

**SELF-ACCEPTANCE OF AUGGIE PULLMAN IN R. J.
PALACIO'S *WONDER* BASED ON CARL ROGERS'
HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY THEORY**

THESIS

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
MALANG
2026**

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THESIS

Presented to

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in Partial Fullfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

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MALANG

2026

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **"Self-Acceptance of Auggie Pullman in R. J. Palacio's *Wonder* Based on Carl Rogers' Humanistic Psychology Theory"** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, May 11th 2026

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APPROVAL SHEET

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MOTTO

“Per aspera ad astra.”

Through hardships to the stars.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved father and mother, Drs. Sirojuddin, S.H and Yuyu Rubiasih, who always supported and encouraged me at every step of my journey during college. For all your sacrifices, both of you, may Allah reward you abundantly.

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The research and writing of this thesis can be completed with help of various parties. On this occasion, the researcher expresses his sincere gratitude and appreciation to all those who have helped, especially to:

1. Prof. Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag., as Dean of The Faculty of Humanities Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.
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The researcher is aware that this thesis still needs improvement and has weakness in several aspects. Therefore, criticism and suggestion for improving this work are welcomed. Hopefully, this thesis will benefit both the researcher and reader in general.

Malang, May 11th 2026

The researcher,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Akbar Fariz Ramzy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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ABSTRACT

Ramzy, Akbar Fariz (2026). *Self-Acceptance of Auggie Pullman in R. J. Palacio's Wonder based on Carl Rogers' Humanistic Psychology Theory*. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Agung Wiranata Kusuma, M.A.

Keywords: Self-Acceptance, Self-Concept, Incongruence, Humanistic Psychology, *Wonder*

Literary texts not only present imaginative stories but also depict psychological experiences, inner conflicts, and character development. In children's literature, issues such as self-concept and self-acceptance can be explored through how child characters view themselves and respond to social treatment. This study analyzes R.J. Palacio's *Wonder* by focusing on Auggie Pullman's self-acceptance through Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology. The purpose of this study is to describe Auggie's self-concept and examine how he moves towards self-acceptance. This study uses qualitative literary criticism with a psychological approach. The data consists of selected quotes, narratives, scenes, and dialogues from *Wonder* that reflect Auggie's experiences and psychological development. The findings indicate that Auggie's self-concept is represented through the tension between his actual self and his ideal self. His actual self is reflected in his awareness of physical differences and negative self-evaluations, while his ideal self emerges in his desire to be like other children and live without being judged based on his appearance. Furthermore, Auggie's self-acceptance develops gradually through incongruence, openness to experience, positive regard, and congruence. This study concludes that self-acceptance in *Wonder* is represented as a gradual psychological process shaped by individual experiences and social relationships. This study also shows that Rogers' humanistic psychology can be applied as an analytical framework in psychological literary criticism, particularly in children's literature.

ABSTRAK

Ramzy, Akbar Fariz (2026). *Self-Acceptance of Auggie Pullman in R. J. Palacio's Wonder based on Carl Rogers' Humanistic Psychology Theory*. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Agung Wiranata Kusuma, M.A.

Keywords: Penerimaan Diri, Konsep Diri, Ketidaksesuaian, Psikologi Humanistik, *Wonder*

Teks sastra tidak hanya menyajikan cerita imajinatif tetapi juga menggambarkan pengalaman psikologis, konflik batin, dan perkembangan karakter. Dalam sastra anak, isu-isu seperti konsep diri dan penerimaan diri dapat dieksplorasi melalui bagaimana karakter anak-anak memandang diri mereka sendiri dan menanggapi perlakuan sosial. Studi ini menganalisis *Wonder* karya R.J. Palacio dengan berfokus pada penerimaan diri Auggie Pullman melalui psikologi humanistik Carl Rogers. Tujuan studi ini adalah untuk menggambarkan konsep diri Auggie dan meneliti bagaimana ia bergerak menuju penerimaan diri. Studi ini menggunakan kritik sastra kualitatif dengan pendekatan psikologis. Data terdiri dari kutipan, narasi, adegan, dan dialog terpilih dari *Wonder* yang mencerminkan pengalaman dan perkembangan psikologis Auggie. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa konsep diri Auggie diwakili melalui ketegangan antara diri aktualnya dan diri idealnya. Diri aktualnya tercermin dalam kesadarannya akan perbedaan fisik dan evaluasi diri negatif, sementara diri idealnya muncul dalam keinginannya untuk menjadi seperti anak-anak lain dan hidup tanpa dihakimi berdasarkan penampilannya. Lebih lanjut, penerimaan diri Auggie berkembang secara bertahap melalui ketidaksesuaian, keterbukaan terhadap pengalaman, penghargaan positif, dan kesesuaian. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa penerimaan diri dalam *Wonder* direpresentasikan sebagai proses psikologis bertahap yang dibentuk oleh pengalaman individu dan hubungan sosial. Studi ini juga menunjukkan bahwa psikologi humanistik Rogers dapat diterapkan sebagai kerangka analitis dalam kritik sastra psikologis, khususnya dalam sastra anak-anak.

مستخلص البحث

رمزي، أكبر فاريز (٢٠٢٦). قبول أوجي بولمان لذاته في رواية ردنوو للكاتب آر. ج. بالاسيو استنادًا إلى نظرية علم النفس الإنساني لكارل روجرز. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية في مالانغ. المشرف: أغونغ ويراناتا كوسوما، ماجستير في الآداب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: قبول الذات، مفهوم الذات، عدم التوافق، علم النفس الإنساني، ردنوو

لا تقتصر النصوص الأدبية على تقديم قصص خيالية فحسب، بل تُصوّر أيضًا تجارب نفسية وصراعات داخلية وتطورًا للشخصيات. في أدب الأطفال، يمكن استكشاف قضايا مثل مفهوم الذات وتقبلها من خلال كيفية إدراك شخصيات الأطفال لأنفسهم واستجاباتهم للمعاملة الاجتماعية. تُحلّل هذه الدراسة رواية ردنوو لـ آر. جيه. بالاسيو بالتركيز على تقبل أوجي بولمان لذاته من خلال علم النفس الإنساني لكارل روجرز. يهدف هذا البحث إلى وصف مفهوم أوجي لذاته ودراسة كيفية انتقاله نحو تقبل الذات. تستخدم هذه الدراسة النقد الأدبي النوعي بمنهج نفسي. تتكون البيانات من اقتباسات وسرديات ومشاهد وحوارات مختارة من رواية ردنوو تعكس تجارب أوجي وتطوره النفسي. تشير النتائج إلى أن مفهوم أوجي لذاته يتجلى من خلال التوتر بين ذاته الواقعية وذاته المثالية. تنعكس ذاته الواقعية في وعيه بالاختلافات الجسدية وتقييماته الذاتية السلبية، بينما تبرز ذاته المثالية في رغبته في أن يكون مثل الأطفال الآخرين وأن يعيش دون أن يُحكم عليه بناءً على مظهره. علاوة على ذلك، يتطور تقبل أوجي لذاته تدريجيًا من خلال التمرد على المؤلف، والانفتاح على التجارب، والتقدير الإيجابي، والامتثال. وتخلص هذه الدراسة إلى أن تقبل الذات في رواية ردنوو يُصوّر كعملية نفسية تدريجية تتشكل بفعل التجارب الفردية والعلاقات الاجتماعية. كما تُظهر هذه الدراسة إمكانية تطبيق علم النفس الإنساني لروجر كإطار تحليلي في النقد الأدبي النفسي، ولا سيما في أدب الأطفال.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

As children grow up, they experience different situations and responses from the people around them that can affect how they see themselves. Recent psychological research shows that self-acceptance is a psychological process that plays an important role in emotional well-being and an individual's ability to cope with life experiences adaptively (Neff & Germer, 2017). During childhood, individuals begin to form their self-identity and evaluate their own worth, making the ability to accept their strengths and limitations a key part of psychological development. Children who can accept themselves tend to have more stable emotional conditions and feel more comfortable psychologically. Conversely, when self-acceptance does not develop well, children may experience difficulties in emotionally adjusting and building a coherent understanding of themselves. In literary criticism, this issue can be analyzed through the way the child character's inner conflict and self-evaluation are described in writing as the story progresses.

From a humanistic psychology perspective, self-acceptance is viewed as one of the important components of psychological health. Rogers (1951; 1961) described self-acceptance as an individual's ability to accept life experiences, feelings, strengths, and limitations without excessive self-judgment. This self-acceptance is closely related to how individuals perceive and evaluate themselves based on the experiences they have. If self-acceptance develops healthily,

individuals tend to be able to integrate various life experiences into a more stable self-concept. Conversely, negative evaluations from the social environment can disrupt this process and form a negative self-perception, thereby hindering psychological adjustment (Gunawan et al., 2023).

In childhood, self-acceptance has not yet fully developed because children are still in the process of forming their self-concept. At this stage of development, children rely heavily on social interactions to understand their self-worth and identity. Neurocognitive studies show that self-concept continues to develop during adolescence and is greatly influenced by social experiences and environmental support, including children's ability to assess themselves through interactions with others (Crone et al., 2022). Environmental responses, whether in the form of acceptance or judgment, play an important role in shaping how children view and accept themselves. As children continue to develop their understanding of themselves, social experiences can contribute to how they view and accept themselves.

During childhood, children are still developing their sense of self and learning to evaluate their self-worth through interactions with others. The quality of these experiences can influence how children perceive and accept themselves. Aprilianti and Laily (2021) found that social support and positive interactions with peers play a crucial role in fostering healthier self-acceptance in children. Conversely, limited support and negative social experiences can be associated with difficulties in developing positive self-views. Children who struggle with self-acceptance may experience low self-esteem, self-doubt, and emotional difficulties

in dealing with everyday experiences. During this developmental process, environmental responses, whether in the form of acceptance or rejection, can serve as psychological mirrors that shape how children perceive and evaluate themselves. When social experiences are unsupportive, children may be more likely to develop negative self-evaluations, which can hinder the development of healthy self-acceptance.

One form of negative social experience that can affect the development of self-acceptance in children is bullying. Bullying is understood as repeated negative behavior that involves a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim, leaving the victim in a vulnerable position and making it difficult to defend themselves (Olweus, 2010). Empirical findings also show that repeated bullying is associated with decreased self-esteem and emotional insecurity among children, which can interfere with the development of self-acceptance (Mawlod et al., 2024). In the context of children's psychological development, the experience of bullying is not positioned as the main focus, but rather as one of the social conditions that can influence how children view and assess themselves. Exposure to degrading treatment, rejection, or negative labeling has the potential to form initial self-assessments that are less positive and disrupt the process of self-acceptance.

This study uses Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology as the main theoretical framework to analyze Auggie Pullman's psychological development in *Wonder*. Rogers' theory was chosen because it provides concepts that help explain how individuals understand themselves and move toward self-acceptance. Through this perspective, Auggie's psychological development can be examined through the

relationship between self-understanding, life experiences, and the process of self-acceptance.

R.J. Palacio's *Wonder* (2012) tells the story of August "Auggie" Pullman, a ten-year-old boy born with facial deformities due to a genetic condition. After years of homeschooling due to various surgeries and medical treatments, Auggie begins attending Beecher Prep, a public school, for the first time. At school, he experiences a variety of social experiences, including rejection, teasing, fear, friendship, kindness, and support from those around him. Throughout the story, Auggie learns to overcome these challenges while adjusting to his new environment and building relationships with his peers, teachers, and family members.

As a literary work, *Wonder* can be researched not only through its narrative structure but also through its representation of human experience and character development. According to Wellek and Warren (1956), literature reflects aspects of human life that can be analyzed through various critical approaches. Therefore, *Wonder* provides a relevant literary context for examining how self-concept and self-acceptance are represented through children's experiences and character development.

In addition to depicting a child's experience with facial differences, *Wonder* explores issues related to identity, empathy, acceptance, friendship, and psychological growth. Through Auggie's interactions with others, the novel illustrates how social responses can shape how children perceive and evaluate themselves. The narrative also demonstrates that support, understanding, and

positive relationships can contribute to healthier psychological development. As the story progresses, Auggie undergoes significant emotional changes that reflect a gradual movement from insecurity and discomfort to greater confidence and self-acceptance. Therefore, the novel provides a meaningful context for examining the development of self-concept and self-acceptance from a humanistic psychology perspective.

Through Auggie's experiences of being judged, rejected, accepted, and supported by others, the novel provides a relevant narrative context for examining how self-concept and self-acceptance develop in child characters. Several previous studies on *Wonder* and children's literature have examined Auggie Pullman's experiences from various perspectives. Candraningrum (2021), Hameed and Hassoon (2023), and Feng et al. (2024) focused on rejection, social exclusion, and psychological vulnerability, while Nurfajriani et al. (2021), Sagimin and Damayanti (2019), Fikri (2019), and Habiba (2022) examined the psychological, linguistic, and pragmatic aspects of the novel.

Beyond studies specifically related to *Wonder*, Abharini et al. (2023) discussed self-acceptance in adolescents, Haines and Schutte (2023) emphasized emotional acceptance and support, and Rezaei and Seyyedrezaei (2013) highlighted the importance of a clear psychological framework in literary criticism. Therefore, existing studies have not specifically focused on analyzing Auggie Pullman's self-acceptance as a process of becoming through Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology in R.J. Palacio's *Wonder*. Although previous studies have examined Auggie's social experiences, psychological responses, and language use, they have not

systematically explored how self-concept, incongruence, and self-acceptance are interrelated in his psychological development. By applying Rogers's humanistic psychology as an analytical framework, this study contributes to psychological literary criticism by providing a more comprehensive understanding of self-acceptance in children's literature.

Based on the background of the study and research gaps that have been described earlier, this study focuses on examining the process of self-acceptance experienced by the character of Auggie Pullman in the novel *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio, using Carl Rogers' humanistic psychological theory as the main analytical foundation. This research emphasizes how Auggie's self-concept was formed, how he experienced psychological tension in dealing with his life experiences, and how self-acceptance gradually developed as part of his psychological growth process. Thus, self-acceptance is positioned as the main focus of the analysis, not just as the end result of the story's conflict. Based on this, the research then formulates research questions that will guide the analysis in the following chapters.

B. Research Question

Based on the research gaps identified in the previous section, this study focuses on the analysis of Auggie Pullman's self-acceptance process in R.J. Palacio *Wonder's* book using Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology theory. Since previous research has not specifically examined self-acceptance as the main focus, this study aims to explore Auggie's psychological development in more depth. Therefore, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How is Auggie Pullman's self-concept described in R.J. Palacio's *Wonder*?
2. How does Auggie Pullman move toward self-acceptance based on Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology theory in the novel?

C. Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this research contributes to the field of literary psychology by applying Carl Rogers' theory of self-acceptance to the analysis of children's characters in a literary work. This research enriches the discussion of humanistic psychology in literature, especially in understanding how self-concept and self-acceptance are formed through emotional experiences and social interactions. By focusing on Auggie Pullman, the study also provides a clearer illustration of how psychological theory can be used to analyze character development in children's literature.

Practically, this research is expected to help readers understand the importance of self-acceptance in dealing with social differences and challenges. Through Auggie's experience, readers can learn that self-acceptance does not develop instantly, but through emotional support, positive relationships, and personal growth. In the field of literary criticism of psychology, this research also makes a methodological contribution by showing how Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology can be used as an analytical lens to examine character development in children's literature. Therefore, this research is expected to help future students and researchers apply Rogers concepts, such as self-concept, incongruence,

congruence, and self-acceptance, in analyzing the psychological growth of literary characters.

D. Scope and Limitation

This research focuses on the analysis of R.J. Palacio's novel *"Wonder"*, which focuses specifically on Auggie Pullman as the main character. This study utilizes Carl Rogers' humanistic theories, specifically the concepts of self-concept and self-acceptance, as the main theoretical framework. The analysis is limited to the psychological aspects related to Auggie's self-concept formation and the development of self-acceptance. Other literary elements, supporting characters, and psychological theories are excluded to maintain the focus and depth of the analysis.

E. Definition of Key Term

1. Self-acceptance

Self-acceptance is an individual's ability to realistically accept themselves, including personal conditions, limitations, and emotional experiences, without excessive self-judgment. In this study, self-acceptance is understood as the process of self-acceptance of the character of Auggie Pullman based on the humanistic psychology theory of Carl Rogers (1951; 1961), which emphasizes self-acceptance as part of psychological health and as a result of the alignment between the true self and the ideal self.

2. Self-concept

Self-concept is the way an individual views and evaluates themselves, encompassing perceptions of identity, self-worth, and personal existence. In this study, self-concept refers to how Auggie Pullman understands and assesses himself based on life experiences and social interactions, as explained in Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology theory (1951; 1961).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology as the main theoretical basis for analyzing the psychological development of the character Auggie Pullman in the novel *Wonder*. The concepts of self-concept, congruence and incongruence, as well as self-acceptance, are used as an analytical framework to read the character's inner dynamics textually (Rogers, 1951; 1961).

A. Psychological Approach in Literary Criticism

The psychological approach in literary criticism is used to understand literary characters as representations of psychological processes constructed through the text. In this approach, characters are not treated as real individuals, but as narrative constructions that represent inner experiences, internal conflicts, and personality development. Wellek and Warren (1956) emphasize that literary criticism can examine the inner life of characters by paying attention to how thoughts, feelings, and emotional responses are represented through story structure and characterization.

In this study, a psychological approach is specifically applied through Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology theory. Rogers' concepts, such as self-concept, congruence and incongruence, and self-acceptance, are used as a theoretical framework to interpret the psychological dynamics of characters in literary works. This theory does not function as a method of data collection but rather as an interpretive lens in literary criticism to explain how the process of psychological

growth and inner conflict is textually represented in the narrative (Rogers, 1951; 1961).

B. Humanistic Psychology by Carl Rogers

The humanistic psychology proposed by Carl Rogers views humans as active and dynamic individuals with an inherent tendency to develop psychologically. Rogers emphasizes that an individual's behavior and development are primarily shaped by their subjective experiences and the personal meaning they give to those experiences, rather than solely by external factors (Rogers, 1951). Therefore, understanding a person must start from how the individual views and evaluates himself.

Rogers (1961) further explained that psychological growth occurs when individuals are able to accept and integrate life experiences into their overall self-structure. Within this framework, personality development is understood as a gradual process, rather than a fixed condition. Rogers' humanistic perspective provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding psychological development as a process of becoming, emphasizing self-acceptance and the integration of experience as a center of psychological health.

In Rogers' humanistic psychology, unconditional positive attention is also an important condition that supports psychological growth. Unconditional positive attention refers to the acceptance, respect, and appreciation given to individuals without requiring them to meet certain conditions or expectations. Through this acceptance, individuals are more likely to feel emotionally secure, become more

open to their experiences, and develop a healthier understanding of themselves. In literary character analysis, this concept can be used to examine how acceptance from other characters affects the psychological development of the main character. Therefore, unconditional positive attention becomes relevant in this study because Auggie's movement toward self-acceptance is shaped not only by his internal awareness, but also by the acceptance and kindness he receives from others.

C. Self-Concept in Children's Literary Character Analysis

In Carl Rogers' theory of humanistic psychology, self-concept is a central personality structure because it relates to how individuals perceive, evaluate, and understand themselves. Self-concept also includes an individual's internal perception of self, which refers to how an individual understands themselves from within, regardless of how they are perceived by others. Rogers (1951) defined self-concept as an organized set of perceptions about the self, which includes personal characteristics, abilities, and individual limitations. Self-concept is dynamic because it is continuously shaped and influenced by life experiences and social interactions (Hapsari et al., 2023). In children, self-concept develops through everyday experiences and interactions with others, which helps them interpret experiences, respond emotionally to social situations, and form attitudes toward themselves. In analyzing children's literature characters, self-concept can be identified through the way the child characters view and describe themselves, particularly in relation to their behavior, appearance, and experiences in social interactions. In this study, self-evaluation is not treated as a separate category from the actual self. Instead, self-evaluation is understood as one way the actual self

manifests in literary character analysis, as it shows how the character perceives and evaluates his actual condition, behavior, or appearance based on direct experience. Therefore, when Auggie expresses negative perceptions about himself based on his direct experiences, the data can be interpreted as a representation of his true self because it reflects how he views himself in reality. When a character evaluates himself negatively, this can indicate a disturbed self-concept because the character begins to understand himself through unfavorable self-perceptions.

Rogers distinguishes the self-concept into two main dimensions, namely the actual self and the ideal self. The actual self refers to the perception of oneself as experienced and perceived based on real experiences, while the ideal self represents the self that an individual hopes to become or aspires to be. When there is a significant gap between the actual self and the ideal self, individuals tend to experience psychological tension in the form of insecurity, self-doubt, and inner conflict (Rogers, 1951). In the context of literature, this discrepancy can be traced through the emotional responses, attitudes, and behaviors of characters that show dissatisfaction with themselves.

In children's literature, the concept of self-concept is relevant to understanding how child characters perceive themselves through their experiences and social interactions. Through these experiences, child characters can develop certain perceptions of themselves and respond emotionally to the treatment they receive from others. Therefore, in this study, self-concept is used as an analytical category to understand the main character's perception of himself through the

relationship between the actual self and the ideal self as formulated by Rogers (1951).

D. Congruence and Incongruence in Literary Character Analysis

In Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology theory, congruence and incongruence are important concepts for understanding an individual's psychological condition based on the relationship between life experiences and self-concept. Congruence refers to the state when the experiences an individual goes through are in harmony with how the individual views and evaluates themselves, thus allowing the creation of psychological balance and a sense of emotional security. Conversely, incongruence occurs when life experiences conflict with the self-concept, causing the individual to have difficulty accepting and integrating these experiences into their self-structure (Rogers, 1951). In literary analysis, incongruity can also be seen when a character internalizes negative social treatment, causing the character's self-understanding to be influenced by painful social experiences.

In literary criticism, the concepts of congruence and incongruence can be applied to interpret the inner conflicts and psychological dynamics experienced by literary characters. In this study, these concepts are used as analytical categories to examine whether the main character's experiences are consistent with or contradictory to his self-concept. Therefore, congruence and incongruence provide a framework for understanding Auggie Pullman's psychological development and his movement toward self-acceptance in the novel *Wonder*.

E. Self-Acceptance as a Process of Becoming

In Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology, self-acceptance is not understood as a fixed psychological condition, but rather as a developmental process that occurs gradually. Rogers (1961) referred to this process as the process of becoming, which is the process in which individuals slowly learn to accept life experiences, emotions, and their own limitations more honestly and realistically. Within this framework, self-acceptance develops in line with increased openness to experience and a decrease in defensive attitudes towards oneself.

Rogers (1961) emphasized that self-acceptance is closely related to the individual's ability to integrate experiences, including those previously rejected or considered threatening to self-concept. This process is supported by psychological conditions that allow individuals to feel secure in recognizing and accepting themselves, such as understanding empathy and emotional acceptance from the environment. Rogers (1961) also emphasized that positive regard from others can support an individual's psychological growth and movement toward self-acceptance. Thus, self-acceptance is understood as a dynamic psychological process, formed through internal awareness and interpersonal relationships, rather than as an instant result or a final state that is immediately achieved.

F. Relationship between Self-Concept, Congruence, and Self-Acceptance

In Carl Rogers' humanistic theory, self-concept, congruence and incongruence, and self-acceptance are interrelated concepts that form a unified psychological process. Self-concept serves as the basis for self-evaluation, that is,

how individuals view and understand themselves based on life experiences (Rogers, 1951). Meanwhile, congruence and incongruence indicate the extent to which an individual's experiences are aligned or not aligned with their self-concept (Rogers, 1951; 1961).

Rogers (1961) explained that self-acceptance develops when an individual is able to achieve a higher level of congruence, that is, when life experiences can be accepted and integrated into the self-concept without causing excessive inner conflict. Conversely, prolonged incongruence tends to hinder the process of self-acceptance because individuals find it difficult to accept experiences that contradict their self-image. Therefore, in this study, the relationship between self-concept, congruence, and self-acceptance is understood as interrelated psychological processes that help explain an individual's movement toward greater self-acceptance from a humanistic perspective.

In this study, the sequence of incongruence, openness to experience, positive regard, congruence, and self-acceptance is used as an analytical framework derived from Rogers' concepts to examine Auggie Pullman's psychological development in *Wonder*. Positive regard, particularly in the form of acceptance and support from others, can facilitate this process by helping individuals feel accepted and emotionally secure. As individuals become more open to their experiences and receive supportive responses, they can gradually move toward greater congruence between their experiences and self-concept, which can contribute to the development of self-acceptance. It should be noted that Rogers did not propose these concepts as a fixed sequential model, and the

sequence presented in this study is the researcher's analytical framework built from the interrelationships between Rogers' concepts.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter discusses the research methods used in this study. Qualitative literary criticism with a psychological approach is used to examine the representation of Auggie Pullman's self-concept and self-acceptance in R.J. Palacio's *Wonder* through a textual analysis based on Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology.

A. Research Design

This study employs literary criticism as the research design. Literary criticism focuses on the interpretation and analysis of literary texts in order to understand how meaning is constructed through narrative, language, and characterization (Wellek & Warren, 1956). The use of literary criticism is appropriate because the object of this study is a literary work, namely the novel *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio.

This research applies a psychological approach within literary criticism as its critical perspective. Specifically, Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology is used as the primary theoretical framework to analyze the psychological development of the main character. Rogers' concepts of self-concept, congruence and incongruence, and self-acceptance are employed as analytical tools to interpret how Auggie Pullman's inner conflicts and process of self-acceptance are represented through the narrative.

B. Data and Data Source

The main source of data for this study is the novel *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio, published by Alfred A. Knopf in 2012. The edition used in this study is an international paperback edition, with ISBN 978-0-553-50997-7. This edition is consistently used as the basis for all page references in the analysis. The novel tells the story of August "Auggie" Pullman, a boy with facial deformities who enters public school for the first time and faces social challenges and psychological struggles in the school environment. Although the novel consists of a variety of characters and narrative perspectives, the analysis in this study focuses on Auggie Pullman as the main character. The unit of analysis includes narrative elements such as narrative, dialogue, character depictions, and interactions involving Auggie Pullman that represent his psychological development. These textual elements are examined to identify representations of self-concepts, congruences and incongruence, as well as processes of self-acceptance based on Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology. Secondary sources consist of books, journal articles, and previous studies related to literary criticism, psychological approaches to literature, and Carl Rogers' theoretical concepts that support the analysis.

C. Data Collection

This research involves several stages in the collection of textual evidence. The first stage is a careful and thorough reading of R.J. Palacio's novel *Wonder* to gain an in-depth understanding of the narrative, specifically Auggie Pullman's characterization, his psychological state, and his interactions with other characters throughout the story. This careful reading is done over and over again to identify

narrative moments that reflect Auggie's inner experiences and psychological development.

The second stage involves tagging the text by highlighting and noting the sections that represent aspects of self-concept, congruence and incongruence, and self-acceptance. In the final stage, the selected textual evidence is categorized based on its thematic relevance to Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology, focusing specifically on the dynamics of self-evaluation, psychological tension, and the gradual process of self-acceptance. Through this process, textual material is systematically prepared for further analysis in the next chapter.

D. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study was carried out through a textual reading of the novel *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio. The first step is to identify narrative data in the form of narratives, dialogues, and story parts that represent the psychological experiences of Auggie Pullman's character, specifically those related to how he perceives himself and responds to the social treatment around him. The selected data focused on the parts of the text that are relevant to the formation of self-concept and the dynamics of character self-acceptance.

The next step is to group the data according to the main concepts in Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology, namely self-concept, congruence and incongruence, and self-acceptance as the process of becoming. These categories are used to track how a character's inner conflicts, psychological tensions, and altered self-perceptions are represented narratively.

The final step involves the interpretation of the categorized data using the framework of psychological literary criticism. Through this process, the analysis explains how Auggie Pullman's psychological development is constructed in the literary text as a process toward self-acceptance, not only as a consequence of the conflict of the story, but as an internal dynamic that is revealed throughout the narrative.

The data were deliberately selected based on their thematic relevance to the research question and their significance in representing Auggie Pullman's psychological development. Eight data points for the first research question were selected because they most clearly represent Auggie's self-concept through his actual self and ideal self. Meanwhile, fifteen data points for the second research question were selected because they represent the most significant psychological moments in Auggie's journey toward self-acceptance, including incongruence, openness to experience, positive regard, congruence, and self-acceptance. Therefore, data selection was not only based on quantity, but also on the relevance and strength of each data point in relation to Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology theory.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of data analysis obtained from the novel *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio. This study uses the humanistic psychological theory of Carl Rogers (1951; 1961), in particular by using the analytical framework of self-concept and self-acceptance. The discussion in this chapter discusses two formulations of research problems. First, to show how Auggie Pullman's self-concept is represented through the actual self and ideal self in the novel. Second, to analyze how Auggie Pullman moves toward self-acceptance through the concepts of incongruence, openness to experience, positive regard, congruence, and self-acceptance. In part A, Auggie Pullman's self-concept will be explained as represented through the actual self and the ideal self. Then, in part B, Auggie Pullman's movement towards self-acceptance will be discussed through five key concepts, namely incongruence, openness to experience, positive regard, congruence, and self-acceptance.

A. Auggie Pullman's Self-Concept in *Wonder*

This section examines Auggie Pullman's self-concept as depicted in R.J. Palacio's novel *Wonder*. Based on Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology, self-concept refers to how individuals perceive and understand themselves through their experiences. In this study, Auggie's self-concept is analyzed through the relationship between his actual self and his ideal self.

1. Actual Self

Actual self refers to how individuals perceive themselves based on real conditions and direct experiences. In the novel, Auggie's actual self is shown through his awareness of his physical appearance, his social experiences, and how he evaluates himself in everyday situations. Through his narrative, Auggie shows that he understands himself as a child who is physically different from other children. The following data shows Auggie's actual self as part of his self-concept.

Datum 1

"I know I'm not an ordinary ten-year-old kid." (p.3).

This data provides an early indication of Auggie's self-concept. At the beginning of the novel, Auggie does not introduce himself by describing his family, his school, or his daily activities. Instead, he immediately states that he is not an ordinary child. This opening indicates that Auggie's awareness of his differences has become a central part of his identity and shapes the way he understands himself in relation to others. Auggie's identity is introduced through his awareness of his differences, which then influences how he responds to his social environment.

The statement also shows that Auggie's self-concept is not built from fantasy or desire, but from the reality he experiences. When he said that he was "not an ordinary ten-year-old kid" he realized that his condition placed him outside the image of children his age. However, he still identifies himself as a child. Psychologically, this suggests that although Auggie

recognizes his differences, he does not completely reject his basic identity as an ordinary child who wants to belong and be accepted by others. This creates an important point in the analysis, Auggie does not deny his childhood identity, but he understands that his physical condition makes his childhood experience different from others.

Auggie's use of the phrase "I know" gives the statement a strong sense of self-awareness. This shows that his repeated experiences of being perceived as different have been internalized and incorporated into his self-perception. Through this statement, Auggie demonstrates an awareness of himself that has been shaped by his interactions with the social environment. Rather than imagining himself differently, he acknowledges the condition that distinguishes him from other children. This quotation demonstrates Auggie's self-concept because his understanding of himself emerges directly from his lived experiences and becomes the basis for how he interprets his identity and social position.

Auggie's statement reveals that he perceives himself as physically and socially different from other children. Psychologically, this awareness becomes the starting point of his identity formation because he evaluates himself primarily through the differences he experiences. Therefore, this quotation demonstrates that Auggie's self-concept is initially organized around his recognition of being different, which subsequently influences how he responds to social experiences throughout the novel.

Datum 2

"I'll be the only kid who looks like me," (p.12).

Auggie's response in this scene suggests that his anxiety about school is closely tied to his perception of his own physical appearance. When his mother tells him that he is not the only new student, Auggie does not fully accept this reassurance. For him, being new is not his primary concern. Instead, he was more aware that his appearance sets him apart from the other kids. Through this response, Auggie demonstrates that his awareness of his physical differences has already influenced how he anticipates social interactions. Even before entering school, he expects his appearance to distinguish him from his peers and affect how he will be perceived by others.

This statement also shows that Auggie's self-concept is shaped by his awareness of his actual condition and by the meanings he attaches to his experiences. He does not imagine himself to be different for no reason. His understanding comes from the reality of his physical appearance and from previous experiences of being noticed by others. By saying that he would be the "only kid" who looked like him, Auggie realized that his body and face would shape how he was seen in the new social space. This awareness becomes an important component of Auggie's identity because he understands himself primarily through the physical differences that he believes will define his social experiences at Beecher Prep.

This moment is important because Auggie's understanding of himself influences his expectations before any direct interaction at school occurs. His anticipation of being visibly different shapes the way he approaches the new environment and prepares him to expect social separation from his peers. He already understood that his physical appearance would set him apart from other students, even though they might have the same position as the new students. Therefore, Auggie's self-perception is both personal and social because he constructs his identity not only from his physical condition but also from his expectation of how others will respond to that condition.

Auggie's statement reveals that he understands himself as physically different from other children and expects this difference to influence his place within the school environment. Psychologically, his anticipation of being the "only kid" who looks like him indicates that his awareness of his appearance has already become central to his self-perception. This quotation demonstrates Auggie's actual self because his understanding of himself is grounded in his real physical condition and in the meanings he has developed from previous social experiences.

Datum 3

"I could tell I was being stared at without even looking up."

(p.49).

This data shows how Auggie's actual self was formed through his first-hand experiences in the social environment. Auggie does not enter the

cafeteria simply as a student looking for a place to eat; he enters it with an awareness that his appearance will likely attract attention from others. Instead, he soon realized that his presence attracted the attention of other students. The cafeteria becomes a social setting in which Auggie interprets himself through the reactions of others and becomes increasingly aware that his appearance influences how he is perceived in social interactions. His awareness of being stared at indicates that his physical condition shapes not only his self-perception but also his expectations and experiences in social situations.

Auggie's statement revealed that being noticed has become a familiar part of his life. He did not have to look up to make sure that the other students were staring at him because he had been in a similar situation many times before. This suggests that Auggie's understanding of himself has been constructed through repeated experiences of receiving unusual attention from others, causing him to anticipate similar reactions even before directly observing them. Consequently, being stared at has become an internalized social experience that influences how Auggie positions himself and anticipates his presence in public settings.

This moment demonstrates that Auggie's awareness of himself cannot be separated from the social responses he repeatedly encounters. He realized that his appearance made him easy to notice even when he tried not to pay attention to others. Therefore, his self-concept develops not only from his recognition of his physical differences but also from his interpretation of

how others consistently respond to those differences. The lunch scene shows that Auggie understands himself as someone whose presence is often treated differently in social situations.

Auggie's statement demonstrates that he has become highly sensitive to other people's reactions and has internalized the experience of being observed because of his appearance. Psychologically, he no longer needs direct confirmation that others are staring at him because such experiences have become a familiar part of his social reality. This quotation demonstrates that Auggie's self-concept is shaped through lived experiences that repeatedly reinforce his awareness of being physically different and socially visible.

Datum 4

"I hate the way I eat. I know how weird it looks." (p.50).

In this part, Auggie's actual self emerges through daily activities that become emotionally uncomfortable for him. Lunch, which is normally an ordinary school activity, becomes a moment in which Auggie becomes acutely aware of the differences in his physical condition and how these differences may attract the attention of others. While eating in the cafeteria, he perceives himself as being observed by other students, and this perception leads him to evaluate himself negatively and feel uncomfortable with his own behavior.

Auggie's statement shows that his self-concept is not limited to his facial appearance but also encompasses the way he interprets his bodily

differences in performing everyday activities. When he says, "I hate the way I eat" he is judging his own way of eating. This statement reflects a negative self-evaluation because Auggie does not merely recognize that eating is difficult for him, he emotionally rejects the way his body performs an ordinary activity and associates it with being different from others.

His consciousness became stronger when he said, "I know how weird I look." This sentence indicates that Auggie anticipates negative judgments from others and has already incorporated those anticipated reactions into the way he understands himself. He recognizes that his way of eating differs from that of other children, and this recognition demonstrates that his self-perception has developed through repeated experiences that make him increasingly conscious of his differences. In this situation, Auggie interprets himself primarily through his physical condition and through his expectation that his differences will be noticed by others.

Auggie's statement demonstrates that his awareness of being physically different extends beyond his facial appearance and influences the way he experiences everyday activities. Psychologically, he has internalized these differences to the point that an ordinary act such as eating becomes a source of self-criticism and discomfort. This quotation demonstrates that Auggie's self-concept is shaped by lived experiences that lead him to evaluate himself negatively and interpret his differences as central to his identity.

Datum 5

"The kids in that story were afraid they'd catch the cooties if they touched the old moldy cheese on the basketball court. At Beecher Prep, I'm the old moldy cheese." (p.72).

In this data, Auggie's actual self is shown through the way he relates his school experience to the story of Touch of Cheese. Not only did he realize that other students were avoiding him, but he also gave meaning to that avoidance by comparing himself to "moldy old cheese." This comparison shows that Auggie understood his position at Beecher Prep through the social treatment he received from his classmates.

The image of a moldy old cheese represents something that other children do not want to touch. By using this image to describe himself, Auggie shows that he begins to see his own presence as something that others avoid. His statement not only describes what students do, but also shows how their behavior affects the way he evaluates himself. This makes the data important because Auggie's self-understanding is shaped by repeated social rejection in the school environment.

Auggie's line, "At Beecher Prep, I'm the old moldy cheese" reflects a negative self-evaluation. He does not merely describe his classmates' behavior but incorporates their rejection into the way he perceives himself. By identifying himself with something that others avoid, Auggie internalizes social rejection as part of his identity. This indicates that his self-concept has been shaped by interpersonal experiences, as external judgments begin to influence his understanding of who he is.

This condition demonstrates that Auggie's self-concept develops through his interaction with the social environment. His perception of himself is no longer based solely on his physical differences but also on repeated experiences of being avoided by his peers. The metaphor of the "old moldy cheese" shows that social rejection has become incorporated into his self-understanding, illustrating how self-concept in Rogers' perspective is continually formed and reshaped through lived experiences and interpersonal relationships.

2. Ideal Self

The ideal self refers to the self a person wants to achieve or the kind of life they want to have. In this novel, Auggie's ideal self emerges through his desires and hopes. He not only understands himself based on his real condition, but also imagines a life where he can have a normal face, like other children, and be known without being judged based on his appearance. The following data shows Auggie's ideal self as part of his self-concept.

Datum 1

"If I found a magic lamp and I could have one wish, I would wish that I had a normal face that no one ever noticed at all."
(p.3).

Auggie's desire in this data shows that his ideal self is formed from the gap between his current condition and the life he wants to live. Not only did he say that he wanted to be different, but he imagined a situation where his face would no longer be something that attracted attention. This means

that Auggie's desires are not only related to physical appearance, but also to the way he wants to exist among others.

The image of the "magic lamp" is important because it places Auggie's wishes outside of ordinary reality. He knows that his actual condition is not easily changed, so the desire becomes a space where he can imagine a different version of himself from his real life. Through this imagination, Auggie reveals himself what he expects, a self with a normal face and without unwanted attention from others.

His desire for a "normal face" suggests that Auggie's ideal image is tied to his desire to be like other kids and not be noticed for his appearance. He imagined himself having a face that would not make him look different from the people around him. This reflects the gap between how Auggie sees himself in reality and the kind of self he wants to become.

However, the most important part of his desire was not only a normal face, but also the phrase "so that no one would ever notice him at all." Auggie wants to live without being stared at, judged, or treated differently because of his appearance. Therefore, Auggie's wish reveals that the life he longs for is one in which his appearance no longer becomes the center of attention. His desire for a normal face and for not being noticed suggests that he associates acceptance and comfort with being physically similar to other children. This gap between his present condition and the version of himself he hopes to become demonstrates the operation of his ideal self.

Datum 2

"if I could be like every other kid going to school. Have lots of friends and hang out after school and stuff like that." (p.4).

In this data, Auggie's ideal self is shown through his imagination of school life. He did not completely reject school, what he wants is a school experience where he can live like other children. This suggests that Auggie's desire is not just about being physically different, but also about being socially accepted in ordinary childhood life.

The statement "if I could be like the other kid going to school" reveals the gap between Auggie's actual situation and the life he wants to have. He imagines himself as a child who can go to school without feeling different from others. Through this statement, Auggie presents the ideal version of himself, a child who can participate in school life normally.

His desire to "have lots of friends" suggests that Auggie's ideal self includes social acceptance. He wants to be surrounded by friends and accepted into peer relationships. This suggests that the self he expects is not isolated, but connected to others in a normal social environment.

The phrase "hang out after school and stuff like that" expands Auggie's ideal self outside of the classroom. Not only does he want to study at school, but he also wants to experience the usual social activities that other children enjoy. Therefore, this data depicts Auggie's ideal self because it reveals the kind of person he wants to become, a child who can go to school, make friends, and participate in everyday social activities without feeling different from others. The contrast between his current state and his

imagined version of himself indicates a difference between his actual experience and his desired identity. This difference shows how the ideal self works in Rogers' theory, where individuals construct an image of what they would like to achieve based on unmet needs and personal aspirations.

Datum 3

"I wish every day could be Halloween. We could all wear masks all the time." (p.73).

In this data, Auggie's ideal self is shown through his desire to live where appearance is not the first thing people notice. Halloween has a meaning for Auggie because it gives him a temporary opportunity to move like other children without being stared at or judged. Through this desire, Auggie imagines a situation that is different from his daily reality, where his face often makes him feel separated from others.

The line "I wish every day could be Halloween" shows that Auggie does not just see Halloween as a holiday. For him, Halloween represents a condition where he can feel more comfortable in public because his face is covered. This desire reveals that Auggie hopes for a daily life where he does not have to bear the burden of being noticed because of his appearance.

His statement "We could all wear masks all the time" also shows his desire for equality in social situations. If everyone wore masks, Auggie would not be the only one whose face caught the eye. In this imagined state, he can stand among others without being treated differently. It shows that the ideal self is connected to the expectation of being seen and treated in the same way as other children.

Auggie's wish to live in a world where everyone wears masks reveals his desire to participate in social interactions without being defined by his facial difference. By imagining a situation in which no one can immediately judge appearance, he constructs an image of himself as an ordinary child who can interact with others on equal terms. This imagined condition differs from his everyday experiences of being noticed and treated differently because of his face. Therefore, this datum illustrates Auggie's ideal self, as it represents the identity and social experience he hopes to achieve but has not yet attained in reality.

B. Auggie Pullman's Movement Toward Self-Acceptance in *Wonder*

This section examines Auggie Pullman's movement toward self-acceptance as depicted in R.J. Palacio's novel *Wonder*. Based on Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology, self-acceptance is understood as a gradual psychological process in which individuals learn to accept their personal experiences, feelings, and conditions more openly. In this analysis, Auggie's journey toward self-acceptance is examined through five key concepts: incongruence, openness to experience, positive regard, congruence, and self-acceptance.

1. Incongruence

Incongruence refers to the condition when an individual's experiences are not aligned with their self-concept. In this novel, Auggie's incongruence is shown through his anxiety, discomfort, and fear of being judged because of his appearance. Through his narrative, Auggie expresses

feelings of anxiety and discomfort when his social experiences do not align with how he views himself and hopes to be accepted by others. These experiences create tension between his self-concept and the reality he faces in his interactions with others. The following data shows Auggie's incongruence as part of his journey towards self-acceptance.

Datum 1

"Everyone will stare at me at school," (p.10).

Auggie's fear in this quote does not appear after he enters school, but before the school experience actually begins. This shows that the conflict is already within him. School has not been a real event for Auggie, but in his mind school has become a threatening social space. He imagined that the first thing other students would notice was his appearance, not his personality or identity as a child.

This fear shows the clash between Auggie's desires and expectations. On the one hand, he wants to go to school like other children. On the other hand, he believed that his face would make the normal experience impossible. This is why this sentence is important to understand his psychological state. Auggie is not only afraid of the school itself, but also afraid that the school will assert his differences in front of many people.

This statement also suggests that Auggie has brought previous social experiences into his imagination of the future. He expected the people at school to look at him because he had experienced being stared at elsewhere. Therefore, his anxiety is not random. That anxiety is shaped by repeated

experiences that make him believe that the new social environment will produce the same reaction.

This datum illustrates incongruence because Auggie's desire to experience school like other children conflicts with his expectation that his appearance will immediately attract attention. Although he wants to participate in school as an ordinary student, he anticipates being defined by his facial difference instead. This difference creates anxiety and emotional tension, indicating that his experiences and expectations have not yet been integrated into a secure and accepting sense of self.

Datum 2

"I admit I was feeling so nervous that I didn't know what to say or do except look at the floor." (p.25).

Auggie's nervousness in this scene shows how difficult it is for him to enter a new social situation. During the school tour, he is placed with Jack, Julian, and Charlotte, who are students he has never met before. This meeting was supposed to serve as an introduction to school life, but for Auggie, it became an uncomfortable experience as he felt exposed in front of other children.

His reaction showed that the problem was not only the presence of new students, but also the pressure to be seen by them. Auggie wants to join the school environment, but his body reacts with nervousness and silence. He is unable to respond naturally because the situation makes him feel insecure. This suggests that his social experiences are at odds with his desire to be treated like a normal student.

The act of staring at the floor also shows Auggie's attempts to protect himself from direct interaction. Instead of facing the other students confidently, he avoided eye contact and distracted himself from them. This response suggests that Auggie is trying to alleviate the discomfort caused by the possibility of being judged.

This datum illustrates incongruence because Auggie's wish to participate in school as an ordinary student conflicts with his emotional response during the interaction. Although he wants to become part of the school community, he reacts with nervousness, silence, and avoidance by looking at the floor. These reactions indicate that he does not yet feel secure in the social situation and still anticipates being judged by others. The difference between his desire for normal participation and his inability to engage comfortably demonstrates the emotional tension characteristic of incongruence.

Datum 3

"I kept my head way down." (p.36).

Auggie's actions in this data show how his fear is seen through his body movements. On his first day at Beecher Prep, he was surrounded by many students in front of the school. Instead of entering the school confidently, he lowered his head as a way to avoid attention. This response suggests that Auggie was already feeling uncomfortable even before the direct interaction occurred.

The act of bowing his head is not a coincidence. This shows that Auggie is trying to control how many parts of his body others can see. He wants to reduce the possibility of being noticed, stared at, or judged for his appearance. In this situation, his body becomes a form of protection from the social pressures around him.

This moment also shows that Auggie can not experience school in a relaxed way like other children. Although he was physically present as a new student, emotionally he was still trying to hide himself. His desire to go to school like other children is at odds with his fear of being seen differently. This gap creates psychological tension because Auggie wants to experience school like other children but emotionally feels compelled to hide himself from the social situation.

Although Auggie attends school with the hope of participating like other students, his immediate reaction is to lower his head and withdraw from his surroundings. This behavior indicates that he is unable to engage with the new environment comfortably and instead responds with self-protective avoidance. The difference between his wish to experience school normally and his tendency to hide himself demonstrates incongruence, as his social experience is accompanied by anxiety and emotional insecurity rather than a sense of acceptance and belonging.

Datum 4

"We're kind of like Beauty and the Beast." (p.56).

Auggie's comparison in this data occurs after he develops a friendly interaction with Summer, one of the first students who willingly sits and talks with him at school. However, when describing their relationship to his mother, he still presents the two of them through the contrasting figures of "Beauty" and "the Beast." Summer has treated him well and is one of the first students to accept him at school. However, when Auggie talks about Summer with his mother, he still puts himself in an unequal position. He associates Summer with "Beauty" and indirectly positions himself as the "Beast."

This comparison reveals that Auggie still carries a negative image of himself. He not only sees Summer as a beautiful figure, but also compares himself to Summer. In that comparison, Auggie positions himself as someone who is physically different and less attractive. This shows that his view of himself is still influenced by the way he perceives his appearance.

The important point in this data is that even though Summer is friendly to him, Auggie still describes himself through the image of "The Beast." By choosing this comparison, he indirectly positions himself as someone who is physically different and less attractive than others. This self-description indicates that his negative self-perception persists in how he interprets himself. By choosing this comparison, Auggie continues to define himself through an image associated with physical difference. Although he now has a friend who interacts with him positively, his own description still places him in a position that contrasts sharply with Summer.

This datum illustrates incongruence because Auggie's description of himself remains different from the acceptance he is beginning to experience in his interaction with Summer. While Summer's friendliness places him in a more positive social relationship, Auggie still identifies himself through the image of "the Beast," a figure defined by difference and unattractiveness. The contrast between this self-description and his changing social experience indicates that his self-concept has not yet adjusted to the new situation, creating a tension between how he perceives himself and how he is being treated.

Datum 5

"Every new class I had was like a new chance for kids to 'not stare' at me." (p.61).

Auggie's statement in this data shows that his incongruency did not only appear at one specific moment, but continued throughout his school experience at the beginning. After entering Beecher Prep, Auggie had to deal with many new classes, new students, and new situations. Every class is supposed to give him the opportunity to learn and participate like any other student, but for Auggie, each new class is also another situation where he has to deal with other people's reactions to his appearance. This makes school a place where academic activities are continually accompanied by his awareness of other students' reactions to his appearance.

The phrase "every new class" suggests that Auggie's discomfort is repeated. He does not just experience anxiety on the first day of school or during one particular interaction. Instead, the same tension returns every

time he enters a different class. This repetition is important because it shows how Auggie's school life is filled with constant social pressures. He wants to adapt to school normally, but each new environment reminds him that his appearance makes him different in the eyes of others.

Auggie's use of the phrase "not stare" also reveals the hidden form of judgment he experienced. The phrase "not stare" suggests that Auggie remains highly aware of how other students look at him. Even when he imagines that they are trying not to stare, their reactions still make him conscious of his physical difference. This creates another inconvenience because even though they try not to stare, their reactions still make Auggie realize the difference.

This situation shows the conflict between Auggie's expectations and his actual experience. He wants to be treated like a normal student, but his daily school experiences repeatedly remind him that other students see him differently. The classroom, which was supposed to be a normal space for learning and socializing, became a place where Auggie felt psychologically tense. His desire to be accepted is interrupted by the repeated realization that people try not to react to his face.

This datum illustrates incongruence because Auggie wants to experience school as an ordinary student, yet each new class becomes another situation in which he anticipates reactions to his appearance. Instead of viewing the classroom solely as a place for learning and social

participation, he continues to associate it with being noticed because of his face. The difference between his desire for normal participation and his persistent awareness of his difference creates psychological tension, indicating that his school experiences have not yet become fully compatible with his self-concept.

Datum 6

"I wanted a hole I could fall inside of: a little black hole that would eat me up." (p.78).

Auggie's statement in this data shows the strongest form of incongruency in his early school experience. Auggie wears his Halloween costume and feels comfortable that the other students do not recognize him. For a while, the costume allowed him to move freely without being judged based on his face. However, this comfort was shattered when he heard hurtful comments about himself from other students. Since they did not know that Auggie was there, their comments exposed negative judgments about him that he was not supposed to hear directly.

This moment becomes painful because Auggie's sense of comfort and safety is suddenly disturbed. Halloween had given him a sense of relief because the costume allowed him to move around without immediately being recognized because of his face. However, the comments he heard reminded him that beyond the costume, he was still judged by his appearance.

Auggie's desire for a "hole" suggests that he wants to escape the situation completely. He does not just want to leave the room or avoid the

people around him, he wants to disappear from the painful moment itself. This reaction shows how deeply the experience affected him emotionally. The social rejection he heard became too difficult for him to deal with directly, so his mind imagined a place where he could hide from everything.

The image of "a little black hole that would eat me up" amplifies the intensity of his emotional pain. Through this image, Auggie reveals how overwhelmed he felt after hearing the hurtful words. Through this image, Auggie reveals how overwhelmed he feels after hearing the comments, which abruptly replace his temporary comfort with feelings of hurt and humiliation.

This datum illustrates incongruence because the comfort Auggie experiences while wearing his costume is suddenly interrupted by negative comments about his appearance. The costume temporarily allows him to participate in the Halloween event without feeling different from others, but the remarks he overhears immediately restore his awareness of being judged because of his face. The contrast between this brief sense of normality and the painful social evaluation he receives creates psychological tension, showing that his experiences at school remain incompatible with his desire to interact without being defined by his physical difference.

2. Openness to Experience

Openness to experience refers to an individual's ability to accept and respond to new experiences more openly. In this novel, Auggie's openness

to experience is shown as he begins to navigate school life, learn from his experiences, and develop a broader understanding of himself and others. Through his narrative, Auggie shows that he is gradually becoming more willing to accept new situations rather than avoid them. The following data demonstrates Auggie's openness to experience as part of his psychological development toward self-acceptance.

Datum 1

"As I wrote down Mr. Browne's September precept, I suddenly realized that I was going to like school. No matter what." (p.48).

Auggie's statement in this data marks an important change in the way he responds to schools. Before this moment, school was mostly associated with fear, nervousness, and the possibility of being judged by other students. However, in Mr. Browne's class, Auggie begins to experience school differently. The classroom is no longer just a place where he feels watched, but also a place where he can listen, learn, and discover the meaning of what is being taught.

This change began when Auggie wrote down Mr. Browne's precept for September. The act of writing shows that he is not only physically present in the classroom, but also mentally involved in the learning process. He began to pay attention to the lessons and allowed himself to be involved with the school environment. This is important because Auggie no longer focuses solely on the possibility of being judged by others. Instead, he begins to engage with classroom activities and pay attention to what he is learning.

The words "I suddenly realized" indicate that Auggie had a shift in perspective. This realization does not mean that all his problems are gone, but it does indicate that he is beginning to make room for a more positive understanding of the school. He begins to recognize that school may offer experiences that are more positive than he initially expected.

The phrase "I was going to like school. No matter what" reinforces this openness. Auggie understands that school would not always be easy for him, but he has willing to accept the experience. This willingness indicates that Auggie is becoming more receptive to his school experience rather than approaching it only through anticipation and fear. This datum illustrates openness to experience because Auggie begins to reinterpret school through his direct experiences rather than through his earlier fears of rejection. His realization that he is going to like school shows a growing willingness to engage with the environment and accept the possibility of positive experiences. This shift reduces the distance between his expectations and his actual experiences at school, indicating a more congruent way of responding to his environment.

Datum 2

"The things we do are the most important things of all. They are more important than what we say or what we look like." (p. 65).

Auggie's written reflection on this data marks an important shift in the way he understands personal value. Before this moment, Auggie often judged himself through other people's reactions to his appearance. However, through the October Precept of Mr. Browne, Auggie began to realize that a

person should not be understood by his physical appearance alone. This shows that he is beginning to accept a broader view of himself and others.

This change came when Auggie responded to Mr. Browne's assignment on the precept. The quote is not just Mr. Browne's statement, but Auggie's own written reflection on the meaning of the precept. This is important because Auggie not only listens to lessons, but also processes those ideas personally. His response suggests that he is beginning to engage with a new perspective on identity and self-esteem.

The words "The things we do are the most important things of all" show that Auggie is beginning to appreciate action. He began to understand that what people do can reveal who they are deeper than physical appearance. This awareness is important because Auggie's life is often shaped by the way people judge his face. By focusing on action, Auggie begins to move away from the view that appearance is the only measure of self-worth.

The phrase "They are more important than what we say or what we look like" reinforces Auggie's openness to a new understanding of himself. He began to realize that appearance does not fully define a person. Through this reflection, Auggie begins to reconsider the belief that physical appearance is the primary source of personal value. By accepting the idea that actions and character are more important than appearance, he becomes more open to experiences that challenge his previous negative self-

perception. This shift reduces the dominance of appearance in his self-evaluation and indicates a movement toward congruence, as his understanding of himself gradually becomes more flexible and aligned with a broader and more realistic view of personal worth.

3. Positive Regard

Positive regard refers to acceptance, support, and caring responses that help individuals feel valued and understood. In this novel, Auggie's positive regard is shown through the acceptance he receives from those around him, especially when others treat him kindly without judging his appearance. Through his narrative, Auggie shows that this supportive response helps him feel more comfortable and valued. The following data shows how positive regard supports Auggie's movement toward self-acceptance.

Datum 1

"She put her lunch tray on the table, plopped her backpack on the floor, and sat down across from me." (p.51).

Summer's actions at this point marked an important moment in Auggie's school experience as it gave him direct acceptance from other students. Before this moment, lunch makes Auggie feel uncomfortable because he realizes that the other students are watching him. However, Summer chose to come to his desk and sit across from him. This changed the meaning of the lunch situation from a moment of isolation to a moment of social acceptance.

This acceptance begins through simple but meaningful actions. Summer placed her lunch tray on Auggie's table, indicating that she chose to share the same space with him. Her actions were important because Auggie had just experienced discomfort from being stared at by other students. By coming to his table, Summer shows that she does not avoid him or treat him as a different person.

The action becomes even more powerful when Summer puts her backpack on the floor and sits down. This shows that she not only stopped by for a while, but intends to stay with Auggie. Her presence gives Auggie a different social experience than he usually receives. Instead of rejection or avoidance, he receives the friendship and kindness of someone who is willing to be with him.

Summer's decision to sit across from Auggie provides Auggie with an experience that contradicts the rejection he usually expects from others. By willingly sharing the same table and remaining with him during lunch, Summer treats Auggie as an ordinary classmate rather than as someone to be avoided because of his appearance. This acceptance becomes psychologically meaningful because it gives Auggie evidence that social relationships do not always have to be defined by rejection. Therefore, this datum demonstrates positive regard because Summer's acceptance offers Auggie a supportive interpersonal experience that begins to reduce his feelings of isolation and contributes to a more positive view of himself.

Datum 2

“But ever since that first lunch at school, we’ve sat at the summer table together every day, just the two of us.” (p.68).

Auggie's narrative in this data shows that Summer's acceptance is not just a single moment, but a consistent part of his school experience. The first lunch with Summer does not end up as an isolated act of kindness. Instead, it develops into a recurring form of friendship that Auggie experiences every day. This makes this data important because positive rewards are shown not only through a single act of acceptance, but also through the sustainability of friendships.

The phrase "since that first lunch at school" connects this data to the previous moment when Summer first chose to sit with Auggie. That first lunch was the beginning of a relationship that gave Auggie a different social experience at school. While the other students often stare at him or avoid him, Summer's presence gives him a sense of acceptance.

The statement "we’ve sat at the Summer table together every day" shows the stability of Summer's support. Summer not only treats Auggie very well, but continues to sit with him regularly. This repetitive action shows that she accepts Auggie as a friend and does not see him as someone to avoid. Summer's consistency helps create a safer social space for Auggie in the school environment.

The phrase "just the two of us" also shows the closeness between Auggie and Summer. Even when no other students joined them, Summer continued to sit with Auggie. This consistency is psychologically significant

because Auggie is accustomed to being stared at, avoided, or treated as different by his peers. Summer's repeated choice to remain with him provides an experience of dependable acceptance that challenges his expectation of rejection. Therefore, this datum demonstrates positive regard because Summer's sustained acceptance allows Auggie to experience friendship as a stable and genuine relationship, helping him gradually develop a more secure perception of himself.

Datum 3

"I did notice as I walked that 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. They were surrounding me as we walked through the crowds of kids. Like I had my own emperor's guard." (p.272).

Auggie's narrative in this section shows positive regard through the protection and support he receives from his friends. After a terrifying incident at a nature retreat, Auggie does not walk alone in the crowd. Amos, Jack, Miles, and Henry remain close to him and around him. This moment is important because Auggie begins to perceive his friends not just as classmates, but as people who care about his safety and comfort.

The presence of Amos beside Auggie indicates the beginning of this support. Amos remained right by his side after the difficult situation, which meant he did not leave Auggie to face the crowd alone. This action gives Auggie a sense of protection because someone stays close to him when he feels vulnerable. It also shows that Auggie is treated as someone who deserves to be protected.

This support becomes stronger because Jack, Miles, and Henry also remain close to Auggie. Jack walked beside him, while Miles and Henry positioned themselves in front of and behind him. Their position shows that Auggie is surrounded by his friends from various sides. This creates a strong picture of friendship as Auggie is not isolated, but is accompanied by a group of students who choose to stay with him.

The comparison "Like I had my own emperor's guard" shows how Auggie interprets his friends' presence. He does not describe them merely as classmates walking beside him, but as people who intentionally protect and accompany him. This perception is psychologically important because Auggie, who has often experienced exclusion and vulnerability, now sees himself as someone worthy of care and support. Therefore, this datum demonstrates positive regard because the acceptance and protection offered by his friends provide Auggie with an experience of being valued and emotionally secure, contributing to a more positive perception of himself.

4. Congruence

Congruence refers to the condition when a person's self-concept becomes more aligned with his or her experiences. In the novel, Auggie's congruence is shown when he begins to experience acceptance from others and feels more comfortable with himself. Through his narrative, Auggie shows that his experiences no longer just create fear or discomfort, but also help him recognize his own worth. The following data demonstrates

Auggie's congruence as a crucial stage in his journey toward self-acceptance.

Datum 1

"And now that they'd protected me, I was different to them. It was like I was one of them. They all called me "little dude" now— even the jocks." (p.282).

Auggie's experience with this data shows a turning point in the relationship between his concept of himself and his social environment. Before this moment, Auggie often understood himself as someone who was stared at, avoided, or treated differently because of his appearance. However, after the incident at the nature retreat, the way other students responded to it began to change. Their protection gives Auggie a new experience, he is no longer just a student who looks different, but someone who is accepted into the group.

This change is important because it does not happen through Auggie's imagination, but through direct social experience. His friends protect him, stay close to him, and then treat him more intimately. This experience helped Auggie see that his position among the students was changing. He began to feel that he was no longer outside the group. The sentence "I was different to them" suggests that Auggie is aware of a shift in the way others see him.

The phrase "It was like I was one of them" is the strongest sign of congruity to this data. Auggie's previous self-concept was filled with the realization that he was different from other kid. However, at this moment,

his experience began to give him a different understanding of himself. He began to feel accepted, included, and connected with the students around him. This means that his social experiences begin to support a more positive self-understanding.

The nickname "little dude" also indicates that Auggie is treated with familiarity by a wider group of students. This acceptance is no longer limited to his closest friends but extends to the larger school community. Psychologically, this experience challenges Auggie's earlier belief that he is someone who will always be treated as different or excluded. Instead, he begins to experience himself as a valued member of a peer group. Therefore, this datum demonstrates congruence because Auggie's social experiences of acceptance and inclusion become increasingly consistent with his emerging perception of himself as someone who belongs among others.

Datum 2

"everyone started standing up. Not just the front rows, but the whole audience suddenly got up on their feet, whooping, hollering, clapping like crazy. It was a standing ovation. For me." (p.305).

Auggie's experience at this moment shows the peak of his movement towards acceptance. Throughout the novel, being seen by others often makes Auggie feel uncomfortable because people usually stare at him because of his appearance. However, at this point, being seen by others no longer serves as a source of shame or fear. During the graduation ceremony, Auggie takes center stage, but the attention he receives is positive, respectful, and appreciative.

The raucous applause changed the meaning of visibility for Auggie. Previously, when people looked at him, he often felt judged, avoided, or treated differently. In this scene, the entire audience stands not to look at him negatively, but to respect him. This created a new social experience for Auggie as he was publicly recognized by the school community. The situation that used to make him anxious, namely being noticed by others, is now a moment of acceptance and pride.

The words "the whole audience" indicate that the recognition comes from the wider community, not just from his close friends or family. This is important because Auggie's previous struggles are closely related to the way the people around him have responded to his appearance. When the audience gave him a standing ovation, Auggie received a collective sign that he was appreciated. This experience supports a more positive understanding of himself because he is no longer positioned just as someone different, but as someone who is valued.

The short sentence "For me" is the most important part of the quote because it shows that Auggie recognizes and accepts the appreciation directed toward him. Unlike his earlier experiences, where being the center of attention caused discomfort and self-consciousness, he does not withdraw from this moment or question it. Instead, he acknowledges that the recognition belongs to him. Psychologically, this indicates that Auggie is able to accept a positive social evaluation of himself. Therefore, this datum demonstrates congruence because his experience of being publicly

appreciated is now consistent with his developing perception of himself as someone who is worthy of acceptance and recognition.

5. Self-acceptance

Self-acceptance refers to an individual's ability to accept their personal conditions, experiences, and identity without excessive self-judgment. In this novel, Auggie's self-acceptance is shown when he becomes more comfortable with himself and no longer focuses solely on his physical appearance. Through his narrative, Auggie shows that he gradually accepts his experiences at school as part of his growth. The following data shows Auggie's self-acceptance as a result of his psychological development throughout the novel.

Datum 1

"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."
(p.307).

Auggie's experience at this moment shows a clear self-acceptance as he is able to be with his friends without being controlled by thoughts about his appearance. After getting recognition from the school community, Auggie took a photo with his friends. This moment is different from previous experiences, where being seen by others often makes him anxious or uncomfortable. Here, Auggie no longer focuses on how his face looks in front of others.

The physical closeness between Auggie and his friends is important in this scene. When they embraced each other's shoulders, Auggie became

a part of the group naturally. He did not stay away or try to hide himself. This shows that he feels comfortable being close to others and no longer sees himself separated from his friends because of his appearance.

The phrase "for the first time I can remember" suggests that this feeling is unusual for Auggie. In many previous moments, Auggie was very aware of his face when he was around other people. His face is often the center of fear, shame, and self-awareness. However, at this moment, he experienced himself differently. He was able to enjoy the situation without being dominated by the usual worries about his appearance.

The statement "I wasn't even thinking about my face" is the clearest indication of change in Auggie's self-perception. His face remains the same, but it no longer becomes the center of his awareness or determines how he experiences the moment. Instead of monitoring how others might react to his appearance, he is fully engaged with his friends and enjoys being part of the group. Psychologically, this suggests that Auggie is no longer relating to himself primarily through his physical differences. Therefore, this datum demonstrates self-acceptance because Auggie is able to participate in a meaningful social experience without being dominated by self-consciousness about his appearance, indicating a more accepting and secure relationship with himself.

Datum 2

"Thank you for making me go to school." (p.309).

Auggie's statement in this data shows self-acceptance through his ability to look back on his school experiences with gratitude. At the beginning of the novel, school is something that makes Auggie feel scared and anxious. He was worried that people would look at him, judge him, and treat him differently because of his appearance. However, by the end of the story, Auggie no longer sees school as just a scary place. He began to understand it as an important part of his growth.

The words "Thank you" indicate that Auggie has changed the way he responds to his experience. Instead of regretting the decision to go to school, he expressed appreciation to his mother. This gratitude is meaningful because it shows that Auggie is able to accept the difficult experiences he has gone through. He realized that those experiences, while sometimes painful, had helped him grow.

The phrase "for making me go to school" also suggests that Auggie accepted something he once refused. In the early part of the novel, going to school creates emotional tension for him as he expects rejection and negative attention from others. However, towards the end of the novel, Auggie understands that school has given him friendship, recognition, and confidence. This suggests that his view of school has changed from fear to acceptance.

This moment becomes important because Auggie not only accepts school as an external experience but also acknowledges how it has

contributed to his personal growth. By thanking his mother, he recognizes that the fears, difficulties, and social challenges he experienced at Beecher Prep were meaningful parts of his development rather than experiences he wishes to reject or avoid. Psychologically, this indicates that Auggie is able to integrate both painful and positive experiences into his understanding of himself. Therefore, this datum demonstrates self-acceptance because Auggie embraces his experiences as part of who he has become and appreciates the growth that emerged from them.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter discusses the conclusions and suggestions based on the analysis explained in Chapter IV. The researcher summarizes the research results by referring to the problem formulation, namely how is Auggie Pullman's self-concept described in R.J. Palacio's *Wonder*, and how does Auggie Pullman move toward self-acceptance based on Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology theory in the novel.

A. Conclusion

This study aims to reveal how Auggie Pullman's self-concept is represented and how he moves towards self-acceptance in R.J. Palacio's novel *Wonder* using Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology theory, specifically through the concepts of self-concept, incongruence, openness to experience, positive regard, congruence, and self-acceptance. Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that Auggie's self-acceptance did not appear instantly, but developed gradually through the interaction between his internal experiences and the support he received from the people around him, particularly family members and friends.

First, Auggie Pullman's self-concept is represented through his actual self and his ideal self. The actual self emerges when Auggie becomes aware of his true condition, especially his physical differences and how they affect his social experiences. He perceives himself as different from other children, often the object of attention, and judges himself negatively in some situations. Meanwhile, the ideal

self emerges through Auggie's desire to have a normal face, to be like other kids, and to live without being judged based on his appearance. This suggests that Auggie's self-concept is shaped by the tension between how he sees himself in reality and the kind of life or self he would like to have.

Second, Auggie's journey towards self-acceptance is shown through a series of psychological processes. At first, Auggie experiences a mismatch because his desire to be treated like a normal child is at odds with his social experiences of being stared at, judged, and rejected. However, his development begins when he becomes more open to his school experiences, learns to value actions more than appearances, and receives positive reinforcement from family members and friends who accept and support him. This experience helped Auggie move towards congruence, where his concept of self became more in tune with his positive experiences. Eventually, Auggie achieved self-acceptance as he became more comfortable with himself, no longer just focusing on his face, and embracing his school journey as an important part of his growth.

Thus, this study concludes that self-acceptance in *Wonder* is depicted as a gradual psychological process shaped by individual experiences and interpersonal relationships. This process begins with a self-concept shaped by physical differences and social experiences, and develops through openness to experience, positive regard from others, and increasing congruity. Through Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology, Auggie's development can be understood as a movement from maladjustment and emotional conflict to self-acceptance. Theoretically, this study shows that Rogers' humanistic psychology can be used as an analytical

framework in psychological literary criticism. By applying Rogers' concepts to the character of Auggie Pullman in *Wonder*, this study provides an example of how humanistic psychology can be used to examine psychological growth and self-acceptance in children's literature.

B. Suggestion

This research has limitations because it focuses on the analysis of Auggie Pullman's self-concept and self-acceptance in one literary work, namely *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio, using the humanistic psychology theory of Carl Rogers. Based on these limitations, the researchers offer some suggestions for future research.

First, future researchers can expand the scope of research by analyzing other literary works that feature the characters of children who experience psychological struggles, social rejection, or self-acceptance issues. By examining a variety of literary works, future studies can compare how self-concept and self-acceptance are represented across narrative contexts in children's literature.

Second, future researchers could combine Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology with other psychological theories, such as Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, or Adler's individual psychology. This combination may help future studies examine the psychological development of literary characters from a variety of theoretical perspectives.

Third, future researchers can expand on this research in the same novel by focusing on other characters in "*Wonder*," such as Via, Jack Will, Summer, or Miranda. In contrast to the first suggestion that extends the object of research to

other literary works, this suggestion focuses on deepening the analysis in *Wonder* by examining how other characters experience emotional conflict, social distress, and psychological development.

Finally, this research is expected to be a reference for students and researchers in the field of literary psychology, especially those who are interested in analyzing self-concept, self-acceptance, and character development in children's literature.

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