

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Disability is an umbrella term covering impairment of people, activity limitation, and participation restriction. 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; and a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement of life situations (WHO, 2017). Disability is not just a health problem, it is more complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between a person's body and the society in which he or she lives. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove physical and social barriers (WHO, 2017).

The American with Disability Act (ADA) (2017) defines disability as a predominantly medical term of a chronic functional incapacity which consequence the functional limitations result from physical or mental disability. A person, who has a physical impairment which substantially limits one or more of person's major life activities such as performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, speaking, working, communicating with each other are categorized as having such impairment (Maine Government, 2006).

A person with disability often gets a discriminative attitude from other persons; they are labelled, stereotyped, discriminated, and separated from

community within the context of power differential (Green et al., 2005, p. 197). Green argues that “in the context of disability, *labelling* is the recognition that a certain biological trait differs from the norm of social salience but is not likely to evoke labelling because the difference does not have social significance.

Stereotyping is the negative attributes to socially salient differences within the disability context. Stereotypical differences are differences that matter and are also deemed by others to be undesirable. Ironically, while disabilities that appear to be mild or are invisible to others may not evoke the kind of social awkwardness and pity associated with the labelling and stereotyping they may lead to heighten vulnerability to blame and separation. *Separation* leads to acts of commission or omission on the part of others that impose limits on the social participation of stigmatized individuals.” When individuals with disabilities perceive that they are labelled, stereotyped, and separated from others, they experience *stigma*. Stigma is the interactions between the person with the difference and others who evaluate that difference in negative terms (Goffman in Green, 2005, p. 1).

In medical world, disability is physical or mental impairment defined as a condition or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems (US Legal, 2016). One of the anatomical loss affection can be found in *Treacher Collins Syndrome*. *Treacher Collins Syndrome* or commonly known as *Mandibulofacial Dysostosis* (MFG) is a genetic condition which follows an autosomal dominant inheritance pattern. This means, if one parent has the syndrome, they will have a 50 per cent chance of generating it on to their child.

Cleft Palate Foundation in USA explain that *Treacher Collins Syndrome* is the name given to a birth defect which may affect the size and shape of the ears, eyelids, cheek bones, and upper and lower jaws (2014). The most dominant characteristic of *Treacher Collins Syndrome* or *Mandibulofacial Dysostosis* (MFG) is 30%-40% of the bones are missing merely 1 in 50.000 people (A Plus. n.d).

The phenomenon of *Treacher Collins Syndrome* happened in Wetmore family who has a disability daughter named Juliana Wetmore. Juliana Wetmore was born with almost missing a half of her facial bones. This leads to breathing, hearing and eating problems. Her story went viral a year after she was born in 2005 (USA Today News, 2015). Like any other girls with healthy mind and body, Juliana can run around the field, play with her doll, grooming with cosmetic and also talking with her friends although using sign language to communicate in her elementary school in Clay Country, Florida. Despite her appearance, her parents Tami and Thom Wetmore realized that their baby daughter was born for a reason, but not everyone had the heart to accept her beauty, even they often get bullies from internet and other strangers. They are labelled, stereotyped, discriminated and separated from community. However, the hope about their daughter held them up. They know that Juliana has a special purpose in this world to teach others not to judge a book by its cover (Faith Pot, 2016).

Treacher Collins Syndrome has been captured by several authors, such as Raquel Jaramillo Palacio, under the pseudonym R.J. Palacio. She had an incident

where she and her three-year-old son were waiting in line to buy ice cream. Her son noticed a girl with facial birth defects. Fearing he would react badly, Palacio attempted to remove her son from the situation so as not to upset the girl or her family but ended up worsening the situation. Natalie Merchant's song titled "wonder" made her realize that the incident could teach society a valuable lesson. After this incident she decided to write a novel based on the title of Natalie Merchant's song, *Wonder*.

Wonder tells about a boy named August "Auggie" Pullman who had a *Treacher Collins Syndrome* or Mandibulofacial Dysostosis; a similar disease like Juliana Wetmore's case. He was born with craniofacial abnormality that affected the malformation on his face. In R.J. Palacio's *New York Times* bestselling novel, *Wonder* (published in 2012) is divided into eight chapters with important characters such as his sister named Via, Via's boyfriend named Justin, his friend at school Jack Will and Summer, and Miranda his old friend. Each important characters have their own perception of August "Auggie" Pullman by the 5 important narrations.

Wonder tells Auggie's life when his parent decided to enrol him in Beecher Prep to start a middle school after being home schooled for many years. He started 5th grade at Beecher Prep, and like any new student in the world, he got difficulty to be accepted as a normal kid because most of people thought stereotypically that his face was like infected by 'zombie plague', separated by the people around him. The rumour went like everyone who touched him would be

infected. The point is Auggie is merely an ordinary kid, with an extraordinary face. Even though *Wonder* is Palacio's first book, she doesn't have any trouble letting her main character suffer. Auggie is stared at, being talked about, bullied, and avoided. Despite there are so many challenges, *Wonder* is definitely a story of Auggie's hope.

Wonder received a positive review from book critics Martin Chilton from *the Telegraph* (The Telegraph, 2012). In *Wonder*, he said, heartstrings are well and although he did not weep, he was moved, as parents should be by the tale of little August Pullman. Auggie have a horrible look, he got a terrible facial deformity caused by a 'mutant gene', but he is actually a smart, funny, courageous, and marvellous person.

R.J. Palacio has written *Wonder* in a simple, warm, uplifting story that will make readers laughing in the first one minute and then wiping away tears the next minutes with her words, language and sense of kid imagination. R.J. Palacio also shows the main character disability's power within August Pullman through the struggle in his daily life. To discover this issue, the writer uses the Psychoanalysis theory suggested by Sigmund Freud and Mirror Stage by Jacques Lacan to analyse how August "Auggie" Pullman as a disability person portrayed through psychoanalysis which can develop his psychosexual development.

This phenomenon has a relation with Freudian's perspective about psychosexual development, this is important for August "Auggie" Pullman

experiencing labelling, stereotyping, discriminating, and separating leads to stigmatization which affect the development him as a disabled person.

The theory of psychosexual development is also known as a theory of libidinal development explains on how personality develops in human beings (Philip, 2011, p.180). The theory of psychosexual development, however, is an important part of the psychodynamic personality theory advanced by Freud. In the observations of psychosexual development, Freud had the makings of a psychosexual stage theory; oral stage, anal stage, phallic stage, latent stage, and genital stage. Each stage has certain difficult tasks associated with it where problems are more likely to arise.

The writer also uses Jacques Lacan's theory of child development. Lacan's work is a strikingly original attempt to 'rewrite' Freudianism in ways relevant to all those concerned with the question of the human subject (Eagleton, 1983, p.142). In order to understand the Lacanian concepts about children development we need to begin with Lacan's theory in 1936 of the psychological development of the infant, *Mirror Stage*. The condition for the baby to become or emerge as an independent self or subject is the condition where Lacan's Mirror Stage exists (Qazi, 2011, p. 4)

In this research, the writer intends to investigate the portrayal of psychosexual development of August Pullman as a disabled person in *Wonder* novel by Raquel Jaramillo Palacio through the Sigmund Freud's Psychosexual development and Jacques Lacan's Mirror stage theories. There has been another

research about disability from *From Freak to Savant: the Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939) to *Sling Blade* (1997) by Fiona Whittington in 2002 which produced the result that there is a link between the invisibility of people with disabilities in our society and the oppression of they experience. Another research that has been conducted was by Elizabeth A. Dolski which was *The Pitiful Bellringer: The Implications of Representations of Disability in Media & Literature* in 2013 that produced English Language Arts teachers have a unique opportunity to help students explore how literature and media shapes the reality that the judgemental word such as 'retard' or 'cripple' are unacceptable, instead learning and discussion must center upon what the allegorical representations in media and literature imply. Dolski continued, a person is only disabled with respect to the environment in which they are placed or the language that is used to define them, and students need to be given the tools to heighten their awareness around this fact. Those previous researchs are different with writer's research. The writer will focus on the investigation of the portrayal of psychosexual development in August Pullman. The writer also uses Psychoanalysis theory to understand how the main character is involved in disability portrayal through dialogues and behaviours.

Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis are used as a tool to analyse the character's behaviour and mental condition of disability children August Pullman as the main character of *Wonder* novel by R.J. Palacio within the characterization by using psychosexual development theory from Freud and mirror stage of Lacan. Further, the analysis of this fiction has not been discussed before. Besides, the

result of this study will open people's eye wider about what disabled person's feel.

1.2 Research Question

How is psychosexual development of disabled main character portrayed in R.J. Palacio's *Wonder* novel?

1.3 Purpose of the study

Based on the research question, the purpose of this study is to investigate the psychosexual development of August Pullman's as a disabled person in *Wonder* novel by R.J. Palacio.

1.4 Scope of the study

This study focuses on the main character of the story; August Pullman. Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory is used to understand how the main character is involved in portrayal of disability through the dialogues and his behaviours.

1.5 Significance of the study

Theoritically this research is significant to broaden knowledge and understanding about psychoanalysis from the theory by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, especially in certain term of English language dealing with literary studies.

Practically this study will enrich the knowledge especially for the English Department student who would like to understand the application

of psychoanalysis in novel. Furthermore, this research will give a new perspective of disability person in real life.