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Re-(Re)Portraying Bodies in Twenty-First-Century Imaginaries: A Study of R. J. Palacio's *Wonder*

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Abstract

There has been a conflict in the human body over what is supposed to be versus what is seen. The generally accepted notion of what it must be has become the societal norm. Any other physical structures of the human body that are against or not under the umbrella of normalcy are incomplete being, unproductive, unimportant and inhuman in society. Hence, this wrong social mapping has affected their fictional representations over centuries. Recently, scholars have observed that works of art of this present century depict different view that contradicts man's opinion. Therefore, this study examines re-(re)portraying bodies in twenty-first-century imaginaries: a study of R. J. Palacio's *Wonder*. This qualitative research seems not to have been examined which justifies its investigation. Disability literary theory that projects and instigates capabilities in impaired individuals is adopted as its theoretical framework. The textual analysis of the study finds out that the bodies (facial distortion) of August Pullman also called Auggie is re-(re)portrayed by defying societal ideals. Conclusively, the literary writer deconstructs social ideologies of bodies through the handicapped potentials to re-(re)present bodies.

Keywords: Bodies, Disability Studies, Literature, R. J. Palacio, Twenty-First-Century Imaginaries

Introduction

Literary works of previous centuries did not represent the experiences of disabled individuals. In the words of Beauchamp et al. (2015) literature has been displaying issues on gay, lesbian, black studies, feminist, and Hispanic feminists. Writers started to demonstrate it in their works. Clark (2023) asserts that the portrayal of disability is now seen in texts, unlike previous years. Beauchamp et al. (2015) went further to state that it was just the past two decades that disability writings have been narrated. Other scholars contributed by saying that it has grown widely not just in works of art but disciplines like humanities and social sciences (Cushing & Smith, 2009; Taylor & Zubal-Ruggieri, 2009). These narratives have been retelling social inhumane attitudes of individuals towards them. According to Baynton (2013), narratives of disability have been used to showcase the inequality faced by disabled individuals. Quayson (2007) pointed out that displayed impairment in literary texts is to discuss societal distortion of individuals with physical differences. This is a result of differences that have conditioned them to exhibit the same action as others but using another medium. The displaced forms reside in the bodies of human beings but restricted forms reside in society. Apart from this depiction, they are also used in texts to symbolize or illustrate anything wrong or evil. Sticker (1999) discloses that in his speech on the chronicles of disability in European artistic works, Paul Longmore ended their Society for Disability Studies meeting through inquiry which states that all represented bad pictures or wrong information in works are through disability. Thurber (1980) affirms that the negative portrayal of disability in writings may look harmless to the writers but it loudly produces death to the individuals with impairments. Pointon and Davies (1997) say that there have always been deformed characters in literary works but their role and sequence of actions around them are highly detrimental. Mitchell and Snyder (2001) uncover that it is difficult to see any literary texts that showcase the good image of deformed

individuals, which makes it have no proper information to offer to the readers.

Subsequently, the point of discussion here is bodies which is a termor word given to human beings that are not universally, socially and culturally accepted in society. Nevertheless, body is a term or word given to human beings that is universally, socially and culturally accepted in society. These bodies are explained by scholars in various ways. Gabbard (2015) defines it as bodies that are not seen as fully human beings but rather animals with human faces for those that have such bodies. Hehir (2002) expiates that the societal definition of such bodies is those that roll and do not walk; use hand to speak and not with the mouth; read braille and not print; use spell check and not spell independently which are disabled individuals that society does not associate. Given this concept, bodies are differentiated varieties of human frame or structure like paralytic, quadriplegic, tetraplegic, cripple, dumb, blind, deaf, madman, and albino to mention but a few that the society does not accommodate. These literary constructions of disability that represent wrong pictures have migrated to depict other crucial information. The characterization of these bodily essentials is made known in twenty-first-century imaginaries. What are these twenty-first-century imaginaries? A writer like Ōe (2002) explains that twenty-first-century imaginaries are observations of the contemporary world that are expressed through language and the issues are embedded in fiction. Hall (2016) proposes that they are imaginative narrations that encompass different stories of the new age like disability stories. Bérubé (2005) expiates that they are fictional events or enacted situations of this present century that need to be represented for instance disablism and ablism in disablism among others. Conceptually, in this study, twenty-first-century imaginaries are recreated histories or facts of current or immediate happenstances in the globe.

This new mould of disability portrays images of disabled individuals who possess innate qualities that non-disabled individuals possess. The affirmation of such performances is to debunk the universal societal notion of disability. Scholars enumerated their views, which conform to their importance to both scholarships, impaired and non-impaired masses. Hall (2016) observes that literature of the twenty-first century re-writes stories of disabled individuals by revealing good or unique traits or talents they possess that will be useful in society. Lipega (2014) in his doctoral dissertation discloses that textual representation of disability is to show the world that with or without disability narratives there is an enablement in them. Baynton (2013) elucidates that the literary characterization of disfigured and mishappened bodies is to unravel that they can also be as productive as other body.

The arrival of this development in academics is to expunge the existing phenomenon that has been corrupting humanity. Thus, twenty-first-century writers use artistic works to re-(re)create or re-(re)present appearances with different physical structures. There are so many twenty-first-century novels on disability that seem not to have been examined about this viewpoint. In light of these aforementioned discourses, this study adopts disability literary theory to interrogate how the twenty-first-century creative oeuvre titled *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio depicted this perspective. Consequently, this research investigates re-(re)portraying bodies in twenty-first-century imaginaries: a study of R. J. Palacio's *Wonder*.

Review of Related Scholarships

Bodies, twenty-first century, imaginaries, and R. J. Palacio's *Wonder* have been treated by many researchers. Couser (2012) stated that bodies are conditions like deafness, paralysis, HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, blindness, depression, autism and addiction such as drug addicts, alcohol addicts, pornography

addicts etc. Nevertheless, they include the following example stated above. Mitchell and Snyder (2003) elucidate that they are marked bodies that are seen as other which creates a mapping identity for them in society. However, their identity is not only mapped but rejected. Sandahl and Auslander (2008) assert that bodies are people with apparent deformities which cause them to arouse disturbance or unrest among people. Subsequently, they also showcase various talents that are helpful and needed in society. Kuppers (2008) reveals that they are persons with handicaps within and without. It resides both inside and outside of human bodies but doesn't make them unproductive in the environment.

For discourses on the twenty-first century, Kozma and Roth (2012) in their forward expiate that it is a century that applies the use of information and communication technology in carrying out tasks. Moreover, it assists man in his day-to-day activities. Binkley et al. (2012) express that it is an era that is electronically controlled in several areas including the economy, data management, society, and education to name a few. Hence, these are the roles information and communication technology portray in society. On the other hand, imaginaries were explained by Sisakht and Pourlashkary (2018) as fictional illustrations of events that become stories. They also become inspirational works not only stories. Bingham (2021) uncovers that they can also be seen as computerized literature that displays and investigates social situations. Since they display and investigate social situations, they also abrogate their recurrence in man's life. Baeza (2008) pointed out that they are paramount for the growth of communities because they foster communalism. Likewise, they provide information.

In addition to the above, in an undergraduate project work of Casalme (2015) titled "Engulfing Children in Discussion of Disfigurement and Disability: The Wonder of Palacio's *Wonder*". She expresses that the novel presents issues of appearance, bullying, disfigurement, and disability, which are often seen in

life's interpretation of children with special needs. Nevertheless, the present study is on re-(re)portraying bodies. Wendy (2012) in reviewing the work says that it shows the upbeat of life on a day-to-day basis. Altogether, it also shows the strategies they employ to overcome. Riordan (2013) in his review views that as a realistic middle-grade fiction expressed through multiple voices. Indeed, it is a realistic middle-grade fiction expressed through multiple voices about potentialities.

Finally, a cursory reading of the book reviewed by Elyse (2013) on the novel says that it serves as an inspiration to everyone. Similarly, the author expresses this through the talent of the main character portrayed in the novel. The review by Sharabiani (2015) affirms that it represents the worst of human nature and the tremendous emotional growth of Auggie. The literary writers' use of multiple voices exhibits a connection between healthy self-esteem and peer pressure. Also, the portrayal of Auggie's parents to be too perfect and Auggie being easily dispensed with affected the storyline. Nevertheless, all these are literary styles applied by the literary writer to pass message to the readers. Another book reviewed by Finocchiaro (2019) explains that through Auggie's experiences, the literary writer reveals individuals living in a world that is not used to people who look different. Truly, it expresses conditions individuals who look different experience but it also advocates for humanism.

Re-(Re)Portraying Bodies in Twenty-First-Century Imaginaries: A Study of R. J. Palacio's *Wonder*

Wonder is among the fiction of the twenty-first century that arouses a revolutionary strategy of depicting bodies. This is to repudiate the ensuing exploitative tendencies in society, in other words, to avoid being more disillusioned and disenchanted. The exploration of this theme in the creative oeuvre is for a radical response to change and propelling society towards equity and fairness society. The creative interest and vision of enthroning the

potentials of impaired individuals through re-(re)narrating bodies justifies the position of Mitchell and Snyder (2001) that says that the commitment of writers who present positive characterization or works of disability is to eradicate both degrading character portraits and inhuman customs towards persons with deformity. Therefore, the individuals who exhibit inhuman actions will detest from their virulent suppression and work towards the expected goals.

In the literary work, August Pullman who is also called Auggie, a ten-year-old child is presented as having bodies, which is a facial distortion that is congenitally gotten. Even the twenty-seven surgeries he did could not cure the bodies (facial distortion). Its nature makes it different for the doctors to give it a name. Some say "… cleft palate… "small anomalies" (3); "… multifactorial inheritance" (68); ". . . germline mosaicism," "chromosome rearrangement," or "delayed mutation" (69); "man-di-bu-lo-facial dys-os-tosis. . . ." (86) and "… craniofacial abnormality … or craniofacial anomaly" (124). The portrayal of Auggie's facial distortion (bodies) is portrayed in another dimension that is not in addendum to the societal evaluation of impaired individuals. In the artistic work, when he is being dehumanized in the environments he finds himself, which are North River Heights in Upper Manhattan, Amesforth Avenue Street, Beecher Prep Middle School and Broarwood Nature Reserve in Pennsylvania because of his deformity, which creates sadness rather he turns it ". . . into an almost laughing feeling" (19). He does not imagine that ". . . in my next life I won't be stuck with this face" (85). He will ". . . be handsome! He said smiling. That would be awesome, wouldn't it? I could be back and be this good-looking dude be supper buff and be super tall" (86). Curwood (2013) avers that the characterization of literary plots with disabled characters is to tell their positive and negative experiences**.** Even when he ". . . noticed that some kids were staring at me now. I did my thing of pretending not to notice" (25). In his re-(re)exhibiting the bodies, he tries to showcase that:

> Like, it's okay, I . . . know I'm weird-looking, take a look, I don't bite. Hey, the truth is, if a Wookiee started going to the school all of a sudden, I'd be curious, I'd probably stare a bit! And if I was walking with Jack or Summer, I'd probably whisper to them: Hey, there's the Wookiee. And if the Wookie caught me saying that, he'd know I wasn't trying to be mean. I was just pointing out the fact that he's a Wookie. (42)

Disability literary theorists note that disability literary theory is a prevalent characteristic of narrative discourses that treats it, as a character-making trope, social category of deviance, symbolic vehicle for meaning-making, cultural critique and narrative negotiation of disabled subjectivity (Mitchell & Snyder, 2001). Hall (2016) affirms that both literary and non-literary disability writings refute the definition or norm which is the liability placed on disabled individuals by the society to actualize equality and acceptance. Auggie's mother seeing the ill-treatment meted out to him makes her pity him after taking him to school, at the school gate she then ". . . hugged me but I could tell she was about to cry, which would embarrassed me" (25). Auggie re-(re)showcasing bodies ". . . just gave her a fast hard hug turned and disappeared into the school" (25).

In Auggie's re-(re) depiction of facial distortion (bodies), he breaks ideals of the society towards handicapped individuals in other words defying societal ideals. Schur, Blanck and Kruse (2013) assert that the role or function of the literary portrayal of disability is to expunge bad cultural beliefs and behaviours towards people with disability by inspiring them and creating ideologies and surroundings without barriers. In this re-(re)expression, he has the boldness to tell Summer that:

> "Yeah, it's no big deal". . . . "The main thing I have is this thing called man-di-bu-lo-facial dys- os- tosis – which took me forever to learn how to pronounce, by the way. But I also have this other syndrome thing that I can't even

> pronounce. And these things kind of just morphed together into one big super thing, which is so rare they don't even have a name for it. I mean, I don't want to brag or anything, but I'm considered something of a medical wonder, you know". (86)

To fight the social exclusion of people with disabilities they pursue a new vision, to avoid cultural contamination. Dunning (2002) states that disability literary theory proposes that the disabled body must not speak through the means of its condition. Kuppers (2008) expiates that they struggle to challenge and dismantle the stigma of disability. Simultaneously, he continues to defy societal ideals through re-(re)presenting his bodies that he has to tell his mother in their discussion thus:

> I'm so sorry, Auggie, "She said quietly. Her cheeks were bright red.
> "No, it's okay, Mom."
> "You don't have to go to school if you don't want to, sweetie."
> "I want to," I said.
> "Auggie. . . ."
> Mom. I want to. And I wasn't lying. (23)

Moreover, the re-(re)depiction of bodies by Auggie becomes crystal clear to all and sundry. This begins to draw his exploiters closer to him that Jack Will of all people has to admire his smartness. He thinks that he will be behind everyone because ". . . he hadn't gone to school before. But in most things, he's way ahead of me. I mean, maybe not as smart as Charlotte or Ximena, but he's up there" (94). Jack seeing his re-(re)portrayal has no other option than to beg him forgiveness and he accepts him back. They become more than friends and Auggie stands by him in all things. Moreover, Jack wonders how he re-(re)expresses his facial distortion amidst the wrong attitude people show him. He tells Auggie that "It just feels so weird" . . . "to not have people talking to you pretending you don't even exist" (116). Auggie ". . . started

smiling (116) in his defying of societal ideals boldly tells him "It's okay . . . I knew about that" (118). Jack who is still apologizing for mistakenly saying it in their discussion becomes surprised to see Auggie cracking jokes with it. This he re-(re)showcases:

> "I didn't know they called it the plague though . . . .
> "I figured it was more like the Cheese Touch or something."
> "Oh, yeah, like in Diary of a Wimpy Kid. "I nodded.
> "Like someone could catch the black death of ugliness. As he said this, he made air quotes. (118)

The re-(re) portrayal reaches to its brim that he continues cracking jokes by saying ". . . all those babes who keep throwing themselves at me and stuff?" (119). The funny statement makes ". . . the milk I was drinking came out my nose when I laughed, which made us all crack up" (119). Seeing no cobweb in the ill-treatment they mete out to him, they begin to leave notes in their lockers. The notes in Jack are ". . . You stink, big cheese! and Nobody likes you anymore! While in Auggie's locker are ". . . Freak! And another one said! Get out of our school, Orc!" (137). The embodiment of re-(re)description Auggie carries makes both of them give them a reply that is not bad but rather funny and sarcastic. Their first reply is ". . . You're so pretty, Julian! I love you. Will you marry me? Love, Beulah. [The second reply is] . . . Love your hair! XOX Beulah. [Their third reply is] . . . You're babe. Tickle my feet. XO Beulah" (137).

However, neither did Auggie cry over going to a new place nor refusing to sleep in other places except for his home because he would see new faces, rather he became very happy to attend the three days and two nights at Broarwood Nature Reserve in Pennsylvania. This is because of his bodies (facial distortion) that always cause people to stigmatize him. As a result of the re-(re)depiction that he has engaged himself enables him to conquer it. In his new found method of expression, he hurriedly goes for the nature reserve while leaving a letter for her mother containing

"Dear Mom, I won't need Baboo, but if you miss me, you can cuddle with him yourself. XO Auggie" (168). Mitchell and Snyder (2003) opine that their interaction between all the factors that dehumanize disabled individuals is to create and recreate the disabled.

Likewise, he runs into trouble makers in the Broarwood Nature Reserve who subject him to both verbal and non-verbal discrimination that results in injury and loss of his hearing aid but through his re-(re)exhibition, he " . . . wasn't planning on telling the teachers about any of what had happened, but they found out anyway" (181). These are students from other schools that maltreat him. Jack, Amos, Henry and Miles have to save him from being beaten into a stupor by the students that they ". . . pulled me up by my sleeve and yelled, "Run!". . . . We were running like crazy, and it was pitch black and whenever I started to slow down, the guy pulling me by my arm would yell, "Don't stop!" (176). Auggie has to thank them for rescuing him and Jack thanks them too. In their joy over rescuing Auggie, "Amos looked at me and nodded. "It was cool how you stood your ground, little dude he said high-fiving me. . . . Miles high-fiving me, too . . . . Very cool, said Miles high-fived me too" (178). They all sympathize with him over the injuries he sustains and the loss of his hearing aid. They insist on going back to the woods to look for it. In search for it, "We backtracked through the grass for a good ten minutes. . . . [by holding] . . . on to each other's shirts and walk in single file so we wouldn't trip over one another. It was like black ink had been poured all around" (179). His classmates identified with him because of his re-(re)expression of his body by breaking the societal evaluation of the deformed.

Subsequently, having looked for it without seeing it, they console Auggie and decide to take him back to where all the students are watching the film titled "Sound of Music". As they walk ". . . Amos had stayed right next to me. And Jack was close on the other side of me. And Miles was in front of us and Henry was in back of

us" (180). This re-(re)portrayal of his facial distortion makes them to be ". . . surrounding me as we walked through the crowds of kids. Like I had my own emperor's guard" (180). It also extends to his schoolmates "All the girls, even girls I didn't know very well were asking me if I was okay" (181). The boys on their part ". . . were all talking about getting revenge on the group of seventh-grade jerks, trying to figure out what school they were from" (181). Camp directors and counselors become angry about what happened that they ". . . went looking for the hearing aid in the morning while we all went swimming in the lake . . . ." (182). Auggie's mother wants to console him when she learns about the incident. He urgently tells her "It's okay, Mom, I'm fine [he] said smiling" (182) because there are no more tears to wipe away. Even when his mother tells him to narrate the incident to her he insists "I'll tell you all about it later when Dad and Via come home. I'll tell you every detail. I just don't want to have to tell the whole story over and over. . . ." (185).

On the other hand, Mr Tushman, his Principal/Director meets him to ". . . know if you want to press charges . . . ." (188) over his spoilt hearing aid headband that they later found in one of his trouble maker's locker, Edward Johnson a seventh grader becomes surprised too to hear "No I don't think so . . . I'm being fitted for new ones anyway" (188). This hearing aid is what he rejected earlier because it will increase the wrong behaviour meted out to him. The re-(re) portrayal of bodies enables him to accept that he has to thank the ear doctor, Dr James. Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) argue that disability studies in all areas of inquiry and scholarship showcase that disabled people have unique qualities, and also improve their intellectual and developmental abilities. As a result of his new attitude towards his facial distortion when ". . . I showed up at school with the hearing aid, I thought kids would make a big deal about it [again]. But no one did" (141). Also, Summer ". . . was glad I could hear better, and Jack said it made me look like an FBI agent or something" (141). This is due to his

re-(re)portrayal of facial distortion has wiped away all his tears and fears. The Principal/Director still obsesses about his breaking of societal ideals and has to ". . . gave me a quick, tight hug but didn't say anything" (182).

Afterwards, his defying of societal ideals makes him conquer all ill-treatment from his school (classmates and schoolmates) friends, and family members by re-(re)narration of bodies. Hence, it turns out to make all of them identify with him. This is being showcased by every one of them wherever they see Auggie. Students in his school also seeing light emanating from his bodies re-(re)portrayal stop ". . . playing the plague game behind my back, too. No one cringes if I bump into them anymore, and people borrow my pencil without acting like the pencil has cooties" (138). Julian Albans, the chief architect that subjects him to tears starts to dangle between either embracing or rejecting him, that sometimes he ". . . started treating me better, too, but that wouldn't be true" (187). This is because "He still gave me dirty looks across the room. He still never talked to me or Jack. But he was the only one who was like that now. And me and Jack, we couldn't care less" (187). Jack seeing his potential becomes angry that he earlier undermines Auggie by inquiring from him if his family ". . . hates me or yeah you told . . . [them] about Halloween?" (122). Meanwhile, the bodies (facial distortion) that create segregation between him and people have been kicked out of his life by defying societal ideals. This he boldly says "Anyway, it's not that I care that people react to me. Like I've said a gazillion times: I'm used to that by now. I don't let it bother me. It's like when you go outside and it's drizzling a little. You don't put on boots for a drizzle. You don't even open your umbrella. You walk through it and barely notice your hair getting wet" (136).

Disabled individuals are not entitled to all the rights and benefits of their society (Shildrick, 2009).The strategy, which is re-(re) portraying bodies that brought the demise of the evil action towards him also, paves the way for more urge to concentrate on

his study. The concentration brought ideas on how to work on the science fair project. The narrator gives full details:

> "Okay, this one," said August, pointing to a picture on the screen of a bunch of potatoes with wires poking out of them. "How to build an organic battery made of potatoes. Now, that's cool. It says here you could power a lamp with it. We could call it the Spud Lamp or something. What do you think?"
> "Dude, that sounds way too hard. You know I suck at science."
> "Shut up, you do not."
> "Yeah, I do! I got a fifty-four on my last test. I suck at science!"
> "No, you don't! And that was only because we were still fighting and I wasn't helping you. I can help you now. This is a good project, Jack. We've got to do it."
> "Fine, whatever." I shrugged. (121)

The struggle to produce a good science fair project leads to the production of a Spud Lamp. It turns out to be a ". . . hit at the science fair. Jack and I got an A for it. It was the first A Jack got in any class all year long, so he was psyched" (135). Auggie's re-(re)portrayal of bodies continues to show that "Summer had sat down with August, which surprised me because I knew for a fact she wasn't one of the kids that Tushman had talked to about being friends with Auggie" (116). One of the tenets of disability literary theory is to rehabilitate public beliefs. It grows higher and puts nails overall shared wrong evaluations. This is seen as Summer has to make him her partner in the Egyptian Museum exhibit. Most of the artifacts display are great but ". . . mine and August's were the best" (87). Auggie's defying of societal ideals makes the principal/director rejects the decision of the school board to expel him from school on the grounds of his body (facial distortion). The experiences of oppression resulting in disabling society and environment can be eradicated if appropriate changes are made in

the areas of production, architecture, transportation, information, provision and education (Scully, 2005). This he replies to Mrs Melissa Perper Albans a member of the school board that:

> As for your other concerns regarding our new student August, please note that he does not have special needs. He is neither disabled, handicapped nor developmentally delayed in any way, so there was no reason to assume anyone would take issue with his admittance to Beecher Prep - whether it is an inclusion school or not. In terms of the application process, the admissions director and I both felt it within our right to hold the interview off-site at August's home for obvious reasons. We felt that this slight break in protocol was warranted but in no way prejudicial – in one way or another - to the application review. August is an extremely good student and has secured the friendship of some truly exceptional young people, including Jack Will. (107-108)

Consequently, Jack has to examine his identification with Auggie by realizing "He's also just, overall a nice kid. Like he's easy to hang out with and talk to and stuff" (94). He continues to say "I don't enjoy hanging out with the popular group that much. And . . . I liked hanging out with August" (96). Kriegel (1987) discovers that wrong narratives of disability make a mockery of deformed individuals and increase their pain. In his examination, he stresses that ". . . I was doing okay in science because August sat next to me and always let me copy his notes. August has the neatest handwriting of anybody I've ever seen who's a boy. Even his script is neat: up and down perfectly, with really small round loopy letters" (100).

Later, Julian wants to destroy Auggie's defying of societal ideals by compelling Jack not ". . . to be friends with that freak if you don't want to be, you know. . ." (102). Jack finding out his aim quickly punches him "Right in the mouth" (102). Auggie's parents become so happy about his achievement through his re-(re)portrayal of facial distortion that they tell him that they are ". . .

proud of how I'd handled myself with Julian and that I was turning into quite the strong man" (24). Auggie's defying of societal ideals continues to spread that Miranda has to see him outside and hug ". . . me tight. . . . . "Miranda!" I answered and gave her the tightest hug I could give" (154). Even in the camp, she has to tell everyone that ". . . I had a little brother who was deformed" (156). All these actions are because of Auggie's bodies re-(re) portrayal.

Surely, the American Wonder unfolds by Auggie's breaking community principles also rest on Miranda by being popular that ". . . these fictions did wonders for my popularity. … but that Summer in camp, for whatever reason, I was the girl everybody wanted to hang out with. Even the girls in bungalow 32 were totally into me" (156). She happily continues to say that the ". . . other junior counselors heard it from the campers, and they were all over it. Never in my life have I ever been considered one of the "popular" girls in anything . . . ." (156).

Furthermore, he continues to challenge the people's doctrines that ". . . a lot of kids who don't usually say anything to me were nodding hello, or patting my back as I walked by them" (182). Then it later becomes a transformation in the school that in his subsequent days in the school "I noticed . . . there was a big shift in the way things were. A monumental shift. A seismic shift. Maybe even a cosmic shift. Whatever you want to call it, it was a big shift" (187). The transformation also makes him be ". . . one of them. They called me "little dude" now even the jocks. These big dudes I barely even knew before would knuckle-punch me in the hallways now" (187). Auggie's re-(re)presentation keeps on creating transformation that ". . . the other day I saw Maya writing a note to Ellie on a piece of Ugly doll stationery, and I don't know why, but I just kind of randomly said: "Did you know the guy who created the Uglydolls based them on me?" (138).

Mitchell and Snyder (2001) unravel that the various portraits of disability in works of art depicting negativity show that it is socially formed. The literary writer continues to narrate how Auggiee breaks communal ideals that:

> Maya looked at me with her eyes wide open like she believed me. Then, when she realized I was only kidding, she thought it was the funniest thing in the world.
>
> "You are so funny, August!" she said, and then she told Ellie and some of the other girls what I had just said, and they all thought it was funny, too. At first, they were shocked, but then when they saw I was laughing about it, they knew it was okay to laugh about it, too. And the next day I found a little Uglydoll key chain sitting on my chair with a nice little note from Maya that said: For the nicest Auggie Doll in the world! XO Maya. (138)

Finally, his re-(re) re-portrayal of bodies that defy societal ideals dresses Auggie in coats of many colours. The beauty draws admiration that the Principal/Director admires his academic achievement by being ". . . one of our top students. Congrats on the High Honor Roll" (188). Disabled individuals showcase different skilful forms of ableism (Couser, 2012). He continues to admire that he tells him is ". . . truly a pleasure having you here at Beecher Prep, and I'm looking forward to next year" (190). The glaring light from the outcome of his re-(re)showcasing strategy draws the award of Henry Ward Beecher Medal on his neck on the day of graduation. He becomes a rare gem before everyone "People started applauding before Mr. Tushman's words registered in my brain. I heard Maya, who was next to me, give a little happy scream when she heard my name, and Miles, who was on the other side of me, patted my back. (202)

Sandahl and Auslander (2008) reveal that they aim to address and fight against the cultural marginalization of the disabled body and the invisibility of disabled people. Still, engulfed in wonder about the upcoming achievement, his mind is taken away that students start to tell him thus:

> "Stand up, get up!" said kids all around me, and I felt lots of hands pushing me upward out of my seat, guiding me to the edge of the row, patting my back, high-fiving me. "Way to go, Auggie!" Nice "Nice going, Auggie!" I even started hearing my name being chanted: Auggie! Auggie! Auggie!" I looked back and saw Jack leading the chant, fist in the air, smiling and signalling for me to keep going, and Amos shouting through his hands: "Woo-hoo, little dude!" Then I saw Summer smiling as I walked past her row, and when she saw me look at her, she gave me a secret little thumbs-up and mouthed a silent "cool beans" to me. I laughed and shook my head like I couldn't believe it. (202)

Poore (2010) elucidates that they aim to create a democratic model of inclusion for the disabled and also eliminate the use of disability as a negative metaphor for more realistic depictions of disabled individuals as ordinary human beings. The shock still keeps him frozen in wonder that the narrator has to express his wonders. Thus, he says:

> I really couldn't believe it. I think I was smiling. Maybe I was beaming, I don't know. As I walked up the aisle toward the stage, all I saw was a blur of happy bright faces looking at me, and hands clapping for me. And I heard people yelling things out at me: "You deserve it, Auggie!" "Good for you, Auggie" I saw all my teachers in the aisle seats, Mr. Browne and Ms. Petosa and Mr. Roche and Mrs. Atanabi and Nurse Molly and all the others: and they were cheering for me, woo-hooing and whistling. (202)

Hevey (1992) notes that the aim of disability literary theory is to interact between impairment and physical/attitudinal environments, therefore, to achieve refusal to suppression, struggle, oppression etc. The narrator is neither stingy with words nor trying not to reveal his feelings. In his revelation, he reveals that:

> I felt like I was floating. It was so weird. Like the sun was shining full force on my face and the wind was blowing. As

> I got closer to the stage, I saw Ms. Rubin waving at me in the front row, and then next to her was Mrs. G., who was crying hysterically – a happy crying – smiling and clapping the whole time. And as I walked up the steps to the stage, the most amazing thing happened: everyone started standing up. Not just the front rows, but the whole audience suddenly got up on their feet, whooping, hollering, and clapping like crazy. It was a standing ovation for me. (202)

Sandahl (2004) says that people with disability are not only staring back but also talking back through their bodies against the inhuman actions shown to them. The golden crown later rests on the neck of the owner. The Principal/Director ". . . shook his hand with both hands and whispered in my ear: "Well done, Auggie." Then he placed the gold medal over my head, just like they do in the Olympics, and had me turn to face the audience" (202). There are no leftovers in the narration of Auggie's defying of societal ideals by the narrator. All faces try to identify with him:

> Everyone started taking pictures of me and pulling out their flips, and then Dad got me, Summer, and Jack together for a group shot. We put our arms around each other's shoulders, and for the first time I can remember, I wasn't even thinking about my face. I was just smiling a big fat happy smile for all the different cameras clicking away at me. Flash, flash, click, click: smiling away as Jack's parents and Summer's mom started clicking. Then Reid and Maya came over. Flash, flash, click click. And then Charlotte came over and asked if she could take a picture with us, and we were like, "Sure, of course!" and then Charlotte's parents were snapping away at our little group along with everyone else's parents. (203)

The literary writer continues to express Auggie's defying of societal ideals through re-(re)presentation of bodies. Hence:

> And the next thing I knew, the two Maxes had come over, and Henry and Miles, and Savanna. Then Amos came over, and Ximena. And we were all in this big tight huddle as

> parents clicked away like we were on a red carpet somewhere. Luca. Isaiah. Nino. Pablo. Tristan. Ellie. I lost track of who else came over. Everybody, practically. All I knew for sure was that we were all laughing and squeezing in tight against each other, and no one seemed to care if it was my face that was next to theirs or not. In fact, and I don't mean to brag here, but I kind of felt like everyone wanted to get close to me. (203-204)

The brightness of Auggie's achievement chases away Julian and he decides he ". . . is not coming back to Beecher Prep next year" (189). The family members like ". . . Via wrapped her arms around me and swung me left and right about twenty times" (203). Other family members also ride along with his re-(re)portrayal of bodies ". . . Poppa and Tata hugged me, and Aunt Kate and Uncle Po, and Uncle Ben – everyone kind of teary-eyed and wet–cheeked" (203). Miranda's expression that ". . . was the funniest: she was crying more than anyone and squeezed me so tight that Via had to practically pry her off of me, which made them both laugh" (203). Miranda finally expresses that ". . . [Since Auggie Pullman's birth] the universe was not kind to him [but now his re-(re)portraying of bodies that defy societal ideals has given him a rebirth to receive kindness from the universe]" (132). Auggie's mother becomes more than happy for all his achievements that she thanks him "For everything you've given us . . . . For coming into our lives. For being you." She bent down and whispered in my ear. "You are a wonder, Auggie. You are a wonder" (204).

Conclusion

This research investigates re-(re)portraying bodies in twenty-first-century imaginaries: a study of R. J. Palacio's *Wonder*. Disability literary theory that re-deconstructs societal evaluations of handicapped individuals that create social imbalance for them is used to examine this qualitative study. Relying on the disability framework, this study establishes that *Wonder*, a twenty-first-century imaginary re-(re)portrays bodies. This is made known by

Auggie who has facial distortion (bodies) re-(re)expresses it in the fictional environments of North River Heights in Upper Manhattan, Amesforth Avenue Street, Beecher Prep Middle School and Broarwood Nature Reserve in Pennsylvania that didn't go in line with the society's opinion. The re-(re)portrayal of bodies yields to defying the societal ideals by being one of the top students of Beecher Prep Middle School, producing a Spud Lamp that becomes well recognized in the science fair project among others. Hence, the literary writer uses the disabled abilities to re-(re)portray bodies.

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