. And the latest one was published in March 2017 under the title of *We're All Wonders*. Her works became strongly popular in a very short time.

2.3. An Overview of the Novels

Wonder is the debut novel of R.J. Palacio that was directed for children, yet it gained a huge attention from adults especially teachers and parents. The story is inspired from a girl with different facial features who once Palacio encounters in an ice cream store. She was with her own kids ten years ago. One of her kids who is three years old started to cry with fear as soon as he saw the girl sitting next to him, so the author took her kids and fled. Surprisingly, after the book publication, Nathaniel Newman a thirteen years old boy came out, who has nearly the exact features and characters, as well as the event of the first day at school and other events of August Pullman the protagonist from the novel. He has been called 'Auggie Pullman who came to life' by R.J. Palacio. The novel was an outlet for Nathanial.

Wonder was published on February 14th, 2012 in the U.S. and was later translated into forty-five languages and has sold more than five million copies around the world. It was released by Random House's Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers and was edited by an executive editor Erin Clarke. On October 10th, 2013, eighteen months after its release, the novel attained the first place on the list of *New York Times'* bestselling middle-grade novels, it was called by the Book Review section: "rich and memorable" and the *Guardian* review gave it 5/5 rate. One of the awards that the novel won there is the West Australian young readers' Book Award (WAYRBA) for younger readers in 2013, and the South Carolina Book Award for

children's book in 2014. *Wonder* received quite positive critics from several authors, children, parents, teachers and even doctors.

Palacio decided then to write a sort of continuation of the novel and called it *Auggie & Me.* She emphasises that it is not a sequel of *Wonder* but an expansion of Auggie's world. The book includes three short stories that were first published separately as short eBooks. Later, they were gathered and printed under the title of *Auggie & Me.* It was published in October, 2015. The book is about three other characters providing extra visions about Auggie. Each story is giving a title, *The Julian Chapter*, *Pluto*, and *Shingaling*.

Although Palacio is a children's book cover designer, she did not design the cover of her works. In fact, she suggested the illustrator who was named Tad Carpenter. In addition, the theme, indeed, was of the astronaut hamlet that represents the main character's feature. She inspired the title of the novel from Natalie Merchant's song called *Wonder* as well, which was itself overlaid under the theme of being born different. Over all, every detail of the cover met her needs to deliver the work in the best influential way.

In fact, *Wonder* was adapted into a movie on November 14th, 2017. It was directed by Stephen Chbosky, starring of Jacob Tremblay playing the role of August Pullman, Julia Roberts and Owen Wilson playing the role of his parents.

R.J. Palacio intended to convey a message to the younger children which was formulated mainly on their actions towards others and how much they are noted and can make difference either good or bad. She also emphasized the process of learning by themselves to choose their reactions right. The novel also teaches children not to judge by appearance. She succeeded in placing the reader within the experience of each of her characters in both novels *Wonder* and *Auggie & me.*

The central character in the story of both novels is August Pullman. *Wonder* is divided into several parts, each part is narrated from varied characters' perspectives, and that includes chapter of: Olivia, Summer, Jack, Justin, and Miranda. In the other

hand, *Auggie & Me* comprises the perspectives of Julian, Christopher and Charlotte. Every one of them describes the events and the other characters differently. The novels are about August who has facial differences and who was encountering daily difficulties mixed and, a lot of bullied acts and ignorance from his classmates, yet, with kindness and compassion from some people.

2.4. Plot Summaries of the Novels

Wonder is about the protagonist August (Auggie) Pullman a ten-year-old boy who lives in New York city with his parents, his old sister Olivia (Via) Pullman and their dog Daisy. He was born with a severe case of Treacher Collins Syndrome; a genetic defect resulted in a craniofacial disorder that forced him to undergo twenty-seven surgeries since his birth to fix certain different organs and bones in the areas of cheekbones, jaws, ears and eyelids. He has a childhood friend called Christopher who moved away to Connecticut. His sister Via had two best friends from middle school, Miranda and Ella. She meets a new friend at high school named Justin. Auggie also meets new friends at school, they are Summer and Jack. Auggie always faced difficulties in meeting people outside because of his face, and he was also bullied by some of his classmates at school such as from the boy Julian.

The novel is introduced by Auggie's perspective first. He describes himself like "Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse." (Wonder, p.11) and as a very ordinary kid, he adds "Here's what I think: the only reason I'm not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way." (Wonder, p.10). He spent most of his times in hospital which prevented him from going to school, so, he was home-schooled by his mother. One day, his mother decides to send him to a middle school, but his father did not agree at the beginning. Auggie also refused the idea but later he coped with it. So, they enrolled him in a neighbourhood Beecher Prep private school.

Before school started, they arranged a meeting with the principle Mr. Tushman and his assistant Ms. Garcia to meet some students for a school tour. They are Jack Will, Julian Albans, and Charlotte Cody. During the tour, they showed him the

homeroom, the auditorium, and science lab. The kids were nice except for Julian who kept throwing mean comments about his face. School started and the first day was not really fine for Auggie. Ms. Petosa gave the student an activity in which they describe the things they like. Auggie mentioned the series of *Star Wars*[1] and that he has a Padwan braid from one of his favourite series' character. Julian made fun of him and asked him if Auggie likes Dark Sidious, who is facially disfigured. Later, the teacher of English Mr. Browne introduced them to the precept of the month that says "when given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind." (p. 41).

At lunch, Auggie set alone in the lunch table since everybody is avoiding him because of his face. Then a girl named Summer set with him, they started to play a little game, so, they became friends. Unfortunately, when Auggie went back home, he cuts his Padwan braid as he felt offended from Julian's comments. That night, he cries in his mom's arms and whispered to her "why do I have to be so ugly, mommy?" (Wonder, p.50). In fact, the other kids did not laugh at his face but they were making that sound when they get surprised, the *Uh!* sound whenever they see him.

Jack and Auggie go almost to the same classes, and they hang out together more, so, they became friends too. Auggie started to fit in the school. Some kids were nice to him like Charlotte Cody. The day of Halloween came which is his favourite because he can hide his face behind the costumes, so, nobody would know him. Unfortunately, because of the masks he overheard Jack making fun of him to Julian and other boys typically saying "I really think . . . if I looked like him, seriously, I think that I'd kill myself." (Wonder, p.61) without knowing that Auggie is hearing everything. Auggie is devastated, and went home sick. He does not want go back to school.

Now, the story switches to Via's narration. She starts describing her family as a galaxy and Auggie as the sun. Before Auggie was born, she was the unique girl. But, she was neglected ever since he was born. She loves her brother and never felt he was different. Her parents were so busy with Auggie's surgeries, so, they sent her to her

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[1] Star Wars: A space opera film series which was created by George Lucas and that became one of the most successful and influential franchises in motion picture history. It begun in the 1970 and `80s. (Britannica.com)

grandmother. After a while, she went back home, she felt weird encountering Auggie's face, yet the feeling vanished quickly. Via started the first year at high school too. Her friends Merinda and Ella neglected her. But soon, she met a new friend named Justin and they signed up for a school play. She misses her grandmother in Halloween because "Grans had died the night before Halloween. Since then, even though it's been four years, this has always been a sad time of year for me." (Wonder, p. 79). So, she is staying with her mother that day until they called from school reporting that Auggie is sick. Auggie told his sister about the incident. However, she strongly encouraged him to go back to school.

The next perception is told by Summer Dawson. She starts talking about the first day at lunch with Auggie. She set with him and they both had fun. She described how much she enjoys Auggie's company. Summer is always defending Auggie in his back and did not pay attention to the Plague game; which is a game about whoever touches Auggie will die, they were playing against him. Later, the popular group of Julian and Savana invited her to the Halloween party at Savana's house. Their intention was to ask her to stop hanging out with Auggie and to join them. Yet, Summer left the party as soon as she knew about that. After they went back to school, Auggie told her about Halloween's incident with Jack. Summer and Auggie became close friends and started to work on a school project. On the day of the Egyptian Museum Exhibit project, Jack asked Summer why Auggie is not hanging out with him. Summer did not want to reveal the secret but she just gave him a hint.

The following perception is told by Jack Will. It starts with the call of Mr. Tushman asking Jack for a welcome tour meeting of a new kid at school. His mother told him about the call and about the kid's circumstances. Jack knew right away the kid she is talking about because he already met him in an ice cream store with his little brother Jamie and their babysitter Veronica. At the beginning, he refused to go to the meeting but, eventually his mom convinced him to go. After that school started Jack needed a little time to get used to Auggie's face. Actually, he realizes how smart and funny he is and it is fun to hang out with him. They were doing homework and projects together.

Since Auggie is not hanging out with him anymore after Halloween, Jack decided to follow the popular group, yet, he is not having fun as he was with Auggie. Eventually, he understood the clue that Summer gave him. At this time, he is paired up with Auggie to work on a science project. Thus, Julian asked him to switch if he does not want to work with Auggie. Jack refused and Julian called Auggie "the freak". As a result, Jack punched Julian in the face, thereby, Jack is suspended from school. In fact, Mr. Tushman seems to understand Jack's reasons through the letters he asked him to write for both Julian's family and the school as an apology act of his bad behaviour. In Christmas holiday, Julian spreads a rumour about Jack which says that he is having anger management issues. Everybody turned against him. After the winter break, Jack goes to Auggie's house to work on the science project where he met Olivia's friend, Justin.

The subsequent part was presented by Justin. He describes the first day he met Auggie. Although Via prepared him and told him about his face, he was surprised. Justin met Via's family and he was so amazed by the warm and love they share comparing to his family that her parents are divorced, they do not care about him. After that, he left with Jack to the bus station where he noticed that some kids, who are Julian and his friends, bullying and making fun of him. He realized that it is because of Auggie. He later warns them to leave Jack alone. In this part, Via told Justin that her family knew about the party that she did not want them to attend. Olivia feels bad now.

Now the perspective goes back to Auggie's voice. He describes how the kids' parents were staring at him the day of the science fair. In fact, Auggie and Jack made a successful work and everybody like it. Julian kept always messing with them, yet the other kids started to ignore this war. Eventually, they get used to his face and enjoyed hanging out with him.

Via's parents find out about the school play. Her mom gets angry and Auggie knew that his face was the reason that she did not tell them about it because she wanted to keep her abnormal brother from her ordinary life. Meanwhile, their old dog

Daisy died. Auggie felt sad and realized that not everything is about his face. He forgave his sister, and she invited her parents and Auggie to the party. After the play, Auggie met Merinda. Actually, she was the family's friend. Auggie loves her like his sister.

Following that part, Merinda's narration came in turn. She starts with describing her divorced parents. They were both completely neglecting her. The summer before the first year at high school, Merinda went to a summer camp. Surprisingly, she told everyone in the camp about her deformed brother story which she was imagining. She felt that she has the right to make up this lie because she was so close to Auggie. In one charismas year, Merinda gave Auggie an astronaut helmet that he wore wherever he goes for years. Her lie made her gain a lot of intention and popularity. After she came back from the camp she neglected Via because she did not want her to ask her about the summer camp. She stayed in contact only with Ella. The story events jumped to the day of the play. After the school play, Merinda was invited for a party in the Pullman's family to celebrate Via and Justin.

The last perspective of the novel ended by Auggie's point of view. After the spring break, the school sent all the grade students to a Nature Retreat which takes place at a nature reserve in Pennsylvania. Everybody participated in it except for Julia who was suspended because of some mean and rude notes found by the teacher in the lockers of Auggie and Jack. The kids enjoyed the activities. At night, they attended an outdoor movie in the nature. Auggie and Julian wanted to have some foolish adventure, so, they go into the woods. They come across other group kids from seventh grade. They freaked out from Auggie and made fun of him by throwing inappropriate words and wanted to punch them. Suddenly, Miles, Henry, and Amos, who are Julian's friends, show up to defend them. The camp has ended, and things completely changed at school. All the kids' attitudes towards Auggie and Jack became more positive.

At the fifth grade graduation, Mr. Tushman gives a touching speech on kindness. Then he came started to call some students' name to present the medals for academic

excellence. After that, Mr. Tushman reads from a note he holds 'Courage. Kindness. Friendship. Character. These are the qualities that define us as human beings.' (Wonder, p. 210). And then announced that Auggie wins the Beecher Prep award of greatness. Everyone started taking pictures with Auggie. At last, it seems that everyone learned a lesson from Auggie's life. That day, Auggie does not feel uncomfortable with his face. On the way home, his mom whispered in his ear "You really are a wonder, Auggie. You are a wonder." (Wonder, p. 213).

Wonder's companion book *Auggie & Me* covers the three short stories of the minor character of Auggie's story. The book starts with the part of Julian who is the bully-boy. The next part contains the overview of Auggie's childhood friend Christopher. And the last one is concerned with his classmate Charlotte. Each one of them has separated vision but connected under the same event story. "Now read a new side to the WONDER story, from three characters whose lives have been changed by Auggie forever." (Auggie & Me, p. 3).

The Julian Chapter starts with Julian's illogical vindications of his bad actions towards Auggie. He explains his feelings when he met him, and during the school year. Julian did not know Auggie, so, he was afraid and scared from him which explains his behaviours. After he got suspended from school because of the bullied act that Mr. Tushman knew about. As a result, his mother decided to move him away to a new school the following year.

He went to his grandmother in Paris for summer holiday. One day, he told her about Auggie. And, he reveals the bad attitudes he was doing. The grandmother told him about her childhood story with her disabled classmate Tourteau. Their classmates were making fun of because of his different look, and she claims that she always scared of him "Tourteau's legs were deformed from the polio. He needed two canes to walk with. And his back was all twisted. I think that's why he was called tourteau, crab" (Auggie & Me, p. 46). He helped her to run away during the Germany-France war. After her parents died, Sara who is the grandmother stayed with Tourteau and his parents for two years until the German captivated him and killed him. During the war

time it was so dangerous for them to hide her in their house, "it is always brave to be kind, but in those days, such kindnesses could cost you your life." (Auggie & Me, p. 49). Sara learned that one can never judge someone with his body image. In fact, Tourteau's real name was Julian. The grandmother narrated all story the details to Julian.

Ultimately, Julian confesses that "this whole time I had been thinking about Auggie like he was my enemy, but when Grandmère told me that story, I don't know, it all kind of just sank in with me." (Auggie & Me, p. 53). He realized that he did not have to be rude towards Auggie because of his facial appearance because he is actually nice from inside. Summer holidays ends and Julian went back home. He sent to Auggie an apology letter for everything he did to him.

The next wonder story is entitled *Pluto*. Mainly, the perspective is detailed about Christopher's life. Christopher starts describing the day he met Auggie. Actually, they were two babies. Their mothers used to hang out together so the kids grew up together too. Christopher never noticed Auggie's different face until he was four years old when they were playing in the playground and girl saw Auggie, so, she was freaked out. "That was the first time I realized how different Auggie was from the rest of us. It wasn't the last time, though." (Auggie & Me, p. 63). Christopher's family moved away to Connecticut. Christopher's story goes back and forth between the past and present. They have other two friends Zack and Alex. One day, Christopher's friends came to his house to play, suddenly Auggie called him for a video chat. Their friends started to make fun of him, and, it then when Christopher realises who Auggie is really different and abnormal. After this incident, whenever Auggie tries to talk to him, he ignores him. At the end, after the long break between them, Christopher felt guilty thinking about Auggie that he is different and not worth being with because of people's mean comments. Eventually, the relationship between them get back as strong as it was.

The last short story is given from Charlotte's perception. Her story represents her friends' attitudes towards because she was actually neutral. They are Ellie, Ximena and Savana and who are among Julian group and against Auggie and Jack. In winters

season, Charlotte collected warm coats for homeless people because she is sensitive and she cares of authors' feelings. In fact, she did not include herself into the boys' war. However, she preferred to help Jack in secret because she is refusing the things were getting wrong. As a matter of fact, Charlotte's point of view adds a degree into the story.

In fact, empathy is the major theme highlighted in the novel. It comprises the multiplicity of the character's perceptions as well as the kids' unproved rejections of Auggie. Ultimately, the reader uncovers the child's mind and lives a whole different experience.

2.5. Empathy as a Major Theme

Any writer of fictional works develops an idea throughout a story, and the core of the matter encompasses the theme which is influenced by the writer's quality background and values. In other word, a theme is a "dominant thought, a unifying vision, a moral. It is the central idea behind your story." (McCord, 2016). Thereby, empathy is one of the themes that are seriously tackled in children literature. Owning the ability to empathise with people is regarded as an important skill in order to be an effective person, and since reading fiction helps students develop socially and academically, it has a great impact on how we react towards the others, so it is vital to enrich children's turnout to books as they grow so they can build the personality required for a better community. Theme is the idea, the meaning behind a story. The themes of the story "are those ideas, patterns and issues' which the story keeps returning to and re-examining." (Schaefer & Diamond, 1998, p. 166).

Wonder and *Auggie & Me* are concerned about reviving empathy in the reader's awareness. The author represents the situation of Auggie with facial differences and the character's cognitive and emotional reflexion to his inconvenient medical state. The works uncover the the book is mainly wrapped up under the following quote: "when given the choice of being right and being kind, choose kind." (Wonder, p. 41).

People around Auggie makes feel alienated because he is facially different from them. Whereas, his sister Via was the most comprehensive person apart from his parents. She understands and engages emotionally with his situation. Yet she does not see him ordinary. Olivia mentioned that their dog was the only creature which was neuter, as in the passage "Auggie's face doesn't look very different from any other human's face, to Daisy, all our faces look alike." (Wonder, p.63). His parents and sister were treating him in a special way. Mainly, Via was the most comprehensive person about her brother's matter, she says: "mom and Dad would always say I was the most understanding little girl in the world." (Wonder, p.63). Moreover, Via overreacts to people who stares in a rude way to Auggie's face. In fact, Via declared that she had some difficulties to cope with his differences, yet, her emotional care towards him helps overcoming the pressure that is put on her.

From a different angle, Auggie's friend Summer was totally kind with him. In reality, she treated him as an ordinary kid. She understands Auggie's difficult situation, so unlike most of his classmates, she decided, as a matter of empathy, to take a courageous step to start a conversation with him at lunch. Summer was the kind of supportive friends, and she upheld her different friend. Indeed, she embraced Auggie's differences. Unfortunately, Summer was asked rudely about the reason she is hanging out with 'the freak', who is Auggie. she convincingly answered: "because he's a nice kid, and don't call him that." (Wonder, p. 87). In reality, she felt sorry for him, but she did not declare it to him. Additionally, she described Auggie as "the weirdest-looking kid I've ever seen, yes. But just a kid." (Wonder, p. 88). Summer has the ability to deal with people what makes her kinder and compassionate.

Jack Will is confused about him. Indeed, he has difficulties to get used to Auggie's face. His mom's statement encouraged him to treat Auggie with a nicer way, she says "Jack, sometimes you don't have to mean to hurt someone to hurt someone. You understand?" (Wonder, p.101). Thereby, after he knew him and he dealt with him in some classes the fear vanished and he makes it through a stronger friendship. Julian kept triggering him against Auggie. Thereby, the incident of Halloween changed things. Jack felt bad talking wrong things in Auggie's back, since he has nothing to do

concerning how he looks. Nevertheless, Jack punched Julian in the face because he called him the freak, although it is negatively considered as bullying but Mr. Tushman empathised with him and understood the reason behind his act. The principle wrote a reply letter to Julian which includes "while nothing justifies striking another student— ever —I also know good friends are sometimes worth defending." (Wonder, p. 115).

Via's best friend Merinda was more like a sister for Auggie. She brought an astronaut hamlet for him as a gift in Christmas, he used it as mask to hide his face whenever he goes which makes his pain to be reduced. In effect, he likes everything has relation with space and astronomy so the gift was his favourite. Merinda's little compassionate intuition helps him to get over certain difficulties. Since he was wearing it wherever he goes, his pain reduced.

In the other hand, in *Auggie & Me* Julian learns to understand the experiences of the others to act in a kind way. After he heard the story of the disabled man from his grandmother he teaches the reader to being kind is the best thing to do even if you think you are right. From the other side, Auggie's childhood friend Christopher is nice and friendly. Since they grow up together, Christopher did not notice Auggie's differences, so, he was treating him in a good way until the day they got separated. Since he is living far from them, he started to have difficulties when he meets him.

However, one of Auggie's classmates Charlotte used to wave and say "hi" to Auggie in the hallway. Actually, she is nice and friendly from distance. She was one of those girls that was emotionally engaged with Auggie, and refused all the bullying acts that he was facing from Julian and his group, yet she could not take a step to help directly. Actually, Charlotte was more sympathised than being empathised with Auggie. Anywise, she could not resist standing still without doing a thing. As a result, she called for Jack in secret to explain to him the rumours that were spread about him.

The transition between characters filled the puzzle gaps of the story. It transports the reader into the real world of the novel. Each perception describes people around him or her in different ways. Indeed, they contribute in the flow of the events in a way

or another. They translate the good and bad side of their personalities which makes the reader learn about the different features that human beings can possess. Although the characters are kids but each one of them conveys a lesson to the reader.

2.6. The Multiplicity of Voices in the Novels

The plot of the novels progresses out of many people's point of view. Although the novel is about Auggie's journey, but it consists of six different perspectives, four of them are well perceived as the main characters. The reader taking part of more than one perspective helps him shape different visions of the same events of the story. Thus, building an overall understanding of the author's intention. The analysis will be focusing on five characters from both novels that has a profound and direct relation with the flow of the events, in addition to the protagonist himself. Substantially, the author mentioned in an interview that she purposely neglected the parents point of view as she wanted it to be only centred in the children world far from the adults one.

2.6.1. Auggie Pullman

The author focuses first on the protagonist's narrative point of view. She devoted three parts from Auggie's perspective. At an early age, the kid of ten year old is facing the harsh world because of genetic facial difference. The author places the reader in the shoes of Auggie to extend the chance to see with his eyes and to feel with his heart. The reader's transportation throughout his journey basically start with his first day at school until the final graduation ceremony. He has been dealing with many challenges of meeting new people outside, and handling all the noticeable reactions towards his face, and basically making friends and social relations. In fact, as a little child, Auggie is brave and optimist.

Auggie's positive perspective develops the value of self-acceptance and embracing other's differences. Despite his look, he teaches people around him that inner peace and happiness do not concern with the things that we cannot actually change in our appearance. He presented himself as an ordinary kid who does ordinary

stuffs like riding bike, playing ball and owning an Xbox and although the scars left in his face because of the large number of surgeries, he mentioned in a passage that he is "kind of used to how I look by now" (Wonder, p. 10). Additionally, Auggie's look did not prevent him from being funny and a good boy. He did not let the circumstances to control his life. Auggie successfully coped with it. Actually, Auggie understands the others' reactions and he tries to pretend not to notice. Yet, people made him sometimes doubt his belief. However, his mom stands for her child in his hard and complex intervals. Auggie struggled at a young age to fit in the outside world. He made it through his first school year to the end of the year.

Moreover, the character's narration was more into a conversation with the reader which develops certain feelings and understanding of the situation centred in empathizing with the character himself. The kids were starting the first year at the middle school, some of them were already friends from the old school, whereas others were new just like Auggie, yet Auggie was the different new kid. So, readers may relate to the stress felt in the first day at school.

2.6.2. Olivia Pullman

In *Wonder*, the perceptive switches to Via to grant a better experience of the events from her vision as being the sister of the protagonist. Moreover, her perception makes the reader understand and to take into consideration a sister's point of view who has a brother with different needs. She is known in the neighborhood and in her old school by the sister of the deformed boy. Her feelings throughout the story are mixed with stress, pressure and anxiety. Via provides deep information about the facial look of Auggie. She describes the world of Auggie as the galaxy, "August is the Sun. Me and Mom and Dad are planets orbiting the Sun. The rest of our family and friends are asteroids and comets floating around the planets orbiting the Sun." (Wonder, p. 63).

Although Via was neglected by her parents, she was strong and independent. She is mainly private about her social life so she often fights with her mother about that. In fact, their parents unintentionally disregard to ask about her in general and her new

year at high school. Via's perception contributes to the story vision because she adds a number of details about Auggie which he could not tackle in addition to how he really looks like. She is characterized as the young protective girl to her brother and the one that her parents are proud of.

She helps Auggie to overcome all the stereotypes and difficulties he had especially at school and the incident of Halloween. Even though she feels alone and far from her parents, her grandmother compensated to her. She can be regarded as the model of the courageous and empathetic young girl.

2.6.3. Summer Dawson

She is the first and best friend of Auggie. She is the brave girl that teaches the reader to take the step ahead to defend his or her principles regardless of people's opinions. The author makes the reader absorb the experience by transporting the imagination to the mind of the kids. The reason behind her sensitivity towards the others is probably the death of her father. Summer's perspective looks beyond appearances. In addition, the reader is able to see the results of being kind in Auggie's satisfaction.

Additionally, Summer shows that different appearances should not be perceived as a matter of pity but they should be embraced and admitted as beautiful the way they are. In fact, facial abnormality and body features are normally recognized as another human's traits the same as any other one. Moreover, the reader can relate to Summer's reaction especially those readers who emotionally engaged with the people. Furthermore, other readers may improve their cognitive ability by taking the first steps to help others who experience inconvenient challenges.

2.6.4. Jack will

Jack's point of view represents the reasons behind his acts towards Auggie and Julian, and his emotion and feelings, and these details cannot be explained by one narrative point of view who is the protagonist himself. Jack is a kind boy as well. His

attitudes are not different from Summer's ones. he provides another angle of the wonder story. Jack actually protected Auggie from the other kids. He stood with him during all the ups and downs of the fifth grade. Actually, he is beyond appearances the same as Summer. And, he certainly hates the kids who were making fun of him and stands against bullying. His perception truly shows the reality of friendship regardless the differences.

As a matter of fact, the kids were calling Julian "weirdo" because he is hanging out with Auggie. Despite the mean comments he did not give up on his relation with Auggie because he believes that Auggie is pure from inside unlike the popular boys who were not different but do not make him comfortable. Ultimately, the friendship of Julian and Summer made a considerable contribution to fulfillment of the story. They both show that being close to someone does not require beauty of the face or certain facial traits.

The two kids Jack and Summer have the ability to be kind with the others, so, they developed a stable and sociable personality which made them empathizing with people who have been through life challenges. In fact, the reader's engagement with the story changes from one character to another.

2.6.5. Julian Albans

The perspective of Julian is depicted in *Auggie & Me*. Julian is the bully, arrogant and mean boy towards at Auggie and Jack. From the arrival of Auggie things changed. The kids were starting the first year at middle school so most of them were new just like Auggie. Consequently, he is the alienate new kid. In fact, a kid of ten year old cannot really possess evil personality side, but Julian is protecting himself in the wrong way. in *Wonder* the reader can neither understand his position nor can he sympathise with him. However, in *Auggie & Me,* the innocent side of Julian has appeared.

The reader of *Julian Chapter* is able to develop certain feelings of compassion to Julian as well. As a little kid Julian is partially not blamed because his mom has also a

great role. She photoshoped the school picture to remove Auggie's face. In this case, he was more convinced that he is not doing something wrong. Julian's parent contributed to his perception as well.

Nevertheless, Julian can be seen innocent too. And, he fixed his faulted when he realized it by sending Auggie a message. Julian prevented his mom from suing the school because he also took the responsibility the thing happened.

Eventually, there are always two sides of the same story and everyone has a story of tell. Indeed, the different perceptions provided the clear image of Auggie's life and the lives of those around him. Thus, the picture is completed by the character's visions.

2.7. Appearance differences

People are usually judged by others from their facial features and body image, even though, appearances do not always reveal the true self. The novels represent facial abnormality of Auggie that made some people reject him without knowing his inner person. The idea of stereotype in *Wonder* was likely expressed through several characters. On the other hand, in *Auggie & Me* Julian's grandmother childhood story changed his stereotypes towards Auggie.

2.7.1. Facial stereotypes

People with facial differences relate and interact with Auggie's story. As a matter of fact, Stereotype shape people's behaviour. The nature of human being judges the unknown thing. In *Wonder,* certain characters were prejudiced to their idea until they learned how to accept the other. The kids at school are all rejecting him. Since Julian was acting rudely, they follow the leads. *Wonder* and *Auggie & Me* expand the idea of facial and disability stereotypes.

The kids at school rejected Auggie because he looks alien for them. They ignored his deep personality and they feared going through new acquaintance as Auggie's one. Actually, any reactions from a kid must be expected to guide him or her in accordance. However, the

role of the educator such as teachers is to cultivate the student to be kind and compassionate with the other no matter how they look like. In reality, the kids' teachers Ms. Petosa and Mr. Browne treat Auggie the same way they treated other student in order not to spread discrimination between them. After the incident of the nature retreat, and since Julian was absent, they get to think correctly and they knew that Auggie's actual beauty is shaped in his personality because he is fun and a nice friend.

On the other hand, Julian discovered Auggie's reality. He spent a lot of time with him at school and Pullman's house too, so he shaped a new image about him far from the stereotype he had. Jack describes Auggie as smart, fun, friendly and so funny. As a result, he enjoys hanging out with him more than the popular group of Julian. Moreover, Julian was also afraid of him. The nightmare he used to have when he was five year old made him relate to Auggie. These nightmares were because of Voldemort[2] character from *Harry Potter* movie who has unusual face. However, he realized that the facial features do not shape the personality of people. In fact, it is the story of Tourteau from the book of Auggie & Me helped overcome his fears and perceive his fault. Ultimately, everyone in the school learned not to judge anyone from his external face.

The author added a minor story to the event of the novel to strengthen her idea of choosing kind towards the author regardless of their body image. Stereotypes includes also a disabled person which teach not only Julian but also the grandmother. In fact, "the good thing about life, is that we can fix our mistakes sometimes. We learn from them." (Auggie & Me, p. 52). Actually, Julian is brave as well because he confesses his fault and made his mother rethinking about it because she was going to sue the school as she thought her son is oppressed.

2.7.2. Disability Stereotypes

Disability stereotypes is one of the subjects tackled in literature in specific and in children's literature in general. Although it is discussed explicitly in the story, one cannot turn the eye over it. Julian is suspended from school because of bullying. He "has always felt uncomfortable around Auggie – but a summer spent with his grandmother in Paris makes Julian see Auggie with new eyes." (Aggie & Me, p. 3). He

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[2] Voldemort: a villainous character who has a terrifying face; from the movie Harry Potter series whose name is feared and unmentionable.

realized that when someone fears somethings, he actually ignores it. Julian has judged Auggie by his facial appearance.

The story of Julian grandmother about the disabled friend changed his intention. Tourteau's classmates were making fun of his situation, yet, Sara was more likely neutral like Charlotte. However, she did not allow herself to take a look to Tourteau because she was afraid of him. After her rescue from the Germans, she finds out that in spite of his abnormal look, this did not prevent him from being a good person. So, Sara changed her stereotype towards him. As a result, it is the thing that influenced Julian's thoughts, he finally realized that he is the bully-boy. Consequently, fear is the center of the matter for both Julian, his grandmother, and Jack as well and in addition to the other kids. Thereby, to break the patterned stereotypes about the others' semblance, they all get along with the two abnormal characters, in addition to uncovering their good qualities about them.

Ultimately, *Wonder* and *Auggie & Me'* characters disclosed the reality of the appearances through Auggie's journey of challenges. Generally, Olivia Pullman, Summer Dawson, Jack Will, and Julian Albans have delivered reasonable sense of empathy through their attitudes and lessons they learnt during the journey. Stereotypes and prejudice are qualities that can build or destroy social relationships. Thereby, the essence of people lies within his inner conscience which includes the ability to be can kind, compassionate and empathetic.

2.8. Conclusion

Throughout the analysis of R.J. Palacio's novels, *Wonder* and *Auggie & Me*, the theme of empathy has been considerably tackled. The characters learnt how to share affective and cognitive empathy with the others. Summer and Charlotte are approximately similar in perceiving experiences, whereas, Jack differs in the understanding of Auggie's challenges which has progressed over the events of the story. In the other hand, Julian, the bully-boy, develops considerable respect to those people with facial abnormality and disability, he also changes his stereotypes towards

Auggie. Moreover, people with such abnormalities in reality may relate to the novels, and thus, gain certain satisfaction of the character's reactions and to the matter of the production of the literary works produced for them. In addition, the variation of the narrative point of views engage the reader with the story and provides each persona a vision which conveys his or her concerns, reasons, and a portion of the personality.

General Conclusion

Literature has been always considered as one of the tools that amuse and educate people about others' lives. In particular children's books teach about the world around along with the different types of people's personalities. Moreover, books devoted for children raise consciousness about self-acceptance and the respect towards the others, apart from developing imagination and the ability to think in creative ways. They also trigger emotional concern about the others. Notwithstanding, children's literature has been given less importance regarding its value and significance. however, it started to gain attention in the last few years.

As a debut authorship of R.J. Palacio's novels, *Wonder* and *Auggie & Me* has gained successful outcomes in a short period of time. It reflects the stories of people with facial deformity and disabilities who have been facing difficulties in coping with it within the society. Mainly, the characters are represented in kids and teens voices who are growing up to learn about life and its challenges. Indeed, it is loaded with subjects that enrich children's knowledge tank as well as their curiosity in an entertaining style.

In both *Wonder* and *Auggie & Me*, the protagonist August Pullman, a kid of ten-year-old who has facial abnormality, is facing social obstacles to fit in the society. The two novels focus on the kids and teens characters' challenges throughout life. In addition, Palacio's works are a heart whelming stories that are able to impassion emotions in heat of the reader. In that way the novels raise the emotional ability of empathizing with people's experiences in life. As a matter of fact, empathy is conducted as a major theme throughout the novels.

The core of the work lies on the theme of empathy which is regarded as a skill that must be developed in the attitudes of children and adults because it is an ability to feel and understand the feeling of others. It is expressed through the characters of the story to shape an image about the protagonist's tough journey. Mainly, empathy is the affective and cognitive reaction resulted in encountering other's experiences.

Successfully, the author managed to engage readers with the events of the story and to transport the emotional aspects of empathy through the characters. She employed the multiplicity of the narrative point of view throughout all the novel of *Wonder* to fill gaps in Auggie's story journey by the perceptions of the characters surrounding him. On the other hand, she preferred to write short stories in *Auggie & me* where she devoted each story a character perception. Nevertheless, Palacio neglected the adults' view such as the parent to include in the succession of the events.

Additionally, the research work attained the result of the fact that children's literature is highly recommended to adult readers regardless their age, and to children teachers in particular. Likewise, the readers are awakened by the empathetic reactions of the characters which makes him or her trigger initiative steps into the real world experiences with others. Moreover, educators and teachers are able to devote certain elements of the novels to transport to the right attitudes of being kind and empathetic with others. Furthermore, many facial abnormal people related to the wonder story of the both novels such as Nathaniel Newman a little ordinary boy of thirteen-year-old who went through approximately the same events as August Pullman did, and people who were bullied once in their lives are able to have the sense of the engagement with the story as well.

Substantially, Palacio's *Wonder* and *Auggie & Me* are one of the novels that make the reader shed tears after finishing them, it be can be read by all age readers. Most importantly, empathy has been wonderfully expressed through all characters.

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