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“Ordinary” from an out-group’s perspective

Comparing non-affected teenagers’ attitudes towards (cranio)facial anomalies after book reading versus film watching



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Preface

“It is perhaps less trivial to claim that all literature and art has throughout history been used as an educational, or at least ideological vehicle; yet the didactic project is unquestionably stronger in literature written and marketed for young audiences.”

- Maria Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 2.

In my last year of secondary school, one of my friends sceptically sighed that she did not see any point as to why we were required to read books. I can still remember disagreeing with her, although I could not put my finger on the reason why. I had some vague ideas about reading improving empathic skills and teaching us ‘stuff on some broader things in life.’ I did not know how to word these concepts though, and so I kept my mouth shut. Still, that moment sparked within me an interest in the social effects of reading, together with a desire to someday come back with a plea in which I could phrase why reading is beneficial, especially while growing up.

Five years later, during one of the first courses of my MA in Youth Literature, I was finally given many of the answers to my burning questions. I got to understand more and more of the cognitive impact of reading. Meanwhile, the people surrounding me told me that they read less and less. This was often seemingly counterbalanced by them stating –“BUT, I do watch a lot of movies and Netflix shows.” I had the unanswered feeling that there was in some sense a difference between these two pastimes. Whereas none of my friends ever felt guilty about staying up reading a book, watching films or series is frequently called a “guilty pleasure.” Besides many other linguistic and attentional explanations, in the back of my mind, the ideas on empathy popped up again.

Thus, I am so very happy to finally have written the plea that I could not phrase six years ago. I am grateful that I was given the opportunity to delve into this topic so extensively, and am now confident in my ideas and beliefs on this great passion of mine: literature.

I would thus like to use this preface to thank Sara Van den Bossche, my supervisor, for introducing me to the field of cognitive literary studies through the course *Het kind als lezer*, allowing me to tackle this subject in the way I was enthusiastic about, as well as all the intricate feedback both in person and digitally. I, too, want to thank Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer for the inspiring lectures throughout the MA and taking the time to be my second reader.

Of course, I am also thankful for the family and friends who have supported me throughout the process, especially Jade van der Graaf and Noa Tims. They have been very helpful and attentive proof-readers.

Summary

This thesis provides an explorative answer to the question: to what extent is there a difference between the influence of book reading versus film watching on out-group attitudes? I analyse and compare the potential cognitive effects of reading *Wonder*, the novel by R. J. Palacio, versus watching the film adaptation by Stephen Chbosky on the implied reader and watcher. *Wonder* is a narrative on first-year middle-school student August Pullman. Auggie and his classmates reflect on his craniofacial condition, a rare case of Treacher Collins syndrome, and how it affects his everyday life. Moreover, this thesis includes an explorative inquiry into the real effects of reading versus watching *Wonder* on the attitudes of non-affected first-year students of Dutch secondary education (in-group) towards main character August Pullman and (cranio)facial anomalies in general (out-group), as they occur during interventional book-/filmtalks.

Cognitive skills such as Theory of Mind and empathy have been proven to be triggered by book reading. They are also “essential social skills” that can shape our knowledge of other people (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 78). Studies have shown that this effect may be beneficial in improving out-group attitudes (Vezzali, et al, 2015, p.115). In the meantime, narratives are consumed evermore frequently through digital media such as film, surpassing book reading (Rideout et al. 2010, p. 2). Many of the hypotheses that have been used to prove the cognitive effects of book reading may also be applied to film. Fictional narratives may affect our brains in similar ways to real life experiences. The same goes for extended contact, which means that out-group attitudes of one person may be improved if another in-group member participates in intergroup contact with the out-group. Such effects can, however, only be achieved in a person if they identify with this other in-group member, or the out-group member themselves. Despite the fact that films also provide fictional narratives, the studies I discuss in the theoretical framework lead to the hypothesis that readers of the *Wonder*-narrative are more likely to gain positive out-group attitudes compared to watchers, mostly due to a higher degree of identification-inducing defamiliarisation. In my analysis, I added to this hypothesis that both book and film contain many indicators for potential positive cognitive effect on out-group attitudes, but that the book’s potential is embedded in deeper cognitive complexity.

The results of the explorative interventions are in accordance with these expectations. Both groups showed overall positive post-interventional out-group attitudes, but implicit identification with Auggie was more common in the book group. Moreover, book-group participants made more personal connections between themselves and the out-group than those in the film group. Although the film-group participants also demonstrated the ability of speculating on the interiority of characters and identifying with them, they focused more on the out-group’s otherness than the book group and exhibited a victim-versus-saviour pattern. Overall, the results show that both media may affect out-group attitudes positively, but the book group showed positive out-group attitudes on a deeper, more nuanced level.

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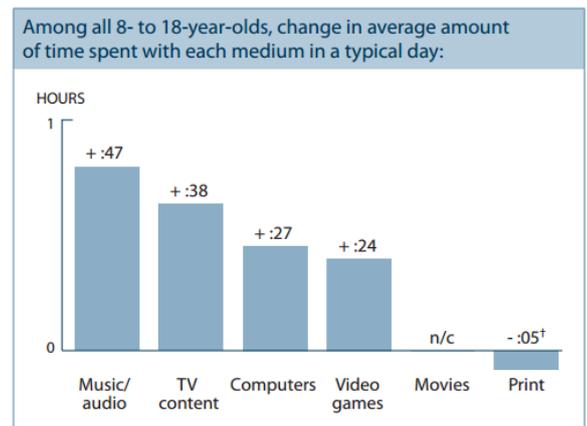
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“As anyone who knows a teen or a tween [add: “preteen, 9 to 12 years old” (“Tween” n.d.)] can attest,” write researchers Victoria J. Rideout, Ulla G. Foehr, and Donald F. Roberts, “media are among the most powerful forces in young people’s lives today” (2010, p.1). Their study on the role of media in the lives of 8- to 18-year-olds showed that teenagers spend an average of more than 7.5 hours a day consuming media. Consequently, they state:

[the] TV shows they watch, video games they play, songs they listen to, books they read and websites they visit are an enormous part of their lives, offering a constant stream of messages about families, peers, relationships, gender roles, sex, violence, food, values, clothes, and an abundance of other topics too long to list. (2010, p. 1)

Figure 1 shows that, in the United States, the use of electronic entertainment media such as music/audio, TV content¹, computers and video games has increased substantially, contrary to the consumption of printed entertainment media such as books. Moreover, Dutch research by Ewout Witte and Amber Scholtz shows that the average Dutch person watches films more regularly than they read books (2015, p. 27). Streaming services such as Netflix continue to grow internationally (Richter, 2018), while foundations and organisations for reading promotion and literary education such as the Dutch Stichting Lezen or Flemish Iedereen Leest strive to create

Changes in Media Use, 2004–2009



[†] Not statistically significant. See Appendix B for a summary of key changes in question wording and structure over time.

Figure 1 (Rideout, Foehr and Roberts, 2010, p.2)

stimulating and motivational reading environments for young people (“Over Stichting Lezen,” 2018; “Over Iedereen Leest,” 2019). It is clear that the popularity of electronic media has generally surpassed the appreciation for reading amongst teenagers.

As stated above, media affect their consumers. Due to their rising popularity, TV shows and movies become more and more influential. The growth of these electronic media has generally gone hand in hand with scepticism about this influence. Three decades ago, a study was conducted in response to this reputation. Daniel Anderson and Patricia Collins state that it was “widely believed that television viewing has a negative impact on school achievement. ... There has been widespread public commentary about the cognitive effects of television” (1988, p. 8). For example, they noticed a common belief that

¹ Since this thesis deals with a film adaptation, it is important to note that “TV content” here includes time spent watching movies broadcast, shown on demand digitally or on VCR or DVD, etc. The column for “movies” that is shown in the graph merely refers to film watching in cinemas (Rideout, Foehr and Roberts, 2010, p.2).

television negatively affected children's attention span, narratological comprehension and reflection skills, successfully completing cognitively challenging activities such as homework, as well as creative imagination and the development of the left hemisphere of the brain (1988, p. 8). They also argue that television was assumed to overstimulate children through rapidly paced visuals, which may lead to hyperactivity (1988, p. 8). Anderson and Collins refuted all of these assertions. Still, I argue that some of these underlying negative sentiments towards film and TV watching, despite their great popularity, persist in today's society. Due to these ideas, parents may decide on a limited amount of time that their children are allowed to sit in front of a TV screen. This rarely happens with book reading, an activity that aforementioned foundations such as Stichting Lezen or Iedereen Leest even promote. They emphasise that reading improves language learning skills and may effectuate cultural, social and psychological growth ("Over Stichting Lezen," 2018; Koopman, n.d.; "Over Iedereen Leest," 2019). Evidently, there was, and is, a tendency to think that film and television watching may be cognitively disadvantageous, especially when compared to book reading.

Another subject in which scepticism about the cognitive effects of television and film watching has been gaining scholarly attention lately is that of diversity (Erigha, 2015, p.78). Again, especially compared to book reading, film and television are often seen as providing less diverse stories. Literary scholars Perry Nodelman and Maris Reimer express their concerns in the following way:

Children's literature can be a powerful force in the lives of children. It can make them less innocent. It can make them conscious that there is more than one way of being normal. It can offer them the opportunity to experience and learn to enjoy a vast range of different kinds of stories, and so make it clear that the one story they so often hear from toys and TV is not the only possible or the only desirable version of the truth. (2002, p. 149)

Nodelman and Reimer here touch upon the tendency of TV to rarely provide 'alternative versions of the truth,' whereas they state that literature has the power to potentially make young people aware of e.g. social and cultural differences.

However, novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie emphasises that one-sided narratives may exist in literature as well. She describes how, growing up in Nigeria, she only ever wrote stories with blue-eyed characters who played in the snow and ate apples (2009, 0:27). "What this demonstrates," she states, "is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children" (2009, 1:32). She underlines the importance of diverse narratives by saying that "stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize" (17:24). In other words, narratives – whether presented in book or film - help shape the way in which we think about others. This is an essential part of the influence of media consumption that will be central to this thesis.

This ability of media to provide us with knowledge on other people has been gaining academic attention. Especially amongst literary scholars, cognitive criticism has recently become a popular field of study (Nikolajeva, 2014, p.3). In literary cognitive criticism, scholars study how knowledge is conveyed through reading, such as knowledge of the world or of other people (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 21; p. 75). In her book *Reading for Learning: Cognitive approaches to children's literature*, Maria Nikolajeva (2014) describes these phenomena and distinguishes three important elements that play a main part in influencing children's perception of the world and the (diverse) other. I would therefore like to introduce and define these terms, which are: identification, empathy and Theory of Mind.

In this thesis, I mean by identification "the psychological orientation of the self in regard to something (such as a person or group) with a resulting feeling of close emotional association" ("Identification" n.d.). The emphasis in this term lies on the orientation of the self towards another group. I distinguish between in- and out-groups. In short, in-groups are social categories of which one is a member, whereas an out-group is a social category to which one does not belong (Quattrone and Jones, 1980, p. 142).

Empathy is "the ability to understand other people's minds without sharing their opinions or, more importantly, their emotional experiences" (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 86). In particular, empathy is the ability to understand the *feelings* of other people. More specifically, it is "a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect [that] can be provoked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading" (Keen, 2007, p. 5). Empathy is "one of the most essential social skills," (Keen, 2007, p. 5) and thus influences the way we think about and treat others.

The same goes for Theory of Mind, or ToM, which is the ability to understand the *thoughts* of other people (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 77). Nikolajeva summarises the following facts about ToM:

In actual life, attributing mental states to other people relies on their actions and reactions, facial expressions, body language and other external signals. We use this ability on an everyday basis without noticing; this is what makes it possible for us to interact with other people, predict their behaviour and adjust our own. We are not born with Theory of Mind, but develop this skill in real-life interaction with other people. (2014, p. 77).

In real life, we interpret others' external signs to guess what other people think. The same goes for media, although literature and film may also explicitly tell us characters' trains-of-thought from their own perspectives.

Like empathy, ToM is an essential social skill that helps people to understand others (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 77). Nikolajeva, and with her many other literary scholars, argues that reading fiction increases these skills, thus broadening the mind and making us more understanding of people that are different from us. A group of researchers have, for instance, shown that children who have read the *Harry Potter* books are less likely to have negative out-group attitudes towards immigrants, refugees and homosexuals

than children who had not (Vezzali, et al, 2015, p.115). In short, they found that these effects were present in relation to the intergroup contact within the *Harry Potter* novels, by which I mean contact between in-group (Harry) and out-group (minority groups such as ‘mudbloods,’ elves and half-giants (Vezzali et al., 2015, p. 106)). I will elaborate on the concepts behind these findings in the theoretical framework. In short: exposure to out-groups or intergroup contact through literature may have positive effects on out-group attitudes. This thesis is devised as an explorative inquiry into whether similar effects can be found as a result of film watching.

To answer this question, designed an explorative intervention using (early) teenagers of approximately 12 years old². An intergroup-related issue that is relevant and identifiable³ for these early teenagers in their first year of secondary education is bullying. The subject of bullying is often associated with (secondary) schools, and inherently deals with how we treat others, specifically those who are different from us. The narrative *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio deals with this subject. The novel *Wonder* (2014) was adapted into a film by Stephen Chbosky (2017). The narrative deals with the experiences of a boy named August (Auggie) Pullman as he goes to school for the first time at the age of 10.

Auggie Pullman never went to school before, because he has a craniofacial anomaly for which he has had to be hospitalised multiple times a year. “Craniofacial anomalies (CFA) are a diverse group of deformities in the growth of the head and facial bones. Anomaly is a medical term meaning ‘irregularity’ or ‘different from normal’” (Jasmin and Sather, 2018). The specific anomaly that Auggie has is described in the novel as “what seemed to be a ‘previously unknown type of mandibulofacial dysostosis caused by an autosomal recessive mutation in the *TCOF1* gene, which is located on chromosome 5, complicated by a hemifacial microsomia characteristic of OAV spectrum’” (Palacio, 2014, p. 104). It is a complicated case of what is more commonly known as the Treacher Collins syndrome. In short, this syndrome causes anomalies in the bone structure of the face, altering the affected person’s appearance but possibly also affecting facial functions such as breathing, eating, seeing and hearing (McKenzie and Craig, 1955, p. 391). In his interactions with the outside world, Auggie’s appearance seems to define him. Just like the term ‘anomaly’ means ‘different from normal,’ Auggie struggles with the concept of ordinariness. “Here’s what I think: the only reason I’m not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way,” he says (Palacio, 2014, p. 3). He struggles with other people’s stares, with eating in front of others, and with befriending people. However, as the narrative continues, the hardships that Auggie’s appearance brings along seem to be pushed to the background. He befriends several classmates. One of his new best friends is Jack, with whom he has the following conversation:

² I will discuss the reason for choosing this age group in more detail in the method section.

³ The relevancy of a subject to the reader/watcher and the opportunity for identification is an important factor for the potential development of positive attitudes towards others. This will be discussed in the theoretical framework.

‘Are you always going to look this way, August? I mean, can’t you get plastic surgery or something?’

I smiled and pointed to my face. ‘Hello? This *is* after plastic surgery!’

Jack clapped his hand over his forehead and started laughing hysterically.

‘Dude, you should sue your doctor!’ he answered between giggles. (Palacio, 2014, p.64)

The fact that Auggie can talk and laugh about his condition in this passage makes it even more painful when he overhears a group of classmates talking about him behind his back and recognises Jack’s voice saying:

‘I’ve thought about this a lot [...] and I think ... if I looked like him, seriously, I’d kill myself [...]. I can’t imagine looking in the mirror every day and seeing myself like that. It would be too awful. And getting stared at all the time.’ (Palacio, 2014, p.77).

Auggie is heartbroken when he hears his best friend saying he would rather kill himself than have a condition like Auggie’s. He is no stranger to getting treated poorly, however. Apart from being stared at frequently, he is badly bullied by a boy named Julian. This classmate of Auggie’s leaves him harassing notes and calls him extremely hurtful names, such as ‘Freddy Krueger,’ after a character from *Nightmare on Elm Street* or ‘Darth Sidious,’ after a *Star Wars* character, who are both villains whose faces are burnt.

Facially affected people (i.e. those with a (cranio)facial anomaly) are rarely represented in media, or at least not in a positive and authentic way. If present at all, characters with (non-cranio) facial anomalies often appear in the role of the villain, such as the aforementioned Freddy Krueger or Darth Sidious. Generally, the way in which “the media represents facial difference has a significantly negative impact on individuals with a facial difference, in terms of their development of self-esteem and self-worth” (Chatland, 2013, p. iii). However, *Wonder* is a great example of a more positive and authentic narrative with a diverse (for non-affected people: out-group) protagonist: Auggie Pullman.

Research shows that children and adolescents with a facial anomaly (both craniofacial, meaning affecting the skull and often from birth like Auggie’s, or acquired in an in e.g. an accident) are indeed more likely to become socially stigmatised. “A majority of the patients reported having experienced expressions of pity, staring or startled reactions; and about one-quarter had been teased about their facial difference” (Masnari et al., 2012, p.1664). When the anomaly covers more than a quarter of the patients’ face, like Auggie’s, the study concluded they are “particularly vulnerable to stigmatisation” (Masnari et al., 2012, 1665). We live in a society that “strongly emphasises the importance of outward appearance and the benefits of physical attractiveness,” such as positive impact on social interactions and ratings of honesty, intelligence or popularity (Masnari et al., 2012, p.1665). Indeed, another study found that non-affected people ascribed less favourable characteristics to facially affected persons than to non-affects, as well as that there was “less willingness to interact with or befriend a child with a facial difference” (Masnari et al., 2013, p. 115).

The purpose of this study is to explore the potential influence of book reading and film watching on the social stigmatization of facially affected people. More specifically, I will study the difference between the cognitive effects of reading diverse *Wonder* (Palacio, 2014) narrative versus watching its film adaptation (Chbosky, 2017). The significance of this comparison lies within the fact that the cognitive skills that have been proven to be triggered by book reading, such as Theory of Mind and empathy can shape our knowledge of other people, and are “essential social skills” (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 78). As shown in studies such as the one on *Harry Potter* by Vezalli et al., book reading may be beneficial in improving out-group attitudes. In this thesis, I inquire whether film watching also enhances these fundamental competencies. As Nikolajeva states, “the understanding of people’s minds is an essential social skill, and if fiction can help novice readers to develop this skill, it would be a major tool for socialisation” (2014, p. 77). It may even be said that improving these essential social skills and our attitudes towards others might be “one of the fundamental forces for tackling global challenges” (Krznaric in McKearney and Mears, 2015). In the meantime, narratives are consumed ever more frequently through digital media such as film, surpassing book reading. I will therefore analyse and compare the potential cognitive effects on the implied reader and watcher of reading *Wonder*, the novel by R. J. Palacio (2014) versus watching the eponymous film by Stephen Chbosky (2017). Moreover, this thesis provides an explorative inquiry into the real effects of reading versus watching *Wonder* on the attitudes of non-affected first-year students of Dutch secondary education (in-group) towards main character August Pullman and craniofacial anomalies in general (out-group), as they occur during interventional book-/filmtalks. Consequently I hope to answer the question: to what extent is does the influence of book reading differ from the impact of film watching on out-group attitudes through cognitive effect?

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework

1.1 The safe zones of literary fiction versus real life experience

As Nodelman and Reimer state (see previous chapter), “children’s literature [...] can make [young readers] conscious that there is more than one way of being normal” (2002, p. 149). How reading about fictional words affects real-world knowledge has recently become a popular field of interest for scholars in the cognitive literary sciences (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 5). In the introduction of her book *Reading for learning*, Nikolajeva (2014) synthesises studies that have appeared since the beginning of this millennium. As mentioned, the social skills empathy and Theory of Mind are central to the way in which fiction can teach us something about the real world (Keen, 2006, p. 5; Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 77). In answering the question why reading about people “who do not exist and have never existed, with their non-existing personal problems [are] of any relevance whatsoever for our knowledge and understanding of real people,” (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 77) Nikolajeva refers to the work of cognitive literary scholars such as Lisa Zunshine, Blakey Vermeule and Patrick Colm Hogan, on the basis of which she concludes:

We care about literary characters because we are naturally (evolutionary, if preferred) inquisitive about ourselves and other human beings, because we want to understand (or, are, for survival completed to understand) our own and other people’s ways of feeling and thinking, views, beliefs, intentions, desires, motivations and decisions. (2014, p. 77)

The way in which these urges of fictional interpersonal involvement are similar to real-life interactions, has been established through brain research. People react to real life and fiction in similar ways because “our brains can simulate responses to fictional emotions just as if they were real” (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 79). Indeed, readers of literary fiction “may develop feelings of empathy or identification [...] that resemble emotional reactions to real-world events” (Appel and Richter, 2013, p. 117). In the human brain, fictional experiences are processed in the same way as real ones:

Fiction creates situations in which emotions are simulated; we engage with literary characters’ emotions because our brains can, through mirror neurons, simulate other people’s goals in the same manner as it can simulate our own goals, irrespective of whether these “others” are real or fictional. (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 83)

Thus, reading about fictional characters influences us in similar ways as meeting real people does. Therefore, reading about non-existent characters may influence knowledge about and attitudes towards real-life persons.

A study that offers explanations that align with this statement was conducted by Vezalli, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza and Trifiletti. It is titled: “The greatest magic of Harry Potter: Reducing Prejudice.” They focused specifically on how exposure to literary fictional interpersonal contact influenced real-life

out-group attitudes. I discuss the various hypotheses that supported their research in depth, as these are highly relevant to the topic of this thesis.

First of all, Vezalli et al.'s study is founded on the parasocial contact hypothesis, which suggests that "cognitive and affective responses following exposure to media characters are similar to those produced by direct contact experiences" (2015, p. 107). This statement corresponds closely with what followed from the brain researches referenced by Nikolajeva. This hypothesis was put forward by Edward Schiappa, Peter Gregg and Dean Hewes. They based their study on "one of the most important and enduring contributions of social psychology in the past 50 years[:] the contact hypothesis" (2005, p. 92). This hypothesis, "credited to Gordon W. Allport, [...] states that under appropriate conditions interpersonal contact is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members" (Schiappa, Gregg and Hewes, 2005, p. 92). The 'appropriate conditions' are the following:

The contact must be sustained and non-superficial in order to create a dissonant condition in which negative beliefs come into conflict with new beliefs resulting from positive experiences. Additionally, group members must feel of equal status, share common goals, and not be opposed by a salient authority (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1964 as cited in Schiappa, Gregg and Hewes, 2005, p. 92).

In other words, the contact hypothesis concludes that interpersonal contact positively affects out-group attitudes, as long as the interpersonal contact is non-superficial and positive, as well as between equal members without negative superior interference. In their study, Schiappa, Gregg and Hewes test whether the same goes for "parasocial interaction" (2005, p. 93) or, in other words, exposure to intergroup contact through media. They conducted two studies involving parasocial intergroup contact with gay men and one involving male transvestitism. I would like to emphasise that this test used a dramatic TV show, a reality TV show and a comedy show, and not literary fiction. This is relevant to the part of this thesis that deals with film, and will thus be further discussed in that section. In all three studies by Schiappa, Gregg and Hewes, parasocial contact was associated with lower levels of prejudice (2005, p. 92). Vezalli et al. found evidence that this was also the case in studies that used literary fiction. As mentioned before, children who had read *Harry Potter* had more positive out-group attitudes towards immigrants, refugees and homosexuals.

Secondly, Vezalli et al. studied the extended contact hypothesis. Also based on Gordon Allport's contact hypothesis, the extended contact hypothesis deals with "the effectiveness of indirect contact forms" (2015, p. 106). Due to the limitation that there is not always an opportunity for direct intergroup contact, researchers focused on indirect contact and found that "simply knowing that an in-group member has one or more out-group friends," in other words, that *extended* contact "is sufficient to reduce prejudice" (Vezalli et al, 2015, p. 106). Vezalli et al. state there is "vast support for the

effectiveness of extended contact both with adults [...] and children” (Vezalli et al, 2015, p. 106), for which they also provide evidence themselves. In particular, they studied the mediating factors that allowed for extended contact to lead to reduced prejudice. They experimentally tested and confirmed the role of perspective taking and “its emotional counterpart, that is, empathy, (2015, p. 107) as a mediator in extended contact effects. Perspective taking is “the ability to assume the perspective adopted by another person” (2015, p. 107). I deem perspective taking to be a skill similar to Theory of Mind, since it deals with considering and understanding someone else’s mental states. All in all, interpersonal contact between person x and an in-group member who is unprejudiced towards a certain out-group, (in a parasocial situation, the reader/watcher and the fictional character respectively), enhances the empathy and ToM of person x, which results in positive out-group attitudes.

Thirdly, Vezalli et al. acknowledge the relevance of social cognitive theory in addition to this extended contact hypothesis. Developed by Albert Bandura over various studies, this theory states the following:

Individuals, through the process of abstract modelling, can learn positive out-group attitudes and intergroup behaviours from vicarious experiences portrayed by relevant others [...]. Specifically, the theory accords a pivotal role to identification with characters: People should align with the character and his/her view of the world only when they identify with him/her. (Vezalli et al. 2015, p. 107).

This means that extended intergroup contact can only reduce prejudice when person x identifies with the unprejudiced/positive in-group member. Combined with the parasocial contact hypothesis, social cognitive theory implies that the in-group media characters should allow for identification⁴. Identification is thus a prerequisite for improved out-group attitudes.

The necessity of identification ties in with another issue raised by Nikolajeva (2014). She states that “if the character’s experience does not match the reader’s, novice readers may decide that the text is irrelevant for them (expressed naïvely as “I didn’t like it”)” (p. 85). Novice readers are young readers who are still in the process of moving up the spectrum of literary competence. As established in the introduction, this thesis deals with 12-year-old readers. I will discuss the implications of this age in detail in the method section. For now, I would like to state that 12-year-olds are far from completely novice, but may still have novice-reader tendencies. Nikolajeva states that novice readers attach a great deal of value to identification – so much so that they discard a text if they cannot see themselves in the narrative. She defines this ‘extreme’ type of identification as immersive identification (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 85). Readers who identify immersively cannot disconnect themselves from the (main) character of a story. Nikolajeva explains this as a ‘just-like-me assessment,’ which does not endorse empathy with others. This is

⁴ I will discuss what exactly makes book or film characters identifiable in the method chapter.

problematic in the case of out-group characters. Nikolajeva asserts that “making a protagonist ugly, sick, unpleasant, feeble-minded, criminal, immoral, inhuman or simply a monster (thus evoking readers’ fear or disgust) creates alienation,” or, I argue, an out-group versus in-group distinction⁵, “which, for an expert reader should prevent identification, but still allow empathy. This device is seldom employed in children’s literature, possibly because authors, quite rightly, do not trust novice readers to abandon immersive identification” (2014, p. 85). In other words, novice readers who identify immersively are likely to completely reject out-group characters. I argue that (parasocial) extended intergroup contact, in which the novice readers do identify with in-group members who have positive out-group attitudes, may be a solution to make diverse narratives relevant to them. Moreover, more competent readers can still empathise with out-group characters themselves even if they do not (fully) identify with them. I add “fully” here, as J. A. Appleyard states that identification is possible with different characters for different reasons and different characteristics (1991, p. 102). I will discuss this in greater detail in the method chapter of this thesis.

All in all, parasocial intergroup contact, either extended or not, may influence the readers’ attitudes in the same way that real-life interactions would. This makes it possible for fiction to “provide safe zones to readers’ feeling empathy without experiencing a resultant demand on real-world action” (Keen, 2006, p. 4). In other words, (literary) fiction provides the possibility of experiencing various things in life without a threat of real potential consequences. Especially children/(early) teenagers, who generally have “limited life experience of emotions” may benefit from fiction that can offer them “vicarious emotional experience [...] long before they may be exposed to it in real life” (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 79). Moreover, fiction may thus function as a replacement for real-life interactions when those are unavailable.

1.2 Literary fiction versus non-fiction and popular fiction

Multiple sources confirm that reading fiction improves the aforementioned essential social skills of Theory of Mind and empathy. Firstly, Nikolajeva refers to an article written by David Kidd and Emanuele Castano, “Reading literary fiction improves Theory of Mind,” (2013) which she calls “the most ground-breaking experimental study up to date, done with adult informants” (2014, p. 79). In this study, it is “firmly” concluded that “reading fiction is beneficial for the development of Theory of Mind” (2014, p. 79). The study distinguishes between cognitive ToM and affective ToM. Kidd and Castano describe cognitive ToM as “the inference and representation of others’ beliefs and intentions” and affective ToM as “the ability to

⁵ I would like to emphasise that by adding ‘out-group,’ I focus on the triggered alienation, not on the negative characteristics summed up by Nikolajeva. I argue that these negative characteristics may result in out-group positioning, but that out-groups are not defined by negative characteristics.

detect and understand others' emotions," (2013, p. 377). The latter deals with understanding what someone is *feeling*, which is very similar to the definition of empathy⁶ used in this thesis. I will therefore deem them interchangeable. The study reveals that reading literary fiction generally led to better performance in tests of empathy and ToM compared to reading non-fiction, popular fiction or nothing at all (2013, p. 377). This means that literary fiction has a higher value to influencing what we know about and how we think of others.

The main difference between literary and popular fiction, according to Kidd and Castano, is that literary fiction "defamiliarises its readers," whereas popular fiction does not (2013, p. 377). Defamiliarisation is achieved "through the systematic use of phonological, grammatical, and semantic stylistic devices" (2013, p. 377) that lead to "a discourse that forces [the readers] to fill in gaps and search 'for meanings among a spectrum of possible meanings'" (Bruner as cited in Kidd and Castano, 2013, p. 377). Kidd and Castano paraphrase Jerome Bruner's argument in the following way;

Literary fiction triggers presupposition (a focus on implicit meanings), subjectification (depicting reality 'through the filter of the consciousness of protagonists in the story'), and multiple perspectives (perceiving the world simultaneously from different viewpoints). These features mimic those of ToM. (2013, p. 377-8)

Thus, the mind is triggered to make sense of literary fiction on its own, whereas popular fiction is described as having the tendency to "portray the world and characters as internally consistent and predictable" and "[reaffirm] readers' expectations and so not promote ToM" (2013, p.377). Thus, fiction that does not reaffirm what readers are already familiar with and provides gaps for the readers to fill in, is more likely to be cognitively challenging and influence what we know and how we think about others through empathy and ToM.

Moreover, reading literary fiction also grants more effects than reading non-fiction. This corresponds with the findings of Markus Appel and Tobias Richter's study, titled "Persuasive effects of fictional narratives increase over time" (2007). Their article describes how a reader of fiction is less guarded than a reader of a newspaper or magazine. It is easier for a reader of fiction to go along with the text, which makes it more likely that this reader will adopt ideas from this text. Appel and Richter state that "as a rule, readers of fictional narratives are supposed to experience transportation at least to some extent," which means that "the fictional world of the narrative partly replaces the real world while they are reading" (2013, p. 117). They refer to Victor Nell, who recognisably describes this phenomenon as "being lost in a book" (as cited in Appel and Richter, 2013, p. 117). Appel and Richter explain how this

⁶ As put forward in the introduction, empathy is "the ability to understand other people's minds without sharing their opinions or, more importantly, their emotional experiences" (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 86). In particular, empathy is the ability to understand the feelings of other people. More specifically, it is "a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect [that] can be provoked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading" (Keen, 2007, p. 5).

“mental journey from the real to the imagined world of the narrative” influences emotional and cognitive processes:

Emotionally, readers may develop feelings of empathy or identification [...] that resemble emotional reactions to real-world events. Cognitively, readers use the fictional world of the narrative as the frame of reference for evaluating assertions encountered in the narrative [...]. To a certain extent, doubts about the real-world appropriateness of the fictional world are prevented, which in turn facilitates persuasion. (2013, p. 117)

As becomes clear from this quote, literary fiction has the ability to change beliefs about the real world due to its persuasive nature, which is in turn due to the process of readerly transportation. This is facilitated by the close cognitive relationship that fictional and real-life experiences have, which was established in the previous section. Appel and Richter present evidence found by previous studies for the “pervasive short-term impact on beliefs” (2013, p. 117). Moreover, in their own experimental research they showed that opinions and ideas presented in fiction have a long-term influence on our brains, and that these convincingly “integrated into real-world knowledge” (2013, p. 113). This means that literary fiction may durably influence our knowledge of other people outside of fiction. This is relevant to this thesis, since it is an explorative, empirical study into the influence of fiction on real-life out-group attitudes.

2. Text versus film: modes of engagement

As this thesis deals with both literary fiction and film, it is important to define the fundamental differences – or similarities – between these two media. A thorough comparative study on literature and film (adaptations) is *A Theory of Adaptation* by Linda Hutcheon. She differentiates between three main media modes, namely the telling, the showing and the participatory (2006, p. 22). Although various media may include techniques from any of these modes, the telling mode is traditionally ascribed to novels and the showing mode in plays, film and television. The participatory mode generally attributed to video games, but is irrelevant to this thesis and I will therefore not discuss it in greater detail. Hutcheon emphasises the different ways in which these modes engage their audiences by describing them as “*modes of engagement*”:

All three modes are arguably ‘immersive,’ though to different degrees and in different ways: for example, the telling mode (a novel) immerses us through imagination in a fictional world; the showing mode (plays and films) immerses us through the perception of the aural and the visual. (2006, p. 22)

According to Hutcheon, the telling and showing are thus fundamentally different, even though some scholars argue that there are no basal differences between text and the visual (2006, 23). Hutcheon counters this with her two distinctive modes of engagement, which, “like each medium, [have] its own

specificity, if not its own essence" (2006, p. 24). She argues that each mode can achieve different goals through its varying means of expression (2006, p. 24).

The different ways of engaging is the most crucial difference between the verbal or textual telling and the visual showing mode. In literary fiction, "our engagement begins in the realm of imagination, which is simultaneously controlled by the selected, directing words of the text and liberated – that is, unconstrained by the limits of the visual and aural" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 24), whereas the showing mode is presented in "unrelenting, forward-driving" stories, moving away from the interpretive imagination to direct perception (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 24). Oppositely, the telling mode "engages the viewer's imagination in a way that film, because of its realism, cannot" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 129). Still, Hutcheon emphasises that neither the telling nor the showing mode is more or less passive than the other: "both are imaginatively, cognitively, and emotionally active" (2006, p. 24). Both modes challenge us, albeit in different ways.

Before I discuss these different ways, I would like to make an argument for engagement and the topics of empathy, Theory of Mind and identification. As stated in the quote above, engagement is an act that is cognitively and emotionally active. The reference to cognitive and emotional action is reminiscent of Theory of Mind and empathy, in a similar way to how I linked Kidd and Castano's "cognitive and affective ToM" to Theory of Mind and empathy, respectively. The same goes for Appel and Richter's remarks on how "a mental journey from the real to the imagined world of the narrative, influences emotional and cognitive processes" (2013, p. 117). On the one hand, the cognitive understanding of the thoughts of others is what defines ToM. On the other hand, the affective understanding of the emotions of others is the definition assigned to empathy in this thesis (see page 9 of the introduction). I dare make the assumption that engagement, being cognitively and emotionally active, thus requires the discussed essential social skills empathy and ToM.

Moreover, I hereby argue that engagement is closely linked to identification. To demonstrate this argument, I deem the terms 'involvement' and 'engagement' to be nearly synonymic, since engagement is "emotional involvement or commitment" ("Engagement," n.d.). For clarity, I will repeat the definition of identification I use in this thesis: "the psychological orientation of the self in regard to something (such as a person or group) with a resulting feeling of close emotional association" ("Identification," n.d.). The connection between engagement and identification is, I argue, that engagement is necessary for parasocial identification to occur, especially in the age group used in this thesis. In his chapter "Involvement and identification," Appleyard states that "adolescents talk about their involvement with stories almost entirely in terms of identification with characters and situations" (1991, p. 101). I do not claim that engagement or involvement is the same as identification, but I do argue that, following Appleyard, involvement is necessary for identification in the target audience of this thesis. I presume that, in general, a correlation between engagement and identification is probable. Since engagement deals

with emotional involvement, and identification leads to a close emotional connection, it seems logical that the two occur collectively. As established in discussing the social cognitive theory, identification is a requirement for the workings of the various contact hypotheses through which, aided by empathy and Theory of Mind, out-group attitudes may be affected. If involvement activates Theory of Mind and empathy, and, at least in this age group, identification, the differences in the way in which the media do this is of importance to this thesis.

One way in which narratives in both the telling and the showing modes engage their audience, is through gaps. This relates closely to what I discussed in the previous section by referencing Kidd and Castano on defamiliarisation and literariness. Not only in literature, but in general, defamiliarisation may be achieved through gaps that we fill in with knowledge gathered from previous experiences. For the recurring theme of using previous knowledge, I will use the established term *schema*. A schema is “a mental codification of experience that includes a particular organised way of perceiving cognitively” (“Schema,” Merriam-Webster), or in other words, a mental framework of pre-existing knowledge gathered by past experiences. Nikolajeva connects cognitive criticism to Wolfgang Iser’s notion of gaps, who states that “readers engage with fiction through recursive anticipation and retrospection, and they fill textual gaps with their previous real-life and literary experience” (Iser as cited in Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 8). Iser describes “how texts deliberately leave gaps of various kinds, from plot-related to cultural, inviting readers to fill them in” (as cited in Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 8), using these schemas. Moreover, according to Nikolajeva, gaps in literary fiction occur when it is unclear what a particular character thinks or feels. Thus, there is a necessity to fill in this gap using empathy or ToM. These social skills are not only required for making sense of literary fiction, but also in the fictional narratives of film, too. In the following paragraphs, I elaborate on the underlying ways in which empathy and ToM play a part in sensemaking in both modes of engagement.

The difference, however, lies in *how* the two modes engage the audience. To continue my previous argument, this is where the media-specific features come into play. The first issue I want to discuss is that of engagement through interiority. As stated in the previous paragraph, one element used in filling in gaps is empathy:

Empathy does not necessarily require access to mental discourse. On the contrary, “reading” characters’ states of mind from their actions is a better simulation of real life. In practice, though, it seems that the more we know about characters’ interiority, the stronger we engage with them emotionally. (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 81)

In other words, focus on interiority is not necessary, though still desirable for emotional engagement. Therefore, one could assume that literary fiction is more suitable for eliciting empathic responses than film, as the latter medium is typically considered more likely to deal with actions than with interiority.

However, Hutcheon states that such an assumption is a cliché about film (adaptations). Identifying this idea as one of multiple stereotypical notions, she explains:

Cliché #2: Interiority is the Terrain of the Telling Mode; Exteriority is Best Handled by Showing and Especially by Interactive Modes.

In other words, language, especially literary fiction, with its visualizing, conceptualizing, and intellectualised apprehension, “does” interiority best; the performing arts, with their direct visual and aural perception, [...] are more suited to representing exteriority. (2006, p. 56)

She refutes this assumption by mentioning various ways in which film actually can ‘do’ interiority, as well as ways in which literary fiction can ‘do’ exteriority. She cites various scholars who have defended this cliché, among whom Bertolt Brecht: “[he] too claimed that the film demands ‘external action and not introspective psychology’” (as cited in Hutcheon, 2006, p. 57). However, Hutcheon argues that film “can and does find cinematic equivalents” for establishing interiority (2006, p. 58), such as close-ups for intimacy (2006, p. 58) or music for “invoking a dimension of depth of interiority” (2006, p. 60).⁷ Therefore, a film may provide interiority and thus emotional engagement in equal manner to literary fiction. In sum, interiority is said to influence emotional engagement which, at least for early teenagers, is closely linked to identification. It is a cliché that film is less able to provide interiority, which makes the two media equally viable within the context in this thesis, since identification is a requirement for influencing out-group attitudes.

Another point that Nikolajeva makes in *Reading for Learning* with regard to fiction and engagement, however, is very much text-specific and highly relevant to the case study of this thesis: “Fiction stimulates readers’ use of imagination in respect to characters’ appearances, and thus gets readers more engaged with them” (2014, p. 80). By this she means that characters’ appearances are often a gap that readers fill in with their imagination. “Unless we are given [...] specific details, we fill the gap left by the writer from the most common repertory of human features” (Nikolajeva, 2005, p. 258). The main issue here is that deviations from common schemas on appearance is highly relevant to the case study of this thesis, *Wonder*. “If there is something deviant in a character’s appearance, we must be told so” (2005, p. 258), e.g. through “verbal descriptions, either authorial, that is, presented by an omniscient narrator, or figural, presented through another character’s description” (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 80). Moreover, the description of a character’s appearance may be purposely incomplete or revealing it may be delayed. A reader must engage in making sense of these descriptions through imagination to be able to picture the appearance. The author of a novel may play with these descriptions, “which is impossible in real life” (2014, p. 80). I argue that this is, to some extent, impossible for film, too. Withholding

⁷ I will discuss these features in more detail in the method chapter.

information on appearance is something that can hardly be achieved in film due to its aforementioned visual and aural limitations: “[a]ttempts to use the camera for first-person narration – to let the spectator see only what the protagonist sees – are infrequent” (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 54). Moreover, concealing a character’s appearance through e.g. a mask adds emphasis on and draws attention to their appearance. This difference is crucial to this thesis, as physical appearance is at the core of the case study.

3. *Film and cognition*⁸

Some psychological studies deploy film scenes to investigate the workings of empathy. The study “Emotional reactions to dramatic film stimuli: the influence of cognitive and emotional empathy” is an example of such research. Mark Davis et al. use, as the title suggests, a series of film clips from two movies to study the empathic and perspective taking skills of their participants (1987, p. 126). As I explained earlier, I understand perspective taking as similar to ToM. Apparently, Davis et al. expected that film scenes trigger the essential social skills that I focus on in this thesis. However, they present no justification as to why film may be used to test these skills. It may be assumed that these academics had reason to believe dramatic film stimuli were suitable for their research, but they cite no sources that explicitly state so. Even though film is used in a way that suggests it triggers the social skills, data of the effects of film watching on empathy and ToM is scarce.

There are some studies in the field of cognitive film theory that do deal with empathy and Theory of Mind. *Psychocinematics: Exploring Cognition at the Movies* edited by Arthur P. Shimamura (2013) provides multiple studies on these subjects. In their chapter on ToM in movies, Daniel T. Levin, Alicia M. Hymel and Lewis Baker argue that “many of the perceptual and cognitive skills necessary to understand both the basic visual events in edited films and the broader stories they tell are derived from the everyday mentalizing skills that constitute ToM” (2013, p. 244). They discuss various elements used in film editing that can only be understood when perceived using ToM, such as cutaways (2013, p. 245-6). In cutaways, the watcher must understand how the sequence of shots relates to the thoughts of a character. This calls on the watcher’s ability to take the characters’ perspective. The same goes for dramatic irony, which is a narrative device that “occurs when the audience is privy to information that one or more characters do not know, building tension” (Levin, Hymal and Baker, 2013, p. 251). This “[pushes] audiences to infer, understand, empathize, and identify with a character’s goals” (2013, p. 251). This regularly used narrative device relies on the essential social skills of the audience, as it is important to know what the various characters know and what they are thinking in this process of sense making.

⁸ Although I do make a distinction between literary fiction as opposed to popular fiction, I do not differentiate between popular film vs. e.g. art-house cinema. Since the movie I use contains the same narrative as the book, and because literature on cognitive cinematics including such a distinction is very scarce, I shall continue to make the comparison and judge the film on the same features where possible. I discuss this more in the method.

Although this study does deal with cognitive film studies, it does not make any statements on the *effect* of film watching on the development of empathy and ToM. The study merely explains in what ways ToM is *needed* to be able to watch and understand films. The same goes for another article in *Psychocinematics*, namely Ed Tan's chapter on empathy in cognitive film studies. Tan asks the following question: "To what extent is empathy in the cinema an automated reaction and to what degree is it subject to conscious control and dependent on voluntary effort?" (2013, p. 338) He scrutinises the ways in which cinematic techniques may be used to allow, or even evoke, empathy. An example he brings forward is the use of narrative schemas, and how they are adopted to "make up for the lack of similarity between viewer and film figure. Viewers share such schemas with each other and with the filmmaker" (p. 351). Not unlike literature, film relies on the knowledge that people already have so they can recognise and make sense of what they see. Through action and narrative schemas, film producers/directors nudge the audience's capacity to recognise and identify: "[as] we better identify with a character's mental states, we better channel the intended emotions of the portrayed events" (Levin, Hymel and Baker, 2013, p. 262). Again, empathy is needed for film comprehension, while there is no clear evidence that the essential social skills, needed for affected out-group attitudes, are also triggered or enhanced by film.

Studies that suggest that film does affect empathy and ToM, deal with the four hypotheses/theories that I discussed in section 1.1 of this theoretical framework: the contact hypothesis, the parasocial contact hypothesis, the extended contact hypothesis and social cognitive theory. The combination of these hypotheses (resulting in parasocial extended contact with the required identification as articulated in social cognitive theory), applies to all forms of fiction. Thus, it may be applied to media in general, including film. The parasocial contact hypothesis, stating that interaction with media characters reduces prejudice in the same way as real-life intergroup-contact, was tested using TV shows, one of which fictional (Schiappa et al, 2005, p. 112). This corresponds to what Tan states on how "films activate the representation system in the same way real events do" (2013, p. 346). However, Schiappa et al.'s study lacks a control group and does not actually deal with film. The researchers state that the conclusion that "viewers exhibited empathy" would be "too big a leap from the data" (2013, p. 349), which reduces the strength of this evidence with regard to film and potential cognitive effect resulting in altered out-group attitudes. Thus, the suggestion that contact with a fictional character in a film may have the same effects as in writing, as proven by Vezalli et al, is partly refuted.

Moreover, there is empirical data that states that literary fiction does enhance perspective taking more than film watching. Ewout Witte and Amber Scholtz studied the advantages of reading versus watching television series/films by having over 1000 Dutch media consumers of over 13 years old fill out a questionnaire. Witte and Scholtz found that only 35% of the people gave a positive answer to the statement "Watching a film or series made me step into someone else's shoes" (Dutch: "Liet mij in het hoofd van een ander kruipen") (2015, p. 30). Contrastively, the statement "Reading a book made me step

into someone else's shoes" (Dutch idiom) (2015, p. 22) was answered positively by 64% percent of the respondents. For literary fiction specifically, the numbers were even higher: 79%. 'Stepping into someone else's shoes' is something that requires comprehension of how a person feels and what they think. In other words, this act involves ToM and empathy, the social skills that influence the way we interact with others. According to these Dutch respondents, book reading triggers these skills more than film watching does.

Additionally, Witte and Scholtz differentiated between people who self-identify as readers versus non-readers. They found that of the people who declared to step into someone else's shoes while film watching, 44% were readers and 17% non-readers (2015, p. 30). Even though it is still a minority of readers who said they are able to step into someone else's shoes while watching a movie, these numbers may imply that people who read regularly have more well-developed empathic skills than people who do not.

All in all, concluding from the literature available in the field of cognitive literary or film studies, dealing specifically with the essential social skills of Theory of Mind and empathy, there is reason to hypothesise that book reading will affect out-group attitudes more than film watching. Although the extended contact hypotheses and social cognitive theory may also be applied to film, and although it is a cliché that interiority can only be discussed in books, there is a higher quantity and quality of literature available that supports the effects of book reading within cognitive literary criticism. Moreover, some studies emphasised the book to be a more likely medium to trigger empathy, ToM and identification, namely: Nikolajeva's work within cognitive literary criticism on identification, engagement and schemas, especially with regard to physical appearance (2005, 2014); serious limitations in the studies that researched parasocial contact hypotheses in film (Schiappa et al. 2013) that were, however, proven by Vezalli et al. (2015) in book reading; and the questionnaire-based study into empathy and ToM in reading versus film watching (Witte and Scholtz, 2015). In the following chapters of this thesis, I will explore whether or not this hypothesis – that book reading is more likely to positively affect out-group attitudes than film watching – is accurate.

Chapter 3 - Method

This thesis consists of an analysis in which I identify the potential cognitive effects of reading *Wonder*, the novel by R. J. Palacio versus watching the film adaptation by Stephen Chbosky on the implied reader and watcher, as well as an explorative inquiry into the empirical effects of reading versus watching *Wonder* on the attitudes of non-affected first-year students of Dutch secondary education (in-group) towards main character August Pullman and craniofacial anomalies in general (out-group), as they occur during interventional book-/filmtalks.

In this chapter, I expound on the participants, materials, corpus, design and procedure of these interventions, as well as the model of analysis that I apply to *Wonder*.

1. Participants

The participants of this research are (early) teenagers of approximately 12 years old who are currently attending their first year of Dutch secondary education. This age corresponds with the NUR-code⁹ of the Dutch translation of *Wonder*, the book by R. J. Palacio. It also makes for an interesting target audience, as 12-year-old children are ‘readers as heroes/heroines’ becoming ‘readers as thinkers,’ in the terms J. A. Appleyard assigns readers in this period of late childhood/early adolescence respectively (1991, p. 57, 93).

Readers as heroes/heroines are characterised as typically between the ages of 6 to 12. (Appleyard, 1991, p. 59). During this period of their lives, they develop “the intellectual power to organize and relate information” and experience a change in “inner sense of self” (1991, p. 59). With this change of inner sense of self, Appleyard means “both a newly coherent relationship to other people in one’s life [...], as well as a new awareness of having private feelings, a secret life of one’s own” (1991, p.59). These developments affect the function of reading in two different ways. First of all, reading starts to fully function as an instrument for “gathering and organizing information about the wider world and learning how that world works” (1991, p. 59). Secondly, especially the readers as heroes/heroines who move towards early adolescence use reading as a “way of exploring an inner world” (1991, p. 59). The way in which they do this closely relates to Nikolajeva’s definition of immersive identification, meaning that they self-centredly immerse themselves in the narrative. Appleyard states that for readers as heroes/heroines “a main reward of reading fictional stories [...] is to satisfy the need to imagine oneself as the central figure” while being in a state of total captivation by the story (1991, p. 59).

Readers as heroes/heroines typically change into readers as thinkers, a role generally observed in readers between 12 to 17 years of age. Appleyard states that immersive identification is characteristic, too, of readers as thinkers: “a total immersion in the experience, so that the distinction between the

⁹ Short for “Nederlandstalige Uniforme Rubrieksindeling,” (Nur-code, n.d.), a Dutch system for classification that indicates the genre and, in the case of children’s literature, target audience of a book.

subject and the object of experience breaks down" (1991, p. 101). However, the typical reader as thinker becomes "an observer and evaluator of self and others" (1991, p. 101). To clarify how both immersive identification and observation and evaluation of self and others combine, Appleyard mentions another scholar, D. W. Harding. Harding took a critical stance towards "the aptness of the term identification, in the sense of vicarious experience or wish fulfilment, to describe a reader's involvement with a fictional character" (1991, p. 104). An example of a respondent in his study illustrates this. The reader as thinker in question declared to identify with Holden Caulfield from J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, but when stating why she felt this way she summarised all the ways in which he was different from her. Thus, she was "well aware of the difference between who he is and who she is" (1991, p. 104), meaning that readers as thinkers have started to move away from the attitude of the novice reader who mainly read with a "just-like-me" state of mind as described by Nikolajeva (2014, p. 85). In other words, I expect these readers to be susceptible to potential cognitive effects that may be generated from performing empathy and Theory of Mind onto a character that they may not fully identify with. To elaborate on what I stated in section 1.2 of the theoretical framework, I again use the word "fully," since readers as thinkers are able to identify with more than one character. It is possible that identification with multiple characters occurs for various different reasons, or only with various traits per character (Appleyard, 1991, p. 102). Moreover, readers as thinkers begin to "reason in terms of the formal or logical relationships that exist among propositions about objects," thus they are able to imagine possible other realities (1991, p. 97). This allows the reader as thinker to "think about the future, to construct theories and ideological systems, to develop ideals," but most important to this thesis: "to understand others' points of view" (1991, p. 97). All in all, 12-year-old children are impressionable readers who start to use literature to gain knowledge of the world, but who are also developing the ability to step into other peoples' shoes.

Therefore, I expect these 12-year-olds to be developing perspective-taking skills, but that it is not yet fully natural to them to "understand others' point of view" (Appleyard, 1991, p. 97). As I stated in the theoretical framework, these 12-year-old readers will have to abandon immersive identification for ToM and empathy to occur through direct intergroup contact. This leads to a captivating case, since this story, originally written for 12-year-olds, has a main character that represents a minority group/out-group. They will need to identify with a diverse other in order for their attitudes to be influenced.

As was established in the theoretical framework, prejudice and negative out-group attitudes may be reduced as a result of reading literary fiction through parasocial (extended) contact with out-group members. For the explorative research of this thesis, I ensured that this minority group – (cranio)facially affected people – is indeed an out-group to the participants in this thesis. I did so by securing that the participants had no severe facial anomalies themselves. This implies that they form an in-group to which Auggie is an out-group member. This is necessary because a participant who would have a severe facial difference themselves is an in-group member to Auggie, and is therefore unlikely to have stereotypical,

negative attitudes towards their own in-group member from the onset. In this thesis, I will use the following description to limit the meaning of ‘severe facial difference:’ a cleft-lip/palate or other facial anomaly, either cranio- or attained, which compromises (speech) functions or acquired difference, covering more than a quarter of the face. I follow Masnari (et al. 2013) in calling such members of this in-group non-affects.

The participants are two years older than Auggie and his classmates, who are approximately 10 years old and in their first year of middle school. On top of the NUR-code, I chose this age-group due to the shift into becoming readers as thinkers as described above, as well as due to the fact that in the Netherlands students transition from primary school to secondary school around their 12th year of life. I thus deem Dutch secondary school to be more similar to American middle school than Dutch primary school. Moreover, the participants’ sharing the life-period of being a first-grader is likely to stimulate identification. This makes it more plausible for the participants to find the text relevant for themselves (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 85). Attitudes towards Auggie and (cranio)facial anomalies in general may thus be affected through identification with him and his friends, as expected following the parasocial, extended contact hypotheses and social cognitive theory (section 1.1 of theoretical framework).

The participants are eleven first-year students from a Dalton school in Dordrecht. Five participants took part in the book-group intervention and six in the film-group intervention. I initially planned on an equal number of participants per group, but because of unforeseen circumstances this imbalance occurred. Due to the explorative, primarily qualitative and small-scale nature of this study, I decided to not restore the balance by omitting one film participant’s responses, but to maintain them all. The book group consisted of only girls, the film group of four boys and two girls. This difference is due to the fact the participants were volunteers, and will be discussed in the limitation section of the discussion. At Dalton schools, pupils have one hour per day they can spend in the classroom of a teacher of their own choice. The interventions took place during this ‘Dalton hour’. The participants were unaware of the goal of this study. All they knew beforehand was that I myself attended their school, which I hope created a shared experience and reduced distance.

2. Materials

2.1 Intervention

I met with both groups of students once for one hour in two separate groups. I read aloud passages from the Dutch version of *Wonder*, translated by Esther Ottens (2018) to one group. The other group was shown scenes from the English-spoken film with Dutch subtitles. After the participants had given their permission, I used an audio recorder to tape the book- and filmtalks. I later transcribed the parts of discourse that are relevant to my results. I approached this in a similar way to how K. Eriksson proceeded in his study *Booktalk Dilemmas*. In his article, “the focus of the analysis is not the linguistic details in the

utterances,” (2002, p. 396) but on the content and the way in which they relate to the subject matter. I thus made a basic transcription of the fragments of the book- of filmtalks that were significant to the subject.

2.2 Corpus

As established in the theoretical framework, parasocial contact with out-group characters potentially affects out-group attitudes. Logically, an appropriate case study for this thesis should thus include an out-group character. If identification with the out-group narrator fails, extended intergroup contact may provide an alternative for potential cognitive effect. I take this into consideration since there is a risk that the 12-year-old participants of this study may read immersively, which would make out-group identification unlikely. In sum, the case study should include intergroup contact between in- (non-affected) and out-group (affected) characters. Besides, the comparative nature of this thesis asks for a narrative available in both text and film.

Thus *Wonder*, the novel by R. J. Palacio and the adaptation by Stephen Chbosky, is a fitting narrative. It deals with affected out-group character Auggie Pullman, as well as many of his non-affected classmates. The fact that Auggie, *Wonder's* protagonist, feels, specifically physically, different from his classmates is a recurring theme in the novel. This specific physical difference is relevant to the independent variables of this thesis, namely text-reading versus film watching and their different modes of engagement. The analysis chapter deals with this in more detail.

The theme of the book corresponds closely with what Nikolajeva states on the relevance of this text to our participants, who are still novice readers to some extent. “Making a protagonist ugly [...] creates alienation,” (2014, p. 85). If the 12-year-olds have not yet abandoned the tendency to identify immersively, they may thus discard the narrative about Auggie, who self-identifies as “ugly” in some situations within the narrative (Palacio, 2014, p. 60; Chbosky, 2017, 00:24:00), as irrelevant. This could prevent the endorsement of empathy (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 85). However, the participants of this study are of an age where they start to move beyond immersive identification and thus may already be able to ‘reach’ empathy towards Auggie.

Nonetheless, both the book and the film versions of *Wonder* provide a ‘back-up’ for this potential pitfall. Various characters other than Auggie narrate chapters of the novel from a first person perspective. The film adaptation maintains these different perspectives. Every few scenes, the film shifts its focus from character to character, presenting a black screen that shows the name of the corresponding character. In other words, the protagonists cover both the out-group versus in-group of Auggie versus e.g. his classmates respectively. Since Auggie’s classmates are non-affected children in a similar life-period, they

are likely to be part of the same in-group as the participants of this study, and thus identification with these characters is expected to occur¹⁰.

Lastly, as established in the theoretical framework, section 1.2, negative out-group attitudes may be reduced more strongly by reading literary fiction as opposed to by popular fiction or non-fiction. Of course, there is no clear answer to the question what it means for fiction to be “literary,” thus I will focus on the requirements stated by Kidd and Castano. This means the narrative should defamiliarise its readers by using phonological, grammatical and semantic stylistic devices. This will be elaborated upon in section 5. *Model of analysis of Wonder*.

3. *Design*

This explorative study consists of book- and filmtalks. The term booktalk was coined by Aidan Chambers in 1985 for conversations about books in reader-response contexts (as cited in Eriksson, 2002, p. 392). The term filmtalk is my own variation of this concept, meant to describe a conversation about the film after having watched (some of) the scenes together. These talks were followed by a written response, and both preceded and followed by a questionnaire. In all of these approaches, the independent variable is book reading versus film watching, and the dependent variables are attitudes towards Auggie/(cranio)facial anomalies in general. Since this is an explorative inquiry that is not intended to demonstrate any generalisable effects, no further variables need be discussed.

Within the book-/filmtalks and the written response, I limited myself to what is relevant to the dependent variable. I focused on the following themes of defamiliarisation, identification and attitudes:

1. Do the participants understand the defamiliarising elements of the two versions of the narrative?
2. Do the participants identify with any of the characters, and if so, with whom?
3. What are the participants’ attitudes towards Auggie?

Any statements with regard to these themes ultimately lead to insights into the participants’ attitudes towards Auggie and towards (cranio)facial anomalies in general. I phenomenographically analyse their answers into categories that fit the division between defamiliarization, identification, and attitudes. In phenomenography, such categories are subjectively based on the participants’ descriptions (Marton, 2001, p. 146). The basis of this process of classification is finding significant structures in the content of the responses. Where noticeable, I pay attention to the way in which the participants phrased their thoughts. According to discourse analysis, delivery of certain statements may influence its meaning. Therefore, I paid attention to discourse markers, such as¹¹:

¹⁰ I discuss this in greater detail in chapter 4, the analysis.

¹¹ The perception and interpretation of these discourse markers are experienced and conducted by me, and thus subjective. Due to the explorative and small-scale set-up of this thesis I am unable to analyse these markers in a more trustworthy, academically approved way.

1. Spontaneity
2. Facial expressions
3. Pitch
4. Tempo
5. Loudness
6. Intonation
7. References
8. Repetition
9. Substitution
10. Ellipsis
11. Conjunctions

For example, a difference in intonation can provide information on the active, semi-active or inactive state of consciousness (Couper-Kuhlen, 2015, p.15), and thus provide nuances on what was said. An active state of consciousness is related to statements being made on purpose, whereas an inactive state of consciousness may provide information on the subconscious and possibly more honest feelings. Pitch, tempo and loudness can all reflect the intensity of a participant's opinions. A statement made in a high-pitched, raised voice in a fast sequence of words is arguably more emotional or intense than a low, soft and calm voice. References, repetition, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction may all help analyse utterances through the "semantic relations in an underlying structure of ideas" (Schiffrin, 2005, p. 55), or train of thought. More information on a person's train of thought is relevant when drawing conclusions on their cognition or opinions.

Moreover, participants were asked to write a short response. The questions that prompted the written responses were: "Wat vond jij van Auggie?" (What did you think of Auggie?) and "Hoe zou jij het vinden als er iemand met een gezichtsafwijking bij jou in de klas kwam, en wat zou je doen?" (How would you feel if a new child in your class had a facial difference, and what would you do?) Here, too, I phenomenographically analysed their answers into categories based on significant overlap in the semantic content of the responses.

The written responses function as a supporting device that may be of use in case participants are uncomfortable speaking up, or more honest when writing down their opinions anonymously. Furthermore, the forms on which the participants wrote down their responses contained a picture of Nolan Faber, a boy with Treacher Collins syndrome (see Appendix B)¹². Before the written responses, both the book group, who have only read descriptions of Auggie's craniofacial anomaly, and the film group,

¹² For the book-group I use a picture of Faber combined with a piece of the cover of *Wonder*, the novel. For the film-group I use a picture of Jacob Tremblay, who plays Auggie in the film, posing together with Faber.

who have only seen the portrayal of Auggie by Jacob Tremblay, have been introduced to only one example of a craniofacial anomaly. Since the out-group within this thesis is (cranio)facially affected people and since I want to explore the real-life effects on attitudes towards this group, to which the visual aspect of their appearance is significant, I introduced the participants to this real boy with a craniofacial anomaly who is not Auggie. This allows me to examine whether the potentially affected attitudes are not only aimed at the fictional Auggie, but extended to the out-group. The second question of the written-response form involved a hypothetical situation in which, instead of Auggie, a random person with a facial anomaly would join their class. A comparison of the answers to these questions and the results of the book-/filmtalks may therefore confirm or oppose whether the verbal responses truly relate to out-group attitudes in general and not just to the specific fictional individual Auggie Pullman.

The eleven students were also asked to fill out a questionnaire, a short time before the intervention as well as one week after. This self-reporting list of questions will provide information on the levels of social skills of the participants, as well as their out-group attitudes towards craniofacial anomalies. The statements are inspired by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index, designed by M. H. Davis, which Kim de Corte et al. translated into Dutch (2007). This index has been used in over 100 studies on empathy all over the world. The questions I ask in my questionnaire are mainly based on the categories they have titled: Perspective Taking, Empathic Concern Scale, and Fantasy. The statements on perspective taking reflect the participants' ability to perform ToM, as established in the theoretical framework. The statements on the empathic concern scale reflect the participants' ability to perform empathy. The statements on what Davis and de Corte call 'fantasy,' I regard as reflecting the ability to identify with characters in books or movies, since all the statements in this category deal with orientation of the self towards another¹³. I abbreviated these categories as (ToM), (EC) and (ID). These statements thus grant information on how far the participants have already developed these skills, which will be useful when analysing the results of the interventional talks and written responses. Moreover, I added five statements on facial anomalies (FA). These statements are inspired by the questionnaires used by Vezzali et al. (2015) that were highly relevant due to their applicability to a classroom context. I added these statements because they cover the dependent variable: attitude towards craniofacial anomalies. Therefore, the participants' responses to these statements may change as a result of the interventions. The questionnaire consists of the following statements:

1. Als iemand er anders uitziet dan dat ik gewend ben door een gezichtsafwijking vind ik dat onprettig. (If someone looks different from what I am used to due to a facial anomaly I find this unpleasant). FA

¹³ In this thesis, I mean by identification "the psychological orientation of the self in regard to something (such as a person or group) with a resulting feeling of close emotional association" ("Identification" n.d.).

2. Ik zou vrienden kunnen worden met iemand die er heel anders uitziet dan dat ik gewend ben. (I could befriend someone who looks very different from what I am used to). FA
3. Ik zou het vervelend vinden als er iemand met een gezichtsafwijking in mijn klas kwam. (I would find it bothersome if someone with a facial anomaly would join my class.) FA
4. Ik zou opkomen voor iemand met een gezichtsafwijking als hij of zij gepest werd. (I would stand up for someone with a facial anomaly if they were bullied). FA
5. Ik kan me voorstellen hoe het is om een gezichtsafwijking te hebben. (I can imagine what it is like to have a facial anomaly). FA
6. Ik heb vaak bezorgde gevoelens voor mensen die minder gelukkig zijn dan ik. (I often have feelings of concern towards people who are less happy than I am). EC
7. Ik vind het soms moeilijk om dingen te zien vanuit een ander gezichtspunt. (I sometimes find it difficult to see things from another perspective). ToM
8. Soms heb ik niet veel medelijden met andere mensen wanneer ze problemen hebben. (I sometimes have little pity for others when they have problems). EC
9. Ik raak echt betrokken bij de gevoelens van de personages uit een roman. (I get really involved in the feelings of characters from a novel). ID
10. Ik ga vaak volledig op in een film. (I am often completely absorbed in a film). ID
11. Ik probeer naar ieders kant van een meningsverschil te kijken voor ik een beslissing neem. (I try to look at each side of an argument before I make a decision). ToM
12. Wanneer ik iemand zie van wie wordt geprofiteerd, voel ik me nogal beschermend tegenover hen of zou ik voor hen op willen komen. (I feel protective over or want to stand up for people that are taken advantage of). EC
13. Ik probeer mijn vrienden soms beter te begrijpen door me in te beelden hoe de dingen eruit zien vanuit hun perspectief. (I sometimes try to understand my friends better by picturing issues from their perspective). ToM
14. Enorm betrokken raken in een goed boek of film is zeldzaam voor mij. (I rarely get enormously absorbed in a good book or movie is). ID
15. Andermans ongelukken verstoren me meestal niet veel. (Other people's misfortunes rarely bother me much). EC
16. Na het zien van een film voel ik mij weleens alsof ik één van de personages was. (After seeing a movie I sometimes feel like I was one of the characters). ID
17. Wanneer ik zie dat iemand oneerlijk wordt behandeld, voel ik soms weinig medelijden met hen. (When I see someone is treated unfairly, I sometimes feel little pity towards them). ToM
18. Ik geloof dat er twee zijden zijn aan elke vraag en probeer naar allebei te kijken.

(I believe that there are two side to every question and try to look at both). ToM

19. Ik zou mezelf omschrijven als een gevoelig persoon.

(I would describe myself as a sensitive person). EC

20. Wanneer ik naar een goede film kijk, kan ik mezelf zeer gemakkelijk in de plaats stellen van het hoofdpersonage.

(When I watch a good movie, I can easily put myself in the mind of the main character). ID

21. Wanneer ik overstuur ben door iemand, probeer ik mijzelf even “in hun schoenen” te verplaatsen.

(When I am upset by someone, I try to put myself in their shoes.) ToM

22. Wanneer ik een interessant verhaal of boek aan het lezen ben, beeld ik me in hoe ik me zou voelen indien de gebeurtenissen in het verhaal mij zouden overkomen.

(When I read an interesting story or book, I picture what it would be like if the plot would happen to me). ID

23. Vóór ik iemand te bekritiseer, probeer ik mij voor te stellen hoe ik mij zou voelen in hun plaats.

(Before I criticise anyone, I try to picture how I would feel if I were in their place). ToM

The answer-scale for this questionnaire is 1-4, as is usual for the Interpersonal Reactivity Index, one indicating “helemaal mee eens” (completely agree) and 4 indicating “helemaal niet mee eens” (completely disagree). The lack of “neutraal” prevents participants being indifferent.

4. Procedure

The interventions took place at the participants’ school during a Dalton hour. The first day I was at the school, I read aloud passages from *Wonder* to the participants while they read along on printed-out versions of the text. The second day, I showed the other group various film fragments. I selected the passages as result of the analysis, which will be discussed later on. I read out loud for half an hour, and showed the other group half an hour of film scenes. The booktalk that followed lasted approximately 20 minutes. The remaining time was spent writing the response. I adhered to the same schedule during the film-group interventions.

The pupils were asked to fill out the questionnaire shortly before the intervention. A few days after the intervention they were asked to fill out the same questionnaire once more. The one-week gap is meant to prevent their answers from being influenced either by having discussed the subject immediately preceding the response or by my presence. Therefore, the questionnaire may provide insight into the potential long(er)-term effects of having read the book/having seen the film.

During this book-/filmtalk, I kept in mind the following issues raised by Wolfgang Iser, as cited in *Storytime* by Lawrence R. Sipe:

- Give slightly more credence to the power of the text while at the same time honouring children’s interpretations.

- Encourage children to adopt a “wandering viewpoint” by asking children what various characters might be thinking in the same situation, asking what the teller of the story (the narrator) knows that the characters do know, or asking what one character knows that another character does not know.
- Help children fill in the “gaps” in the story by talking about what the story does not tell us. (2008, p. 56)

While doing so, I may fulfil various roles, as listed by Sipe:

- Helper/nudger (by summarising, restating, or asking for clarification)
 - Responder (by introducing, expanding or elaborating on topics)
 - Literary curator (by extending literary interpretations during teachable moments)
 - Reader (by reading the story)
- (2008, p. 76)

To start the book/filmtalks, I used the “Tell me” approach as designed by Chambers. He suggests asking the participants about their likes and dislikes, what may have puzzled them, and the connections between different items or patterns they found in the text (or film). Eriksson and Aronson interpret this last category as connections between the text (/film) and the everyday world (2004, p. 512). This interpretation is useful for this subject, as I aim to create correspondence between Auggie and real children with facial differences. I therefore asked the participants about connections in this particular sense. Even though the likes, dislikes and puzzles of the participants may not be significant to the thesis, I started the book/filmtalks by asking them about these first, so they can first express their initial, spontaneous thoughts. Utterances that followed this question that are, in fact, relevant to this thesis, are extra significant due to their being unprompted. Lastly, I made sure that the participants were aware that I was not ‘testing’ them, but that I was curious about their own thoughts and opinions. By emphasising that no answers were right or wrong, I hoped to adhere to Chambers philosophy on how to speak about books with young people:

They must know that nothing they say will be misused or turned against them, that they will be listened to and respected [...]. They must know that everything they want to tell is honourably reportable.” (Chambers, 1993, p. 47)

5. *Model of analysis for Wonder*

I selected the passages and scenes for the interventions based on an analysis of *Wonder*, the book and film. The aim of this analysis is to pinpoint the cues for potential cognitive effect on the implied reader/watcher, specifically on their attitude towards facial differences. By implied reader I mean the 'ideal' reader, or "the images of readers that can be extracted from the text" (Nikolajeva, 2005, p.251). The implied reader is thus not the 'real' or intended reader. In my analysis of *Wonder*, the novel, I will approach its potential effect on the implied reader. During the interventions, these findings will be tested empirically (exploratively) on the participants – the real readers. The same goes for *Wonder*, the film, of which I analyse the potential effect on the implied watcher, then exploratively test the true effect on real watchers during the interventions. As follows from the theoretical framework, there are three main requirements for the text and film to achieve cognitive effects: 1. Gaps and defamiliarisation, 2. (dis)identification and 3. intergroup contact. The analysis focuses on these three aspects. I will now explain how I consider to recognise these features in the novel and the movie.

5.1 *Gaps and defamiliarisation*

First of all, as established in the theoretical framework, a cognitively triggering narrative should be literary. As Kidd and Castano state, a text that qualifies as literary fiction defamiliarises its readers (2013, p. 377) by means of "a discourse that forces them to fill in gaps and search 'for meanings among a spectrum of possible meanings'" (Bruner as cited in Kidd and Castano, 2013, p. 377). A mind that is triggered to make sense of such a discourse by filling in the gaps or deviate from what is familiar by using their own imagination, develops skills of ToM and empathy (Kidd and Castano, 2013, p. 377). I would like to focus on these features behind the term 'literariness,' and thus go beyond its text-specific definition. Consequently, I broaden this category and apply it to film, too. Hence, I have labelled this category of my analysis 'gaps and defamiliarisation,' as I deem these phenomena not to be text-specific. I will now specify the various ways in which both texts and film may accommodate gaps and defamiliarisation.

First of all, defamiliarisation may be achieved through "gaps that we fill based on our experiences of real life" (Nikolajeva, 2005, p. 258). The human brain makes use of what we call *schemas* when making sense of what we see, hear and read. I refer to the theoretical framework, where I stated that a schema is a structure of pre-existing knowledge gathered by past experiences. We use these structures to fill in narratological gaps, unless we are given specific details on irregularities (Nikolajeva, 2005, p. 258). A deviation from the schemas as we already have them ready in our minds, is cognitively challenging.

Second of all, according to Kidd and Castano, defamiliarisation may be achieved through phonological, grammatical and semantic stylistic devices (2013, p. 377). For instance, phonological emphasis or deviations from what we are used to in everyday or non-literary discourse may linguistically defamiliarise (both in written and verbal discourse). Examples are assonance, alliteration, rhyme, etc.

Homophones (words that are spelled differently, but pronounced similarly) and homographs (words that are spelled the same, but pronounced differently and have different meanings) can also be used for wordplay (Nikolajeva, 2005, p. 377), both in written text due to their spelling, or in verbal discourse due to ambiguity in pronunciation. Ambiguity also plays a role in grammatical devices, such as syntactically ambiguous sentences (which require cognitive effort for meaning making). Another example is varying use of punctuation, although this device can of course be used to a much larger extent in written text than in film. Lastly, semantic stylistic devices include “one of the foremost tokens of literary language,” namely figurative speech, “which is a collective label for the different uses of language other than its direct dictionary meaning” (2005, p. 201), including but not restricted to: simile, metaphor, symbolism, personification, hyperbole, irony, and repetition (2005, p. 201-6). I would like to emphasise that these devices are not just text-specific either. Stylistic devices such as metaphors may be used in a film’s discourse, but many of the devices can also function on a visual level. For instance, symbolism, irony or repetition may be manifested visually.

Lastly, according to Kidd and Castano a defamiliarising text (or film) should trigger “presupposition (a focus on implicit meanings), subjectification (depicting reality ‘through the filter of the consciousness of protagonists in the story’) and multiple perspectives (perceiving the world simultaneously from different viewpoints)” (2013, p. 377-8). In other words, there is significant attention to subjectivity.

5.2 Identification

According to social cognitive theory, identification (or “the psychological orientation of the self in regard to something (such as a person or group) with a resulting feeling of close emotional association” (“Identification” n.d.)), is a necessary component in influencing out-group attitudes. Identification may seem contradictory to defamiliarization, since the former depends on closeness, whereas the latter builds on subjectivity or distance. Within this model of analysis, however, they do not interfere. Namely, it is the characters that need to be identified with, whereas it is the narratological, phonological, linguistic and stylistic devices that should cognitively challenge the readers/watchers to make sense of gaps in the discourse. In fact, filling in defamiliarising gaps in the narrative may lead to heightened engagement with the relevant characters. Especially using ToM and empathy to understand what a character may think or feel, is actively involving and leads to a closer connection with the relevant characters. In such cases, the active process of sensemaking thus reduces the distance between the reader/watcher and the characters involved. These seemingly opposing measures both indicate potential cognitive effect.

As discussed in the theoretical framework, identification is a requirement for potential cognitive effect on out-group attitudes (Vezalli et al. 2015, p. 107). Intergroup contact (whether real or vicarious) can only reduce prejudice in the in-group member if they identify with the out-group member or with an in-group member who has positive out-group attitude. As mentioned before, the latter might be more

effective in readers who have not yet abandoned the immersive state of reading. For more literary competent readers, I propose that identification with a character who is generally perceived as an out-group member, in this case due to craniofacial anomalies, may still occur on other grounds. For example, although Auggie's appearance may be a reason for disidentification, orientation towards Auggie may be based on a shared characteristic of being middle school students.

Moreover, for a positive effect on out-group attitudes there should be disidentification with characters that have negative out-group attitudes. Identification provokes "[alignment] with the character and his/her view of the world" (Vezalli et al. 2015, p. 107). Therefore, it is undesirable that a reader identifies with a character with negative out-group attitudes. All in all, (dis)identification is a crucial factor for potential cognitive effect. I shall now discuss the features that I argue spark identification.

First of all, I look at the exterior character descriptions. As Nikolajeva argues, a character's experiences should be relatable for novice readers in order for them to "decide that the text is [relevant] for them" (2015, p. 85). A relatable story is a narrative in which a reader recognises some of his or her own experiences. A narrative that deals with shared experiences is more likely to provoke psychological orientation towards these matters than a narrative that does not spark any sense of familiarity. Likewise, identification with fictional characters may start with basic features such as age, gender, occupation and ethnicity, as well as the setting of their lives. In real life, too, these features are often indicators of identify and (sub)group orientation (Díaz-Andreu, 2005, p.2). These types of characterisations may provoke the orientation of the self in regard to such a specific group.

Secondly, I look at the interior features that establish to what extent a character is convincing, and, consequently, identifiable (Burroway, 2015, p. 5). As Nikolajeva states, "it seems that the more we know about characters' interiority, the stronger we engage with them emotionally" (2014, p. 81). As I formulated in the theoretical framework, section 2, I deem engagement to be synonymic to involvement, and closely linked to identification. Especially in adolescent readers, who "talk about their involvement with stories almost entirely in terms of identification with characters and situations" (Appleyard, 1991, p. 101), involvement is probable to occur collectively with identification. Thus, following Nikolajeva, I argue that the features that establish the interiority of a character signify potential pinpoints for identification and thus potential cognitive activity. I continue to discuss which narratological elements are likely to carry those features.

5.2.1 Interiority

For this particular model of analysis, I have chosen to focus on one specific aspect of narrative analysis, namely: interiority and distance. These two terms are closely interlinked, since intimacy with a character generally requires a close connection with them, whereas we hardly gain insight into the interior of a character that is positioned far away from the readers.

The first, and arguably most important, narratological feature regarding interiority and distance is narration. In a novel, the narrator may present the characters' direct thoughts, observations and feelings to the readers. There are various kinds of narration, between which the main division is whether it is from a first-, second- or third-person perspective. Although a second-person perspective is highly engaging and creates a sense of intimacy, it is hardly ever consistently used for a full novel (Burroway, 2015, p. 58). Therefore, I argue a first-person perspective commonly offers the most far-reaching access to interiority. In first-person narration, all plot is revealed through a layer of the narrator's subjective perspective. It offers a constant insight into the mind of the narrator. A first-person narrator can be homodiegetic (a character in the story) or heterodiegetic (not a character in the story). Since, for the aim of this thesis, readers should identify with one of the characters in the story, the narrator is ideally a homodiegetic one. A homodiegetic narrator can be anywhere on the scale between autodiegetic and peripheral: respectively the protagonist, or someone on the edge of the action. This influences whether we gain insight into, thus enabling identification with, the protagonist's mind or that of another character. Third-person point of view is generally more distant. Even though a character's thoughts and feelings may still be shared through focalisation, the narrator is not the person thinking and feelings these things themselves. Thus, an extra layer is added, creating a greater sense of separation between the teller and the being-told-about. A third-person perspective can be omniscient (may know anything of any character), limited (able to go into the mind of one or a limited number of characters), or objective (knowing no more than one person and the facts). These different types of third-person narration may vary in level of interiority, but generally a focus on one person is less distant than omniscience. All in all, we generally know much more of the interior of first-person narrating characters or characters that third-person narrators focus on and focalise through, than of non-narrating or non-focalised characters.

In film, the distinctions in forms of narration are different. Similar to how appearances are hardly withheld in film, a pure first-person narrator is close to impossible to achieve visually. Whereas in a novel, the first-person narrator functions as a filter through which all action is told, the watcher of a movie sees the action unfold themselves. As a focal point themselves, the watcher is inevitably further removed from the character than a reader is from a first-person narrator. Film can be considered to work with focalising characters in similar ways as third-person narration does in text. Additionally, film may play with first-person narration through various film-specific features, such as visually shown written text or voice-over. I will elaborate on voice-over when I discuss various film-specific elements at the end of this section.

Secondly, the type of language used by the narrator or focalising character, both in novels and film, also influences the level of interiority and distance. In general it may be argued that: the more detailed and personal the language, the more engaging the discourse is. In *Imaginative Writing*, Janet Burroway explains:

From the impersonality [of e.g. *a man*], through the increasingly familiar designations (full name, first name, pronoun), to the identification implied in the second person (*your collar, your shoes, your soul*), these examples reduce the formality of the diction and therefore the physic and psychological distance between the [reader] and the character. (2015, p. 60)

Thus, formal language creates distance between what is narrated and the readers, whereas personal language, exclamations or addressing the second person minimalise the distance. The same goes for the language used by film characters.

Another way in which the substantial role of language in identification manifests itself, is described by Deborah Tannen. She writes about how a particular usage of language contributes to interpersonal involvement. She speaks of two categories: “first, uses of language that sweep the audience along through their rhythm, sound, and shape; and second, those that require audience participation in sense-making, such as indirectness, tropes, imagery and detail, and constructed dialogue” (1987, p. 69). These features overlap to a high degree with the features of defamiliarisation in section 5.1. Secondly, Tannen states that repetition and figures of speech contribute to making a text and its characters more recognisable (1987, p. 78). The vivid image that a story conveys “comes in part from the ordinariness of the diction, the familiarity of colloquial linguistic patterns” (1987, p. 78). By this, she means that a character becomes more ‘real’ and thus more likely to connect with when they use a particular register or repeat specific phrases frequently, especially when these are familiar to the reader. Slang or conversational phrases that are recognisably idiomatic or of a vernacular or dialect especially create a recognizable voice. Familiar, particular register and repetition of specific phrases move readers “by establishing and building on a sense of identification between speaker or writer and audience” (1987, p. 71).

Thirdly, building on the same notion of familiarity and particularity of colloquialisms, another feature consists of (popular) cultural references. References to something that the readers already know creates a sense of commonality between the text and the receivers. Cultural references may be shared within in-groups and thus very useful through the associations that go with it.

Fourthly, self-identification (the sense of self) and self-monitoring (presentation and addressing and adjusting to assumptions of others’ expectations) by the characters tell us a lot about their interiority, and thus aid the reader in identifying with them, too. This feature is mainly present in narrating characters: “narrating enables [the speaker] to disassociate the speaking/writing self, and thereby take a reflective position vis-à-vis the self as character in past or fictitious time-space” (Bamberg, 2011, p.7). This is a highly interior process to witness, and “reflected in their self-presentation and expressive behaviour” (Colman, 2015). A narrating character that speaks about their past self participates in personal storytelling: “the making of identity across separation” (Roemer 5). This identity construction is highly

interior and can be seen in the stance the narrator takes towards the readers and towards their own past self.

Lastly, character role (“hero, opponent, round vs. flat characters, etc” (Sanders and Krieken, 2008, p. 222)) is another narratological feature that influences interiority. Especially for non-narrating characters, how much we know of a character’s interiority depends on their role. The most important matter is whether a character is round or flat. A round character about whose interiority we know a great deal about is likely to provoke identification more easily. A flat character that we know only very superficially or from a distance, is unlikely to do so. I want to especially mention the roles of hero and opponent/villain, too, because of the social cognitive theory that emphasised that not only identification with the out-group character or in-group characters with a positive attitude towards the out-group character, is necessary, but also that disidentification with the out-group opponent is of importance. Disidentification with the opponent (character with negative out-group attitudes) enhances positive effects on out-group attitudes.

On top of these features that may occur in both media, there are a number of film-specific elements that provide insight into a character’s interiority. These features have no clear-cut textual equivalent. Consequently, I would like to list these in a separate addition to the model of analysis.

Firstly, an element of great filmic influence is music. Hutcheon cites Lawrence Kramer: “It is the music in films that ‘connects us to the spectacle on screen by invoking a dimension of depth, of interiority, borrow from the responses of our own bodies as we listen to the insistent production of rhythms, tone colours, and changes in dynamics’” (2006, p. 60). The combination of both words and music, “the general and the particular, [...] result in a more satisfactory image of the mental universe than is furnished by either in isolation” (2006, p. 60). In other words, Kramer argues that joining music and textual (verbal) information may even surpass the merely textual. Moreover, the “separation of the sound and image tracks, for instance, can allow a character’s inner state to be communicated to the audience while remaining unknown to the other characters on the screen,” (2012, p. 59), thus dealing with private thoughts and feelings. Therefore, the analysis should take into consideration scenes that are aided by music and the ways in which this music could influence the interpretation of interiority.

Secondly, camera angles or zooms are a device used to represent interiority (or lack thereof). Wide camera angles may represent an overwhelming feeling, zooming out may represent ‘snapping out of it,’ etc. One of the clearest examples, simultaneously most relevant to interiority, is the close-up. “The power of that close-up, for example, to create psychological intimacy is so obvious [...] that directors can use it for powerful and revealing interior ironies” (2012, p. 59). The close-up directs attention towards that which is important, such as the facial expression of the character we may identify with.

Thirdly, interiority may be achieved through voice-over. Hutcheon calls the voice-over a “literary” (2006, p. 58) device. I thus refer back to the model of analysis of the novel, since all of its features may

attribute to interiority in the same way. These should be considered while analysing film, in addition to the way in which these images that accompany the voice-over collaborate with the textual.

Fourthly, pace and editing patterns/sequences have the ability to represent emotional impact or even trauma. Both slow motion and flashes of memory (flashbacks) are powerful devices to represent mental reactions, and therefore the interiority of a character.

The same goes for imaginative visions, the fifth device. Imaginative visions such as fantasies or dreams are, much like flashbacks, disconnected from the main plot and possibly colour-graded differently. Slow motion and music may support the visualisation of such dreamlike states.

5.3 *Out-group positioning*

Lastly, a logical requirement within this model of analysis is that said novel or film should include intergroup contact. For defamiliarisation and identification to potentially influence out-group attitudes, an out-group character should be introduced. Especially identification is at the core of the in-group versus out-group distinction: classifying oneself to a certain in-group, and classifying others to an alternative out-group. I will briefly recall what I explained in the theoretical framework. According to the contact hypothesis (Schiappa, Gregg and Hewes, 2005, p. 92), being introduced to and participating in contact with an out-group character is an effective way to reduce prejudice and /or negative attitudes. The parasocial contact hypothesis states that this is true for the *illusion* of this intergroup contact too, meaning e.g. in novels or films. Social cognitive theory adds to this that in order to learn positive out-group attitudes it is necessary for people to identify and “align with the character and his/her view of the world” (Vezalli et al. 2015, p. 107). This should happen with the out-group character themselves, or, in combination with a group of relatively novice readers who may not yet have abandoned immersive identification, an in-group member with positive attitudes (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 85). These hypotheses and theories together lead to the requirement that the novel and film should show at least intergroup contact, or even extended contact.

In my analysis, I pinpoint these relationships as cues for cognitive effects. I will especially link intergroup contact and out-group positioning with identification, because extended contact will only influence the reader/watcher if there is identification. For out-group attitudes to adjust positively, there should be identification with characters in successful intergroup contact, and disidentification with opposing characters in negative intergroup contact.

In sum, the features I include in my analysis are the following:

1. Gaps and defamiliarisation, for cognitive effect
 - a. Schema deviations
 - b. Phonological, Grammatical and semantic stylistic devices

Phonological:

- Assonance
- Alliteration
- Rhyme
- Homophones

Grammatical:

- Ambiguity
- Interpunction

Semantic:

- Simile
- Metaphor
- Symbol
- Personification
- Hyperbole
- Irony
- Repetition
- Enumeration

c. Presupposition, subjectification, perspectives

2. Identification for social cognitive theory

- a. Exterior features: age, gender, occupation, ethnicity, setting
- b. Interior features:

I. Narrator

- First person
 - Heterodiegetic
 - Homodiegetic: from autodiegetic to peripheral
- Second person
- Third person
 - Omniscient
 - Limited
 - Objective

II. Language

- Phonological, grammatical and semantic stylistic devices (which also defamiliarise, see 1.b)
- Personal versus formal
- Register: ordinariness of diction, familiarity or colloquial linguistic patterns

III. References from (pop) culture

IV. Self-identification/monitoring (in case of a homodiegetic narrator)

V. Character-role:

- In-group/out-group
- Round/flat
- Hero/opponent

VI. Film-specific interiority, potentially allowing for identification:

- Music
- Camera angles and zoom, mainly close-up
- Voice-over (see novel)
- Pace and editing
- Imaginative visions

3. Out-group character and intergroup attitudes for (extended) contact

Chapter 4 – Analysis of *Wonder*, novel and film.

In this chapter, I pinpoint the features that may generate (positive) effects of reading *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio versus watching Stephen Chbosky's film adaptation on the implied reader and watcher, as established in the model of analysis. I make a comparison between the two versions of the narrative.

1. *Implied reader*

I would like to start with making explicit what I mean by the implied reader/watcher of *Wonder*. In the method chapter, I used the Nur-code to authorise the intended, or real, readers to be around 12 years old. In this chapter, I use the narrative itself to deduct the implied, or ideal, reader. The difference between the two is described by Nikolajeva as the true audience that the book is targeted at, and the reader who we can extract from seeing "what features are inherent" to the text itself (Nikolajeva, 2005, p. 255-6). According to Nikolajeva "the constructed [...] image of the implied reader" may not match the real audience at all (2005, p. 256). In this analysis I focus on this construct of the implied reader as follows from the text, as opposed to the interventions, where I concentrate on the intended readers. This is necessary, because for the aim of this thesis it is important to know what constitutes the in-group. In turn, this is essential in order to discuss out-group positioning, or to make statements on the leads for identification by the implied reader with the various characters.

I argue that the in-group of *Wonder*, both the book and the film, is non-affected. The out-group is craniofacially affected, represented by Auggie. I argue that the implied reader is not only unaffected, but also unaware of Treacher Collins syndrome. In the novel, this becomes evident from the one sentence that is addressed to the second-person reader: "I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse" (Palacio, 2014, p. 3). A reader who has a craniofacial anomaly themselves, or is familiar with Auggie's craniofacial syndrome, would probably be able to imagine what Auggie looks like. They would not need the explanation on the TCOF1 gene that is provided by Via later on in the novel, in the chapter "Genetics 101" (2014, p. 103-4). The same can be argued for the movie, although there is no explicit "you" addressee. Via's explanations on Treacher Collins are still presented, adapted into a dialogue with her boyfriend Justin. Moreover, Auggie clearly feels alone in the uniqueness of his condition, as well as the other characters presenting him as "that boy" (Chbosky, 2017, 00:51:51) and "the only [...] kid that looks like him," (2017, 00:03:03) emphasising him as 'the only one' with a facial anomaly. I therefore argue that the implied reader/watcher is non-affected and unfamiliar with craniofacial anomalies.

However, this sense of in- versus out-group is not the only group that the ideal reader may orientate themselves towards. As Appleyard articulated, identification may also occur partially, with various characters for various reasons (1991, p. 102). As discussed previously, shared experiences or

settings are apt to provoke identification. Such experiences or settings that may instigate psychological orientation are connected to main identity-shaping subgroups such as age, gender, occupation and ethnicity (Díaz-Andreu et al., 2005, p. 2). In other words, these subgroups may influence identification and thus cognitive effect, on the constructed ideal reader as assumed by the text. I call these characterisations the exterior features.

Starting with age, I estimate the implied reader/watcher to be around ten to fifteen years old. The book has six narrators: Auggie, Via, Summer, Jack, Miranda and Justin. The film has four 'narrators' or focalising characters: Auggie, Via, Jack and Miranda. In both cases, half of the narrators are in their first year of middle school and the other half are high-school freshmen. Both the age of the narrators and the setting of the narrative, which is mainly their respective schools, leads to an implied reader/watcher in their early teenage years. Moreover, the narrators make cultural references that are popular among early teens. In the book, an example is *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Palacio, 2014, p. 72). The implied, or ideal, reader understands the reference to the 'cheese touch' in this book, which is commonly read by nine- to fourteen-year-old children ("Het leven van een loser," n.d.). This reference is not included in the movie. It may be argued that the implied watcher is somewhat more undefined and could be older than the implied reader. The film has more scenes that include adults. The roles of Mr and Mrs Pullman and Mr and Mrs Albans are bigger in the film than in the book, since the film added scenes that solely revolve around these adults. However, for the sake of this analysis and because the main characters are teenagers, and because the main settings are middle and high school, I choose to approach the implied watcher as an early teenager, too.

The gender of the implied reader/watcher may be either male or female. In both the book and the movie, half the narrators are described as male and the other half as female. There are no evident scenarios that may specifically be more relatable for either gender. It can be argued that for direct intergroup parasocial contact with Auggie, a male perspective may be ideal. An argument for this case would be that Auggie is a boy and is bullied predominantly by boys, and thus these scenes of intergroup contact specifically may be more familiar to a male implied reader. However, extended contact from a female perspective is available through half of the narrators. Since the potential cognitive effect of direct and extended contact are similar (Vezalli et al, 2015, p. 106), the ideal, implied reader may be both male or female.

The ethnical or national background of the implied reader is more complex. Book-Auggie and -Via are the children of two first-generation Americans. Their parents moved to New York together and started their family there. Mr Pullman's parents were first-generation immigrants. Being Russian and Polish Jews, they fled to New York and Argentina respectively during the Second World War. Mrs Pullman is described as a "Brazilian fashionista" (2014, p. 84). Both her parents were Brazilian. Auggie and Via refer to their paternal grandparents as "Poppa" and "Tata" (2014, p. 103). Their maternal grandmother ('Grans') is

occasionally quoted speaking Portuguese: “*menina querida?*” and “*Tu es meu tudo*” (2014, p. 87). An ideal reader comprehends these words and phrases from the languages that Auggie and Via grew up with. Ideal identification occurs with implied readers who belong to the in-group that includes the cultural heritage a shared national identity brings along. The implied reader may thus be Russian, Polish or Brazilian, or familiar with any of these cultures. A shared connection may also occur due to the mix of different nationalities in general. The latter is amplified by Summer being a narrator who is described as “biracial” (2014, p. 127). Her parents’ ethnical identities remain unrevealed. However, from the context¹⁴ it may be deduced that either her mother or her father, a platoon sergeant who died when Summer was young, is or was African American and the other Caucasian. In any case, an implied reader with such a background, or a biracial identity in general, may recognise themselves in the description of Summer. The ethnical identities of the three other narrators of the book are unspecified. The only indicator of Jack Will’s appearance that might lead to the assumption of him being Caucasian is his “curly blond hair” (2014, p. 187). In conclusion, the implied reader may thus have a wide variety of ethnical or national identities.

The implied watcher, however, is much less diverse. The four narrating characters are all portrayed by Caucasian actors¹⁵. The parents of Auggie and Via are played by Caucasian American Hollywood-stars Julia Roberts and Owen Wilson. It is noteworthy that Summer and Justin, who are portrayed by Afro-Canadian actress Millie Davis and African-American actor Nadji Jeter, are the omitted narrators. Although they are still important characters, the fact that only Caucasian actors portray the narrating roles leads to the conclusion that the implied watcher, too, would be Caucasian.

All in all, the implied reader and in-group members in this analysis are non-affected (early) teenagers; either boy or girl; Caucasian in case of the film, mixed ethnicity in the book. The consequences of these orientational subgroups on identification will be discussed at the end of the analysis, when the exterior features of all narrating characters have been examined more extensively.

I will now continue with the analysis of *Wonder* as outlined in the model of analysis. In this comparative discussion, I make a distinction based on the interpersonal contact in the novel and the film: out-group (craniofacially affected Auggie), positive in-group (successful interpersonal contact between non-affected persons with the outgroup) and negative in-group (unsuccessful interpersonal contact between non-affected persons with the outgroup).

For each character, I will discuss the out-group positioning (category 2 of the model of analysis) and potential identification-provoking features (category 3). I do not discuss the literariness through

¹⁴ Summer is described as ‘looking like her name’: having “long wavy brown hair,” “a tan and her eyes were green like a leaf” (2014, p. 53). Auggie had not realised Summer is biracial until he saw a picture of her dad (2014, p. 127).

¹⁵ Auggie; Jacob Tremblay (Canadian), Via: Izabela Vidovic (Croatian American), Jack: Noah Jupe (English) and Danielle Rose Russell (American).

defamiliarising elements and gaps (category 1) separately but mention how they support the other two categories where relevant. I would first like to make the general argument that *Wonder*, both the book and the film, subscribe to Kidd and Castano's defamiliarising demand for subjectification and multiple perspectives (2015, p. 377-8) due to their multiple narrators/focalising characters. However, both media do this to different extents. As argued in the model of analysis, first-person autodiegetic is, in theory, the most interior mode of narrating. This is the form of narration that is used throughout all of *Wonder*, the book. The descriptions by these character-narrators are more intimate than the movie's focalising characters. Throughout *Wonder*, the book, six different perspectives provide a filter of consciousness. In the film, four focalising characters are focussed on. I argue that, in general, the book has a higher defamiliarising quality than the movie, since the readers "perceive the world simultaneously" (Kidd and Castano, 2015, p. 377-8) from a closer distance and a higher number of different viewpoints. This does not mean that the movie has no defamiliarising aspects, only that, overall, the book may be more cognitively challenging and therefore more influential. I will now refine this overall statement by discussing specific scenes from both versions of the *Wondes* narrative and all its separate characters.

2. Out-group: Auggie

2.1 Out-group positioning

The characteristic that stands out most about Auggie is his craniofacial anomaly, caused by a combination of genes that, according to Auggie, is unique. In the book, he explains to Summer:

The main thing I have is this thing called man-di-bu-lo-facial dy-sos-tosis – which took me forever to learn how to pronounce, by the way. But I also have this other syndrome thing that I can't even pronounce. And these things kind of just morphed together into one big superthing, which is so rare they don't even have a name for it. (Palacio, 2014, p. 130)

The more commonly known name for mandibulofacial dysostosis is Treacher Collins syndrome (McKenzie and Craig, 1955, p. 391). The fact that Auggie uses the medical term and emphasises the uniqueness in combination with a syndrome that he does not reveal at all enhances his out-group singularity. In the chapter 'Genetics 101,' Via explains to the implied, non-affected and unfamiliar reader that Auggie has "what seemed to be a 'previously unknown type of mandibulofacial dysostosis caused by an autosomal recessive mutation in the *TCOF1* gene, which is located on chromosome 5, complicated by a hemifacial microsomia characteristic of OAV spectrum'" (Palacio, 2014, p. 104). Here, the reader does get the complete information on Auggie's condition. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the implied knows what to picture, given they are not a medical expert and the rarity of the syndrome's combination. This sense of vagueness is strengthened by Auggie not telling the reader what he looks like, because "whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse" (2014, p.3). The reader is told that Auggie's face is the most out-standing

thing about him, but initially does not get a clear description of what to picture. This is highly defamiliarising, as Nikolajeva explains:

Writers seldom if ever tell us that their characters have two eyes, two ears, a nose and a mouth [...]. We do not need this information to have a general portrait of a human being. But if there is something deviant in a character's appearance, we must be told so. [...] Unless we are given these specific details, we fill the gap left by the writer from the most common repertory of human features. (2005, p. 258)

In *Wonder*, the book, the implied reader is told that there *is* something deviant in Auggie's appearance, but is not granted the specific details. For a great part of the novel, the only words he uses to describe himself are "ugly" (2014, p. 60) and he states that his "eyes [come] down too far" and that his "cheeks [look] punched in" (2014, p. 60). He also mentions he has a "tortoise mouth," (2014, p. 60) because he thinks he looks like a tortoise when he eats, "like some prehistoric swamp thing" (2014, 50). Through these similes, a defamiliarising semantic device, the implied reader is slowly able to create an image. No detailed and complete description of this apparently important aspect of Auggie's appearance is given until far into the novel. Initially, it is an imaginative, defamiliarising gap that we must fill in "based on our experiences of real life" (Nikolajeva, 2005, p. 258). As established earlier in this chapter, the implied reader is likely not to have any real-life experience with these craniofacial anomalies. Thus, the implied reader is left with no leads to imagine the exact deviation from the schemas of a face.

Nevertheless, 88 pages into the novel, Via dedicates an entire chapter to describing Auggie's face. Through the following passage, she allows the implied reader to picture Auggie through various detailed descriptions. The main features that come forward, as common for Treacher Collins syndrome, are the bone structure that this craniofacial anomaly affects, such as the eye sockets being placed about an inch lower on the face than usual, the absence of cheekbones and a significantly undersized jawbone. She also mentions that he has no eyelashes or eyebrows, and that he has multiple scars around his mouth from various surgeries correcting his cleft lip and palate. Via uses several similes to complete her description of his face:

[His eyes] slant downward at an extreme angle, almost like diagonal slits that someone cut into his face, and the left one is noticeably lower than the right one. [...] The top eyelids are always halfway closed, like he's on the verge of sleeping. The lower eyelids sag so much they almost look like a piece of invisible string is pulling them downward. [...] His nose is disproportionately big for his face, and kind of fleshy. His head is pinched in on the sides where the ears should be, like someone used giant pliers and crushed the middle part of his face [...]. Sometimes people assume he's been burned in a fire: his features look like they've been melted, like the drippings on the side of a candle. [...] [He has] tiny cauliflower-shaped ears. (Palacio, 2014, p. 88-89)

Via draws on the pre-existing knowledge the implied reader does have, such as how diagonal slits, someone on the verge of sleeping, a burn victim, melted candles or cauliflowers look. In the chapter, of which the citation above is only a small selection, she gives the reader a very precise description of Auggie's face through the use of similes. The implied reader needs to process these in order to picture what Auggie looks like. In line with Kidd and Castano's argument, I suggest that the use of these similes defamiliarises and enhances the literariness of the novel and, more importantly, the potential cognitive effect of this passage.

This passage, apart from being cognitively challenging, also clearly defines the out-group the novel deals with. It is important to eventually describe Auggie's appearance, as the out-group needs to be made explicit for this book to influence the out-group attitudes towards craniofacially affected people in real non-affected readers. If the readers do not (eventually) understand what makes Auggie different from them, it is hardly possible for them to translate their newfound knowledge onto real life people with craniofacial anomalies because they would not be able to recognise them as such. The novel establishes a balance between leaving Auggie's appearance an imaginative gap and later on intricately illustrating the out-group in question.

As for the film, this passage was not adapted. There was no practical need for it. Auggie's appearance does not need to be described, since it is evident in the showing mode. Auggie's character is portrayed by Jacob Tremblay, an unaffected boy of nine years old whose face is artificially altered by use of "an under-skull helmet with a wire system covered in tubing, which was used to pull Tremblay's eyebags down and make his eyes appear droopy" (Ross, 2018) and prosthetics (see Appendix A). The main difference between Auggie's appearance as described in the book and in the film is that in the book, Auggie needs to start wearing a hearing aid, which he dreads because of the way it looks. In the movie he does not wear hearing aids. In the beginning of the movie, Auggie says that he has had a surgery that makes him able to hear without hearing aids (Chbosky, 2017, 00:02:45). Moreover, whereas the book clearly describes the absence of eye sockets, cheekbones and chinbone and explicitly links this to Treacher Collins syndrome, the movie does not portray these bone structures that are substantial in this specific syndrome (McKenzie and Craig, 1955, p. 391). In terms of out-group positioning, the specific out-group towards whom attitudes may be influenced is thus a slightly different one in the film than in the book. However, both book and film portray and discuss a clear (cranio)facial anomaly in general, which is the subject of this thesis. I therefore do not ascribe a discrepancy in potential cognitive effect to this matter, but deem the overall out-group positioning of both media to be similar.

The fact that Auggie's appearance is not withheld in the movie relates to the difference between modes of engagement of the book and the film. The visual showing mode was not able to delay disclosing Auggie's appearance and leaving it an imaginative gap for as long as the book. In the film, Auggie has an opening monologue through voice-over while he is either not on screen or can be seen wearing an

astronaut's helmet. His appearance is revealed as he takes off his helmet. In the meantime, he states that he does not look "ordinary," thus establishing his out-group position already at minute 03:27 (Chbosky, 2017). I discuss the implication this has on identification in the following section.

2.2 Identification

2.2.1 Delay of appearance-reveal

One main factor for identification closely relates to the section on Auggie's out-group position. In the book, the implied reader has read much more of the narrative before they are told what Auggie looks like precisely. There is a difference in length of the time it takes for the book versus the film to reveal in what sense Auggie is an out-group person to the in-group implied reader. Since the core of why Auggie belongs to an out-group is his appearance, this difference in delay is significant. As Nikolajeva stated, making a character out-group prevents identification (2015, p. 85), and identification is necessary for changed out-group attitudes, according to social cognitive theory. The implied non-affected readers have a lot more time to experience a growing sense of identification before they are able to really picture the way in which Auggie is different to them, whereas the implied watcher is aware of this the entire movie. The implied reader reads one third of the book without being able to picture Auggie's out-groupness, whereas film watchers are made aware of the differences much earlier. The book builds upon a sense of identification that is hindered only by a vague idea of Auggie's out-group-position, before revealing it. The film only has a couple of minutes where Auggie makes a voice-over monologue on how he feels that he is ordinary before the medium establishes his appearance. The rest of the plot-development occurs while the audience is highly aware of Auggie's appearance, as it is shown on-screen. In this regard, the book is therefore more likely to establish a sense of orientation with Auggie and a corresponding emotional connection, or identification, therefore potentially generating a positive out-group attitude.

1.2.2. Exterior features

Irrespective of out- or in-group status, the implied reader and watcher are likely to partially identify with Auggie on the grounds of him attending middle school. Auggie raises themes that are relatable and common for students in their early teenage years. I use 'partially' because Auggie is an out-group member to the non-affected implied reader, but they can still identify with him based on other character traits (Appleyard, 1991, p. 102). In the book, for instance, the chapter 'September' deals with reasons why going to middle school is difficult for Auggie that have nothing to do with his appearance: "The rest of September was hard. I wasn't used to getting up so early in the morning. I wasn't used to this whole notion of homework. [...] I also didn't like how I had no free time anymore" (2014, p. 61). Auggie finds these things hard partly because he was home-schooled before, but they are struggles that may be relevant to any middle-school student in the transitional phase. The film addresses this, too. Everyday

school-scenes of science classes, dodgeball matches or even just walking down the school corridors lead to a familiar setting that builds on a common ground and may provoke orientation of the implied reader's self to the group Auggie belongs to: middle-school students. This shared occupation and setting is present in both the movie and the book, so I do not expect differences in intensity of identification on this account.

2.2.3 Narration

Auggie Pullman is the autodiegetic narrator of *Wonder*, the book, and the main focalising character in *Wonder*, the film. As mentioned, this means that there is less distance between him and the implied reader than between him and the implied watcher. A watcher who sees the plot for themselves is more likely to form their own opinions on what they see than to adopt the viewpoint of the narrator, as is likely in a first-person, interiority-based novel. Importantly, the more we know about a character's interiority, the more we engage with them, the more we are likely to identify. Thus, potential cognitive effects may be more extensive in the implied reader than watcher. I will now elaborate on the other interior features for identification that contribute to this issue.

2.2.4 Register

Auggie uses his own personal language in narrating with particular colloquial phrases, such as "by the way" ("My name is August, by the way," "Mom is beautiful, by the way," "The word's 'supposedly,' by the way," etc. (Palacio, 2014, p. 3, p. 7, p. 30)). This specific phrase is frequently repeated, which establishes a voice that the implied reader may start to recognize. Additionally, this specific example is very conversational and contains a sense of the implied reader directly being talked to. This creates direct (intergroup) contact, which may enhance the potential cognitive effect on out-group attitudes. Moreover, Auggie's everyday register, that is typical for (early) teenagers, decreases distance and may constitute "a sense of identification between speaker or writer and audience" (Tannen, 1987, p. 71). The "ordinariness of [his] diction (Tannen, 1987, p. 78) may create a sense of in-group positioning for Auggie based on the familiarity of his language. Identification of the implied reader with Auggie in this specific regard is therefore likely.

Auggie's voice in the film is very similar to his voice in the novel. Many of his replies within dialogue are identical to phrases from the book. The likeliness of identification with Auggie's character is therefore comparable.

2.2.5. *Self-monitoring*

Auggie's personal language and very short sentences resemble stream-of-consciousness, which is highly interior. He often changes his thoughts or gains new insights while narrating, for example in the following sections:

I know how to pretend I don't see the faces people make. We've all gotten pretty good at that sort of thing: me, Mom and Dad, Via. Actually, I take that back: Via's not so good at it. She can get really annoyed when people do something rude. (Palacio, 2014, p. 3)

The reader follows Auggie's thoughts as if he hears himself saying his sister's name and changing his mind, which is a profoundly intimate narrative situation. The implied reader witnesses an act of self-monitoring that strongly decreases all distance between his thoughts and his narration. The same goes for the following:

I have other friends, too, but not as good as Christopher and Zack and Alex were. For instance, Zack and Alex always invited me to their birthday parties when we were little, but Joel and Eamonn and Gabe never did. [...] Maybe I'm making too big a deal about birthday parties. (Palacio, 2014, p. 5)

Not only does the reader witness Auggie's realisation that his way of explaining his friendships might be questionable, they also observe Auggie's participation in self-identification and monitoring. This act of adjusting to his assumptions of other people's expectations is highly interior. Auggie takes "a reflective position vis-à-vis the self" (Bamberg, 2015, p. 7), which is not present in the film. None of Auggie's voice-over monologues include these mental self-reflections. I therefore argue that the film provides less interiority once again, and may therefore support identification to a lesser extent.

2.2.6. *Metaphors*

The use of metaphors attributes to a narrative being cognitively challenging in both defamiliarisation and identification. This presupposition of using language in a way other than its direct meaning is a semantic stylistic device that defamiliarises the reader (Kidd and Castano, 2013, p. 377). The same goes for the watcher of a film that uses such semantic devices. The most important metaphor in both the book and movie, is one where Auggie describes how he thinks about the way in which people deal with him standing out. In the book, he states the following:

Hey, the truth is, if a Wookiee started going to school all of a sudden, I'd be curious, I'd probably stare a bit! And if I was walking with Jack or Summer, I'd probably whisper to them: Hey, there's the Wookiee. And if the Wookiee caught me saying that, he'd know I wasn't trying to be mean. I was just pointing out the fact that he's a Wookiee. (Palacio, 2014, p. 62)

Auggie challenges the readers to make the connection between him and a *Star Wars* figure on the common ground that they are out-group members to the average middle-school student. This is cognitively engaging and may have a cognitive effect through defamiliarisation, but also influences potential identification. According to Tannen, devices such as the metaphor contribute to interpersonal involvement (1987, p. 71). Since the implied reader is familiar with a Wookiee and the ways in which they would stand out in a crowd of middle-school students, it is easier for them to imagine how Auggie feels and thinks about the general behaviour towards him, thus reducing the distance towards his interiority. The film adapted this metaphor. Auggie states the exact same phrases as quoted above through voice-over. The film even lengthens the metaphor by adding a short dialogue after the voice-over stops: [to the Wookiee] “I’m sorry if my staring made you feel weird” (Chbosky, 2017, 00:31:30), upon which the Wookiee makes its typical incomprehensible sound and the two fist-bump and walk into the school together, creating a connection between Auggie and the Wookiee. Not only does this metaphor draw on a common experience of Auggie and a Wookiee both being out-group members *and* provides an explicit example for positive intergroup behaviour, it even challenges the implied reader/watcher of to think of Auggie as in-group, as both the reader/watcher and Auggie look at the Wookiee as out-group. I argue this is very much positively cognitively engaging. Since Auggie befriends the Wookiee in the film scene, an even stronger understanding of intergroup connection may come forth in the implied watcher through extended contact. In my view, the potential effects on identification are slightly higher in the film.

2.2.7. (Pop) cultural references

The mentioning of a Wookiee, in the film specified to be the popular Chewbacca, is also a means of establishing identification based on a familiar cultural reference. There are various other cultural references in both the book and film, e.g. the book *The Hobbit* and the play *Our Town*, as well as *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. The film omitted this last reference. However, this reference is an important one to the plot. The children in the novel play a game called ‘The Plague,’ which is, as Auggie describes, similar to “the Cheese Touch from *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. At Beecher Prep, I’m the old moldy cheese” (Palacio, 2014, p. 72). The film therefore lacks a cultural reference that may strengthen the sense of orientation towards Auggie by the implied reader/watcher based on knowing the same book. Therefore, it may again be argued in this regard, the movie establishes a similar, but slightly weaker opportunity for identification.

2.2.8 Filmic devices

So far, the novel seems to indicate a more extensive potential cognitive effect on the implied reader and watcher. The exterior features and use of metaphor are handled similarly and are therefore expected to invoke similar levels of identification, but on all other points the novel seemed to be more extensive in its cognitive challenges. However, the film has its ways of evoking interiority that are thus far not discussed.

One of these features is the recurring imaginative vision of an astronaut, which has no equivalent in the book. One of its most striking occurrences presents itself simultaneously with another intimate feature, namely that of the close-up in the following scene. Auggie feels insecure about the way he eats: “When I eat, I look like some prehistoric swamp turtle” (Chbosky, 2017, 00:36:05). As Jack sits down at Auggie’s lunch table and fully accepts the way he eats, a close-up of Auggie is followed by a shot of an astronaut skipping down the hallway as if weightless. In this moment, happy music starts playing. The lyrics to this song are “I can tell that we are going to be friends” (Chbosky, 2017, 00:36:43). The cheerful, swelling tunes of the song in combination with its message, “[invoke] a dimension of depth” (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 60) and grant information on how Auggie feels about his new friendship. Moreover, the astronaut is an extension from how, in the book, Auggie likes to wear an astronaut’s helmet because nobody can see his face when he wears it. The astronaut itself, however, is not present in the novel. I argue it represents Auggie’s interiority as he feels on the inside, undefined by his appearance. The close-up, the imaginative symbolic vision and the music are thus highly interior and represent emotion. From these devices, the implied watcher can deduce that Auggie is extremely happy with his new friendship. I do not assume that this makes up for the difference in extensiveness of cognitive effect that I thus far demonstrated, but it does show that film may achieve similar effects to its own extent.

2.2.9. Remaining defamiliarising gap

There is one more scene in which metaphor and cultural reference come together. It is a significant scene which I cannot ignore when pinpointing the moments that may influence out-group attitudes. It is a highly intimate scene that takes place the night after Auggie’s first day at school. In it, the following interaction takes place:

(Book)

I’m not sure why, but all of a sudden I started to cry.

Mom put her book down and wrapped her arms around me. She didn’t seem surprised that I was crying. ‘It’s okay,’ she whispered in my ear. ‘It’ll be okay.’

‘I’m sorry,’ I said in between sniffles.

‘Shh,’ she said, wiping my tears with the back of her hand. ‘You have nothing to be sorry about...’

‘Why do I have to be so ugly, Mommy?’ I whispered.

‘No, baby, you’re not...’

‘I know I am.’

She kissed me all over my face. She kissed my eyes that came down too far. She kissed my cheeks that looked punched in. She kissed my tortoise mouth.

She said soft words that I know were meant to help me, but words can't change my face. (2014, p. 59-60)

(Film)

Auggie starts crying

'I'm sorry.'

'It's okay, it'll be okay.'

'Just why do I have to be so ugly?'

'You are not ugly, Auggie.'

'You just have to say that because you're my mom.'

'And because I'm your mom it doesn't count? Because I'm your mom it counts the most, because I know you the most. You are not ugly, and anyone who cares to know you, will see that.'

'They won't even talk to me. It matters that I look different. I try to pretend that it doesn't, but it does... Is it always going to matter?'

'I don't know.' (Chbosky, 2017, 00:23:48)

The difference between these two scenes is that, in the film scene, Auggie explicitly states why he is upset: he was uncomfortable at school. His classmates treated him differently because of, he suspects, his appearance. He asks his mother the question that he struggles with: will his appearance always influence his life this badly? In the book, however, all of this is implicit. The scene as quote above is preceded by the following passage that his mother reads him from *The Hobbit*:

They were a gloomy party that night, and the gloom gathered still deeper on them in the following days. They had crossed the enchanted stream; but beyond it the path seemed to straggle on just as before, and in the forest they could see no change. (Palacio, 2014, p. 59)

In the book, the implied reader is expected to understand the connection between this passage and what sparks Auggie's tears. Auggie sees his transition from being home-schooled to going to a public school as crossing a border, but that nothing changed in terms of intergroup contact. He has little faith that his classmates will be nicer to him than strangers that do not know him. It is a metaphor for how he feels: he will always keep struggling with his appearance and how people deal with that. This is an example of a significant defamiliarising gap by stylistic device, since no explicit link is provided in the text.

The film explicates these feelings without linking them to this passage from *The Hobbit*. The film fills in the gap that the implied reader had to make sense of themselves. The film does encourage identification by showing close-ups of a clearly upset and crying Auggie, thus providing clear information on his interior emotions. This is emphasised by him taking off his astronaut helmet before revealing this

which leads to more attention to his expression. The watcher can clearly observe Auggie's intimate emotional state, but has to perform a great deal less cognitive effort of their own in sense making. This omits a great deal of defamiliarisation by filling in the gap for the implied watcher. Again, the outcome of the book may enhance more positive cognitive attitudes.

Taking everything with regard to identification into consideration, I argue that although both book and film are likely to establish identification with Auggie at least to some extent for similar reasons, the book offers more entries into Auggie's interiority; gives the reader more time by delaying the definition of his 'otherness;' and shows more commonalities between Auggie and the implied reader, than the film does the implied watcher. Despite the film's own ways of presenting interiority, it does so less extensively than the book.

3. Positive non-affected in-group: Jack, Via, Miranda, Summer and Justin

Apart from Auggie, various other narrating characters may positively affect out-group attitudes through their own positive stance towards Auggie. According to the social cognitive theory, *Wonder* may still be an attitude-changing story if identification with Auggie himself were to fail, due to the possibility of identification with non-affected persons who have successful intergroup contact with him. Therefore, I will now discuss these narrators in greater detail.

Again, I will discuss the specific out-group positioning and features for identification for each character, while also taking into consideration any relevant defamiliarising devices. Furthermore, I will start each subsection with a summary of each character's exterior features, so as to provide an outline of the essence of their characterisation. These characteristics will be summarised and their implications examined after all narrators have been discussed. In particular, I will review the influence of these traits and how, or if, they lead to a broader possibility for stronger identification by various sub-groups within the bigger non-affected, school-going in-group.

3.1 Jack

3.1.1. Exterior features

Jack is a classmate of Auggie's, thus also starting his first year of middle school. The experiences this brings along make him identifiable for the implied teenage reader. Like Auggie, he does not enjoy homework but does enjoy playing videogames. More specifically, Jack is described as having curly blond hair and coming from a family that is short on money. On this last subject, he states:

My parents are not rich. I say this because people sometimes think that everyone who goes to private schools is rich, but that isn't true with us. [...] I overhear my parents talk

about things like ‘Can we do without an air conditioner one more year?’ or ‘maybe I can work two jobs this summer.’ (Palacio, 2014, p. 149)

The movie deals with this less explicitly, but also shows him carrying an old sled he found into his apartment building and mentions his ‘hand me down’ shoes (Chbosky, 2017, 00:06:08). Jack got into Beecher Prep with a scholarship, but is not as motivated or as skilled, especially in science, as Auggie. He prefers playing games over working on the science fair project and is fairly popular – until he befriends Auggie. In his exterior character description, other than him being an approximately ten-year-old boy who goes to middle school, Jack may particularly provoke an even stronger sense of orientation towards him in those who come from, for instance, Caucasian families with little money.

3.1.2. Out-group positioning and character role

In this section, I combine the out-group category with the identification one. The reason for this is that Jack’s vision on and perception of Auggie changes throughout both the book and movie. This makes him a round-character. During the summer, Mr Tushman asks Jack’s mother if he would be willing to give Auggie a tour of the school and to be friendly to him. He is reluctant at first, because it is the summer holidays and he does not want to go to school. Nevertheless, he agrees after he realises who he would be doing it for. His mother reminds him of a time that his little brother ran away screaming upon seeing Auggie. “[If] a little kid like Jamie, who’s usually a nice enough kid, can be that mean, then a kid like August doesn’t stand a chance in middle school” (Palacio, 2014, p. 141), Jack explains about why he changed his mind. Subsequently, Jack shows an arch that makes him a character with depth. The implied reader understands this change of mind due to the access to Jack’s interiority. He recalls the first time he ever saw Auggie and asked his babysitter “‘what was wrong with that kid’” (2014, p. 137). Before he befriends Auggie, he states: “It’s hard not to sneak a second look. It’s hard to act normal when you see him” (2014, p. 138). He even states that becoming friends with August was the bravest thing he ever did (2014, p. 148). He admits that someone who befriends an out-group character can initially be hesitant, too. This way, he may draw in in-group members who have negative out-group attitudes and give them a reason to identify with his former feelings, while also showing them what can be gained by a change of heart. He dedicates an entire chapter of the book (‘The four things’) to what he learned about Auggie only by intergroup contact with him. The film copies this chapter almost entirely in voice-over. In book, he starts by stating: “First of all, you do get used to his face. The first couple of times I was like, whoa, I’m never going to get used to this. And then, after about a week, I was like, huh, it’s not so bad’ (2014, p. 142). He does not say this to anyone in particular, which makes it come across as a moment of interior self-reflection, which is identification-inducing. Especially the monitoring continues as he continues to state:

Second of all, he's actually a really cool dude. I mean, he's pretty funny. [...] He's also just, overall, a nice kid. Like, he's easy to hang out with and talk to and stuff. [...] Third of all, he's really smart. I thought he'd be behind everyone because he hadn't gone to school before. But in most things he's way ahead of me. (2014, p. 142-3)

Jack's hesitant attitude has turned into a positive attitude, which is emphasised by his last statement:

Fourthly, now that I know him, I would say I actually do want to be friends with August. At first, I admit, I was only friendly to him because Mr. Tushman asked me to be especially nice and all that. But now I would choose to hang out with him. [...] Like, if all the guys in the fifth grade were lined up against a wall and I got to choose anyone I wanted to hang out with, I would choose August. (2014, p. 143)

Jack describes how he interacted with Auggie because he was asked to, but how through intergroup contact his attitude was positively affected. Through this parasocial extended contact, the implied reader (and again, due to the identical scenes, the implied watcher) may adjust their own out-group attitudes. Especially because of Jack's popular status and reputation of a likeable in-group member, it may have more impact to hear such positive things from a character that initially had a somewhat negative out-group attitude. Parasocially, it creates the awareness in a 'if he can do it, so can I'-manner in both versions of the narrative. All in all, Jack's developmental arch and the roundness of his character through the accessibility of his interiority, may activate identification and establish a positive out-group positioning, in both the book and film.

3.1.3. Language

In the novel, Jack's identifiability is increased by various linguistic and stylistic devices. First of all, Jack's use of language is particular and a typical case of "ordinariness of diction" (Tannen, 1987, p. 78) for the early-teenage implied reader. Although the colloquial-ness of his language is similar to Auggie's, the implied reader can distinguish between the two characters' register. For instance, Jack uses the word 'like' more frequently than any other narrator, thus establishing a "familiarity of linguistic pattern" (1987, p. 78). This is also true for 'totally' and 'stuff.' As argued by Tannen, this positively influences the likelihood for identification (1987, p. 71). The most striking linguistic expression his chapters are the text-messages between Auggie and Jack. The language both boys use in this passage is extremely colloquial and informal, which decreases distance (Burroway, 2015, p. 60) and may enhance identification.

1 New Text Message

From: JACKWILL

Dec 31 5:02PM

[Julian]'s a jerk. but I was a jerk too. really really really sorry for what I said dude, Ok? can we b frenz agen?

[...]

1 New Text Message

From: August

Dec 31 5:03PM

yes dude we'r frenz agen (Palacio, 2014, p. 166-7)

The implied reader reads along with both characters as they receive each other's texts. This passage calls upon a great deal of Theory of Mind, since the reader needs to approach the texts as from both character's perspectives and minds. On top of the familiar and colloquial occurrence of text messages, this leads to a greater likelihood of identification, thus channelling an opportunity for potential cognitive effect.

The movie, again, copies these aspects of the book almost entirely identically. Jack and Auggie refer to each other as 'dude,' and the text messages are presented in the same linguistic manner. The only difference is the medium through which the messages are exchanged: the boys type these texts to each other as characters in a Minecraft game. The movie alternates between showing both boys sitting behind their computers and the world of the game. For the implied teenage reader, this may indeed be very familiar and engaging. Still, I argue that more teenagers are familiar with texting than with Minecraft, and thus do not assign a significant difference in potential identification to this alternative.

3.1.4. Dramatic Irony

The text messages above touch upon a fight the two boys had had over Halloween. Auggie was supposed to dress up as Bobba Fett, a *Star Wars* character, but since his dog ruined this costume has to wear a different costume; one that includes a mask. Jack does not know this. He and Julian then talk about Auggie in a very negative way in front of him, not realising the boy in the mask is Auggie. "I've thought about this a lot,' said the second mummy, sounding serious, 'and I really think... if I looked like him, seriously, I think that I'd kill myself'" (Palacio, 2014, p. 77). Jack later greatly regrets saying this, and admits he only said it because Julian was pestering him. The movie, again, has a similar scene. Auggie walks into the classroom and then hears Jack joking to Julian: "If I'd look like him I think I'd kill myself" (Chbosky, 2017, 00:44:09). In both versions, Auggie then also overhears him saying that Mr Tushman asked Jack to 'hang out' with him in the beginning of the year. Auggie is heartbroken and stays home for two days, after which he does not talk to Jack anymore. The reader knows this before Jack becomes the narrator. Jack is unaware of this, and does not know why Auggie is angry with him all of a sudden. Jack

thinks Auggie was genuinely ill during Halloween and does not understand what happened. Both in the book and in the film, this is a case of dramatic irony where the readers and watchers know what Jack did, but the narrator, Jack himself, does not. Since the implied readers and watchers need to realize this and engage in what Jack know and thinks, this stylistic device is cognitively challenging and an imaginative gap. It potentially aids the development of empathy and ToM in both modes of engagement.

All in all, the book and film handle Jack's character very similarly. I therefore argue that in regard to his scenes, potential cognitive effect would be similar, apart from the aforementioned general difference in distance by narration.

3.2 Via

3.2.1. Exterior features

Via is Auggie's older sister. She is in her first year of high school. Like Auggie, she is the child of a Polish/Russian father and Brazilian mother. Both in the book and in the film, one of the main themes in Via's life is that she feels her parents give her less attention than they give Auggie. She understands that Auggie's medical condition is the cause of this unequal division of care and tries her best to cope with it well. In the meantime she struggles with the death of her grandmother, who had always secretly told Via she was her favourite grandchild (2014, p. 87). "Auggie has a lot of angels looking out for him. You have me" (Chbosky, 2017, 00:42:02). Via also has a hard time dealing with the changing friendships in high school but finds new friends and boyfriend Justin through getting involved in the school play. Her character may spark a sense of orientation in an implied reader/watcher in whose life loneliness plays a part.

3.2.2. Out-group positioning

As with Jack, Via's out-group attitudes play into the roundness of her character. I discuss the two in overlap, but have decided to split the main arguments into different sections. I will therefore touch upon the complexity of Via's character, but discuss it in greater detail in the following section.

Via's thoughts on her little brother are some of the most interior issues within the novel, and do not come forward in the movie. The book discusses a struggle that is highly relevant to her intergroup contact with Auggie, and to cognitively activating schema deviations as well. It is established early on in both the book and the film that Via loves Auggie very much, despite the fact that she is often less of a priority to her parents due to his health issues. Via, a non-affected in-group girl, is very close with her out-group brother. To some extent, this intergroup contact is self-explanatory or natural: Via grew up with Auggie, and siblings are expected to love each other. I assume brotherly or sisterly love to be a schema for the implied reader. The implied reader does not have a close family connection with Auggie that makes

them spontaneously adore him, but they may gain positive attitudes to him if they identify with Via. As with Jack, this may be aided by the fact that despite her sisterly love, Via has her own struggles in accepting Auggie for who he is. The schema of unconditional love is interrupted occasionally, resulting in a development that eventually leads to pride and an even more positive out-group attitude from Via towards Auggie. Via acknowledges that someone who meets Auggie for the first time sees him in a completely different way than people who know him well. This acknowledgement may be soothing to the implied reader. For instance, on seeing Auggie again after staying with her grandmother for a long time, Via states the following:

It was only a flash, [...] a feeling I hated myself for having the moment I had it. But as he was kissing me with all his heart, all I could see was the drool coming down his chin. And suddenly there I was, like all those people who would stare or look away.

Horrified. Sickened. Scared.

Thankfully, it only lasted for a second: the moment I heard August laugh his raspy little laugh, it was over. Everything was back the way it had been before. But it had opened a door for me. A little peephole. And on the other side of the peephole there were two Augusts: the one I saw blindly, and the one other people saw.

I think the only person in the world I could have told any of this to was Grans, but I didn't. (Palacio, 2014, p. 86)

In a sense, this moment is a schema deviation for Via herself. She explains how there is a difference between how she sees Auggie and how the people she would get angry at see him. She becomes more understanding towards the people who are shocked the first time they see him, thus building a pathway for the unfamiliar in-group to become more understanding of her, and of Auggie by extension. The last sentence of the quote above emphasises how much of an interior process this was to her. Since these highly interior features trigger cognitive activity as well as identification, I argue that these elements which are not present in the film, may improve the implied reader's out-group attitudes as opposed to the implied watcher's.

However, one scene that is important to this issue does occur in both the novel and the film. It is a scene that plays into in- and out-group commonalities directly. After Auggie hears Jack saying mean things about him during Halloween, Via tells him:

Everyone hates school sometimes. I hate school sometimes. That's just life, Auggie. You want to be treated normally, right? This is normal! We all have bad days, okay? [...] The point is we all have to put up with the bad days. Now, unless you want to be treated like a baby the rest of your life, or like a kid with special needs, you just have to suck it up and go. (Palacio, 2014, p. 115)

Auggie I'm sorry but you're not the only one who has bad days. [...] School sucks. And people change. So if you want to be a normal kid, Auggie, those are the rules. (Chbosky, 2017, 00:47:20)

Via emphasises the connection between what Auggie goes through and what is 'normal,' that him being bullied because of his anomalies is not necessarily different from being treated badly for other reasons. Of course she acknowledges that Auggie goes through this every day in more extreme ways, but "it's not a contest about whose days suck the most" (2014, p. 115). By underlining this, she establishes that Auggie should consider his own position within the in- and out-groups. She emphasizes the ways in which Auggie is similar to 'ordinary' (non-affected) middle school students, and thus provides a reason for identification with Auggie for other in-group members, too.

Thus, I argue that both versions of *Wonder* may achieve positive effects on out-group attitudes through the character of Via, but that the novel does so much more elaborately.

3.2.3. Character role

As her struggles with her own feelings towards Auggie show, Via has a complex interiority in the novel. The book brings forward various different sides of Via. Auggie describes Via as very tough and not afraid of confrontation. Through Auggie's narration, the implied reader can picture Via as fierce, with a very positive but protective personality. He states that she would sometimes get angry at people and yell at them for staring at him. From this, he deduces: "Via doesn't see me as ordinary. She says she does, but if I were ordinary, she wouldn't feel like she needs to protect me as much" (Palacio, 2014, p. 3). It becomes clear that she is fiercely 'on Auggie's side,' which sketches an image of the big-mouthed, big sister. On the other hand, her boyfriend Justin describes her using the following metaphor: "olivia reminds me of a bird sometimes, how her feathers get all ruffled when she's mad. and when she's fragile like this, she's a little lost bird looking for its nest" (2014, p. 203). This use of metaphor is cognitively activating as well as contributing to the implied reader's image of Via. He emphasises the more sensitive side of her that does not come forward as much in the chapters narrated by Auggie. Her own narration gives the reader yet another image: one that is more conflicted and struggling to find her way both in high school and her place in a family preoccupied with Auggie's health:

Auggie is the Sun. Me and Mom and Dad are planets orbiting the Sun. [...] Mom and Dad would always say I was the most understanding little girl in the world. I don't know about that, just that I understood there was no point in complaining. (Palacio, 2014, p. 82)

Again, a metaphor is used to describe the situation, contributing to cognitive activation as well as identification through the interiority of her first-person perspective. She explains that behind the image that others have of her, her true feelings are different – she has just developed the habit of not putting them to attention. Via's own narration forms an extra layer of explanation for her behaviour as described

by e.g. Auggie and Justin. This layer, in combination with the description of others, provides insights into Via as a character and creates roundness. In a scene in which Via and Justin are making secret wishes, Justin says: “[Via] has so many things she could wish for I have no idea what she’s thinking” (2014, p. 195). Via’s motives are a mystery in the chapters narrated by characters other than herself, but her narration gives the reader the opportunity to go back and forth in the process of making sense of what other narrators say about her, and fill in those gaps. In applying what they learnt about her character to gaps left by other narrators, the readers’ ToM is triggered. Thus, defamiliarisation and identification are intertwined in Via’s characterisation in the novel.

In the film, Via’s character is more one-sided. In the book, the roundness of her character leads to great opportunity for identification. The film lacks this, since it omits the extra layers of Via’s characterisation. Specifically, her being tough and easily angry is absent in the film. However, in the book, these traits were only discussed by Auggie and Justin and not by Via herself. The part of Via that the film focuses on is the most interior one. She is presented in a way most similar to how narrator-Via describes herself in the book: as hurting and longing for her friends, for her grandmother and for her parents’ attention. Her interiority is adapted through various voice-overs. An example of this is the metaphorical passage in which Auggie is described as the sun, discussed above. This cognitively activating feature is thus also preserved – extended, even. In voice-over, Via states: “This family revolves around the Sun, not the daughter” (Chbosky, 2017, 00;30:23), thus making use of the homophones ‘sun’ and ‘son,’ adding a linguistic defamiliarising device that is cognitively challenging. Moreover, Via’s face is very frequently shown in close-ups, clearly showing tearful smiles or confused facial expressions implying that she feels hurt. Via’s character is presented less elaborately, but her characterisation in the adaptation does focus on her interiority. However, comparing the two media does lead to the conclusion that Via’s interiority in the book is more complex and thus more cognitively challenging than in the novel. Part of this complexity lies in the fact that ToM plays a big part in connecting the various portrayals of her with her own thoughts, whereas the film only deals with her own experience.

3.2.4. Self-monitoring

The citation above in which Via reflects on her own feelings towards Auggie is, as discussed, very interior. Part of this is also due to her participation in self-monitoring in this quote. Via is highly aware of her feelings and is very upset by them. The same goes for the situation in which she did not invite her parents to her play, because that would mean her parents would bring Auggie to her new school, saying: “it’s just been so nice being in a new school where nobody knows about him [...], nobody’s whispering behind my back” (Palacio, 2014, p. 203), but she says so while crying and repeatedly stating: “I’m an awful person!” (2014, p. 203) She eventually comes to terms with the situation and welcomes Auggie to the show, which shows an interior development. The implied reader witnesses this intimate self-monitoring, which is non-

existent in the film, and is likely to feel a closer connection to Via than the watcher. Arguably, the novel triggers a greater sense of identification and thus greater cognitive effect.

All in all, the novel depicts Via as a more complex character that both requires and triggers sense making through essential social skills of empathy and theory mind, and stimulates identification through the interior nature of this complexity. The film may also achieve these effects, though to a lesser extent.

3.3 Miranda

3.3.1 Exterior features

Miranda used to be Via's best friend before the beginning of the story. Miranda used to be very close with the Pullmans. She celebrated Christmas with them and was the one who gave Auggie his astronaut helmet. She carries a picture of him in her wallet. During the summer, her parents got a divorce. Her father immediately started dating another woman, so Miranda suspects he cheated on her mother. Miranda suffers from this divorce. "My mother is the kind of person who has a happy face for the rest of the world but not a lot left over for me" (2014, p. 236). Like Via, she is in her first year of high school and joins the *Our Town* play. She has dyed pink stripes in her hair and tries to find her identity. She may be particularly orientational for in-group members who relate to children of divorced parents themselves. This is the case in both the book and the movie.

3.3.2 Out-group positioning

Miranda's attitude towards Auggie is almost the opposite of Via's secret one: at the summer camp she lied to all her peers, saying that she had a little brother "who was deformed" (2014, p. 237). In the book, she explains this in the following way:

I have absolutely no idea why I said this: it just seemed like an interesting thing to say. [...] I have to admit, there was a part of me that felt a little entitled to this lie. I've known Auggie since I was six years old. [...] I'm the one who gave him his astronaut helmet he wouldn't take off for years. I mean, I've kind of earned the right to think of him as my brother.

And the strangest thing is that these lies I told, these fictions, did wonders for my popularity. (Palacio, 2014, p. 237)

Miranda uses Auggie's uniqueness to stand out at the camp. The citation suggests that the uncommon story of Auggie's facial anomaly is indeed interesting to the new people Miranda meets there. In the film, she states the following in voice-over:

Via and I have been best friends since kindergarten. Her family has always been like my second home. Auggie has always felt like my little brother. [...] One day, and I swear I didn't plan this, but, I started playing this little make-believe game with the girls in camp. I said I lived in a huge brown-stone on a nice street with my two awesome parents, and my awesome dog named Daisy, and my awesome little brother. With a facial deformity. And oh my god everyone went crazy. What do you mean deformity? What does he look like? Suddenly everybody wanted to talk to me, and by the end of summer I was the most popular girl at camp. (Chbosky, 2017, p. 00:59:00).

Again, the way in which Miranda pretends to be Via and puts on a show puts her in the centre of attention. Whereas Via likes meeting new people because they do not know Auggie is her brother, Miranda demonstrates the exact opposite: she lies to people that do not know her and uses Auggie to gain popularity. In a way, this, too, is a schema deviation. The reader has learnt that Via struggles with her popularity due to being Auggie's sister. It may thus be confusing Miranda would pretend to be Auggie's sister to achieve that very thing. This situation is defamiliarising as it provides two means to achieve the same goal. I expect the potential cognitive effects from the novel to be similar to those of the film.

3.3.3 Identification through language

Out of all the narrating characters, Miranda's chapter – and thus speaking time – is the shortest. It counts 12 pages. In comparison, Via narrates 36 pages, Jack 50, Summer 15 and Justin 19. In the film, her narrating time is the shortest, too. The point at which the time of narration by one specific character ends is harder to pinpoint in the film because it is not specified when Auggie becomes the focalising character again. The film as well as the book switch to focusing on Auggie, which in the book is indicated by an introductory page. In the film, the scenes flow back into paying attention to Auggie as their main character. In Miranda's case, this happens after around five minutes. The difference with characters such as Summer or Justin, who have an only slightly higher of pages to narrate, is that Miranda is hardly present in the chapters narrated by the other characters, whereas Summer or Justin make their appearances in other narrators' chapters as well. In both modes of engagement, there is simply little exposure and time for the implied reader and watcher to build a significant sense of orientation towards Miranda. In her narration, in both the book and through voice-over in the film, her voice and register are colloquial but more formal than the other narrating characters. She uses no slang or abbreviations and all sentences are grammatically correct. According to Burroway, this more formal language creates distance (2015, p. 60). The lack of particular register or use of stylistic devices makes identification with Miranda based on linguistics less likely than with the other narrators. This is the case in both film and book, so there is no significant difference in likelihood of identification.

I argue that Miranda's character contains little to provoke a strong sense of emotional connection, but that the defamiliarisation in Miranda's scenes is quite challenging. Still, the sharp contrast between her claiming to be Auggie's sister to gain popularity and Via's struggle with this very issue is dealt with in similar ways in both modes of engagement. I thus expect no significant difference between the potential cognitive effect of the novel versus the film in this regard.

3.4 Summer

3.4.1 Exterior features

Summer is a girl of Auggie's age, and one of his closest friends. She lives with her mother, because her father was a platoon sergeant who died a few years earlier. This does not come forward in the film. Summer is a popular girl, although she is not interested in popularity. When Savannah, allegedly one of the most popular girls in their year, invites Summer to her birthday party, Summer is really happy. However, she leaves this party when Savannah makes a few mean remarks about Auggie and wants to discuss Summer's friendship with him, calling him Summer's "boyfriend" and "the Zombie kid" (Palacio, 2014, p. 122). Savannah hints to her that she thinks Summer should reconsider being Auggie's friend:

'So you have to choose who you want to hang out with,' Savannah said. She was talking to me like a big sister would talk to a little sister. 'Everyone likes you, Summer. Everyone thinks you're really nice and that you're really, really pretty. You could totally be part of our group if you wanted to, and believe me, there are a lot of girls in our grade who would love that. (2014, p. 123)

As I will elaborate on in the next section, the pretty Summer is criticised by Savannah for befriending someone outside of their in-group, which seems to be based on appearances. Still, Summer chooses Auggie over the girls in her class. She is a character who chooses kindness over popularity and does not let the crowd of peers influence her decisions. The scene above does not occur in the film, but a sense of this characterisation is still present in the film. When the group of girls she is sitting with are mean about Auggie, she leaves their table and sits with him. Summer may especially spark feelings of connection in an implied reader/watcher who is biracial, finds authenticity more important than popularity and, in case of the book, is raised by a single parent after losing one.

3.4.2. Out-group positioning and self-monitoring

In terms of intergroup contact, Summer is the one narrating character who had no connection with Auggie at all before befriending him. Jack was asked to by Mr Tushman, Via is his sister and Miranda and Justin met Auggie through her. Summer, however, chose to sit with Auggie during lunchtime for no other reason than wanting to herself. In the book, she does this on the first day of school. In the film, she does

this after Jack and Auggie stop sitting with each other. In the book, Summer states the following on this matter:

Who knew that sitting with August Pullman at lunch would be such a big deal? People acted like it was the strangest thing in the world. It's weird how weird kids can be. I sat with him that first day because I felt sorry for him. That's all. Here he was, this strange-looking kid in a brand-new school. No one was talking to him. (Palacio, 2014, p. 119)

The next chapter, she says:

I've been sitting with him for two weeks now, and let's just say that he's not the neatest eater in the world. But other than that, he's pretty nice. I should also say that I don't feel sorry for him anymore. That might have been what made me sit down with him the first time, but it's not why I keep sitting down with him. I keep sitting down with him because he's fun. (2014, p. 120).

Thus, Summer's view on Auggie changes. Whereas her initial reason to be friendly to him stemmed from pity based on his appearance and loneliness, she later realises it is his personality that makes her want to continue the friendship. The fact that she first sat down with Auggie due to feeling sorry for him may be seen as derogative and impersonal. However, Summer later explicitly mentions that there is no need to feel sorry for Auggie. This emphasises Auggie's personality over his appearance. This is powerful, because it is his appearance that makes him an out-group member. The development of Summer's out-group positioning is even more significant due to the fact that it is brought forward in a moment of self-reflection. Summer looks back on her own initial motives, and reassess them. As discussed, this is highly interior and therefore also relevant to her character's level of engagement, on top of positive out-group positioning.

In the film, the intergroup contact between Auggie and Summer is less complex, since it does not include a development. In the movie, when Auggie asks her why she keeps sitting down with him, she replies: "Because I want some nice friends for a change" (Chbosky, 2017, 00:52:23), referring to the bullying girls she sat with previously. Summer has observed the friendship between Jack and Auggie, which in the film develops before her own friendship with Auggie does. She bases her idea that Auggie might be a good friend on what she has already seen through another non-affected in-group character, instead of spontaneously approaching Auggie herself as she does in the book. In the film, she herself is affected by extended contact. Although her out-group positioning does not include self-monitoring or an intricate progression, it is based on her judgement of Auggie's character, rather than his appearance. This is what is most important to her positioning Auggie as an in-group member. Therefore, I argue that there is no significant difference between the book and film's potential cognitive effect through Summer's out-group attitude.

3.4.3. Identification through language, self-monitoring and filmic alternatives

As touched upon in the previous section, Summer engages in self-monitoring more in the book than in the film. Since she is not a focalising character in the film, her interior motives are almost entirely absent, except for explicit statements made in dialogue. Summer's actions are more likely to be understood and thus copied by a reader who knows her interior motives and arch. The more one knows of a character's interiority, the more one is likely to identify with the character, and in turn, the more one is likely to copy their view on the world and other people. A character that is a first-person narrator provides more interiority than any other. In the book, Summer provides the reader with her honest thoughts through first-person narration, constructing a background in colloquial, informal language. The implied reader is inside Summer's head, and observes her experiences from little distance. Again, her register demonstrates a typically middle-school diction that is "recognisably idiomatic" (Tannen, 1987, p. 78), and in addition is very personal. She continuously calls her parents 'Mommy' and 'Daddy,' even when she speaks about them without addressing them. This informal language reduces distance and allows identification (Burroway, 2015, p. 60). Her status as a first-person narrator, who engages in self-monitoring and uses colloquial language makes her an identifiable character whose view of the world may be copied by the implied reader.

In the film, Summer is not a focalising character. This rids her of many of the qualities that make her a round character. She has no voice-over lines and nothing about her background is discussed. There is one close-up of her face breaking into a smile when she watches Jack and Auggie having fun at their lunch table (Chbosky, 2017, 00:36:30). This close-up is a filmic device that suggests an interior process where she'd like to have such a friendship, which is confirmed by her stating that she sits with Auggie because she wants a nice friend. However, the presence of her interiority is very meagre compared to the novel, where she has a much more prominent role as narrator/focalising character. This, in general, is a big difference in terms of interiority and opportunity for identification. Therefore, I argue that there is a large difference between the book and the film with regard to the possible cognitive effect in connection with Summer's character.

3.5. Justin

3.5.1. Exterior features

Justin is Via's boyfriend. In the book, Miranda describes him as a "skinny cutish dude with thick glasses and longish hair who [carries] a violin everywhere" (Palacio, 2014, p. 239). He lives in Brooklyn. In the film, he also has a fiddle in a case with him frequently and also wears glasses, but wears a short afro hairstyle. He joins the theatre elective. He meets Via there, and they start dating after a while. In the book, Justin states that he has tics. He does not specify what his tics are. In the film, Justin does not have tics.

Moreover, in the book Justin is described as having a poor relation with his parents, who are divorced and don't give him a lot of attention. This is not mentioned in the film. As with Miranda, an implied reader who relates to his issues in relation to divorce, and additionally with tics, may identify with Justin. Different from Miranda's character, however, this is only true for the novel, since the film discusses Justin's background to a much littler extent.

3.5.2. Out-group positioning

As for Justin's intergroup contact, he admits that he is shocked the first time he meets Auggie in the book. In the film, the camera angle stays quite distant, which makes it hard to perform empathy or ToM. He does look at Via and smiles at Auggie, saying: "Hey dude!" (Chbosky, 2017, 00:55:57). His friendliness implies a positive out-group attitude towards Auggie. I argue that the narrative here provides an example of a positive out-group attitude caused by extended contact through Via. In the book, Justin admits he was initially shocked but he acts normal and eventually befriends Auggie because he is his girlfriend's little brother. In the film, this is emphasized by him looking at Via before greeting Auggie. In this film, this Justin's only scene together with Auggie. In the book, they spend a lot more time together. He mentions how much love there is in the Pullman family, concluding:

the universe was not nice to Auggie pullman.

[...] so doesn't that make the universe a giant lottery, then? you purchase a ticket when you're born. and it's all just random whether you get a good ticket or a bad ticket. it's all just luck.

my head swirls on this, but then softer thoughts soothe, like a flatted third on a major chord. no, no, it's not all random, if it really was all random, the universe would abandon us completely. and the universe doesn't. it takes care of its most fragile creations in ways we can't see. like with parents who adore you blindly. and a big sister who feels guilty for being human over you. and a little gravelly-voiced kid whose friends have left him over you. and even a pink-haired girl who carries your picture in her wallet. maybe it's a lottery, but the universe makes it all even out in the end. the universe takes care of all its birds. (Palacio, 2014, p. 204)

Making use of many defamiliarising metaphors (i.e. the birds) and implicit references to the other characters in the book (i.e. Mr and Mrs Pullman, Via and Miranda), Justin challenges the implied reader to realise Auggie's appearance is one of his burdens but that in other ways Auggie is more privileged than he is himself. Justin summarises how Auggie is very much loved by the people who know him well, which is

an extra impetus for the readers to gain positive attitudes towards Auggie through extended contact and social cognitive theory.

3.5.3. Identification through language

In the book, Justin's narrative mainly deals with Via and Auggie, but he also shares a scene with just Jack through which we learn more about his own personality. In the film, this is not the case. Like Summer, Justin is not a focalising character in the movie. He is only present in interaction with Via. Close-ups are used to emphasise his fascination with her, but no interior information on him is explicitly granted. As narration is a major indicator for interior access, there is a large difference between the novel and the film considering potential identification with Justin and, consequently, potential cognitive effects through this character. What stands out most about the features of the novel that do facilitate possible identification is the defamiliarisation through his language: he uses no capital letters whatsoever. This is a grammatical deviation from schemas of the usual lay-out of books. I argue that his lack of correct punctuation increases the informality of his recognisable linguistic pattern, as correct capitalisation and punctuation are valued in formal text. This informality reduces distance and increases the possibility for identification (Burroway, 2015, p. 60). The novel is able to reveal such information through narration due to its mode of engagement. As stated, the film makes use of some close-ups, but is otherwise limited in features both defamiliarising as interior.

I argue that especially Justin's exterior features are more specific and potentially recognisable for identification, aided by the novel's first person narration and some defamiliarising features such as language. In the film, Justin is a very flat character, who is unlikely to affect out-group attitudes as features of identification are scarce.

3.6 Exterior features: conclusion

I make a final comparison on how the book and film deal with the diversity of the narrators in different ways. All characters may be identifiable for the general in-group implied reader: school-going (early) teenagers, either male or female. However, specific portrayals of members of diverse groups may provoke an even stronger sense of identification. While discussing the implied reader/watcher, I stated that the film represents a less diverse abundance of sub-groups than the book. The main characters are played by actors with the same Caucasian background and abandons the Polish/Russian-Brazilian heritage of Auggie and Via, and rids the two characters that are played by actors of colour of their narrating role and character background, thus limiting the potential for a strong sense of identification based on ethnicity radically.

Additionally, children who come from less wealthy families may identify more actively with Jack. This is true for both the film and the book, since both media versions use this characterisation. Children with divorced parents may identify more readily with Miranda and Justin in the book, and only Miranda in the film. Readers who have tics may feel represented by Justin, whereas this representation is omitted in the film. The lesser presence of diversity in the film as compared to the book does not deny identification altogether, but it is necessary to mention since the presence of these features in the book may lead to a stronger sense of identification and appeal to a broader audience. Both these consequences may lead to a larger effect on out-group attitudes in the book.

4. Negative non-affected in-group: Julian and his parents, Mr and Mrs Albans

According to social cognitive theory, disidentification with characters with negative attitudes towards the out-group is necessary for positive effects to occur. This part of the analysis will thus focus on the identifiability of the characters of *Wonder* that are Auggie's opponents: main bully Julian and his parents.

4.1 Julian

4.1.1. Exterior features and character role

I combine these two features due to the little information on Julian's background. Moreover, since Julian is not a narrator, all information that shapes his description and establishes his character role come from other characters – thus being exterior.

Julian is a boy in the same class as Auggie and Jack. When introducing himself, he states: “[My] name is Julian. And the number one thing I'd like to tell everyone about myself is that... I just got Battleground Mystic for my Wii and it's totally awesome. And the number two thing is that we got a Ping-Pong table this summer” (Palacio, 2014, p. 42; Chbosky, 2017, 00:16:54). This is the most detailed description both the reader and watcher receive about Julian's self-image. He quite clearly values materialistic objects. These games may be appealing to the implied reader and watcher. However, the narrators discourage orientation towards Julian. An example is how Auggie and his mother describe Julian as two-faced: “the kind of kid who's one way in front of grown-ups and another way in front of kids” (Palacio, 2014, p. 34; Chbosky, 2017, 00:09:52). Both Auggie and his mother use this as an argument for not liking Julian. He is explicitly described as “not nice” (Palacio, 2014, p. 34; Chbosky, 2017, 00:09:57). Mrs Pullman even states “I hate those [kids who act one way ... in front of kids]” (Palacio, 2014, p. 34; Chbosky, 2017, 00:09:57). Moreover, his role within intergroup contact with Auggie is villainous: he bullies Auggie and even starts to bully Jack for befriending Auggie. For instance, Julian leaves Auggie abusive notes and a class photo which Auggie is photoshopped out of. In the film, on the back of this photo Julian wrote “do everyone a favour and die” (Chbosky, 2017, 01:23:12). He asks Jack why he befriended “that

freak” (Palacio, 2014, p. 154; Chbosky, 2017, 01:37:01), after which Julian and Jack get into a fight. His overall character role is very flat and negative towards Auggie.

4.1.2. Identification: narration

The most important fact that makes identification with Julian far less likely than with any of the positive in-group characters, is that he does not narrate any part of the film or book. In the book, he is a flat character that is only characterised through dialogue. His verbalisations are either abusive towards Auggie or superficial, such as in the quote above. All he can say about himself is which toys he owns. It is clear that he values possessions. This might be familiar to the teenage implied reader, but his characterisation remains flat. He does not go through a character arch or any sort of change.

In the film, Julian does change slightly. His interiority is somewhat focused on more. The film contains a scene in which Mr Tushman calls him out for bullying Auggie. This scene is completely absent in the novel. The close-ups of Julian’s facial expressions show that he is upset. When he lingers in the office after his parents, who we learn are quite strict, have already walked out, this is confirmed. With his face in close-up he says in a slow and serious manner: “Mr Tushman, I’m really sorry” (Chbosky, 2017, 01:25:12). Mr Tushman confirms: “I know” (2017, 01:25:13). Julian’s interiority is visible here, but it is important to realise that this happens as he stops having a negative attitude towards Auggie. As the heightened presence of interiority increases his identifiability, he starts to regret his actions and his negative out-group attitude retreats. Thus the possibility for identification is equalled out by his change in attitude. Both disidentification with his character in both media versions, and later identification with him in the film, encourage positive out-group attitudes.

4.2. Julian’s parents

4.2.1. Exterior features, attitudes and character roles

Similar to the section on Julian, I combine these features due to the limited and intertwined information on exteriority, attitudes and character roles. First of all, Mr and Mrs Albans are married and parents of one son. They are wealthy and (desire to be) influential in the school board. In the film, Mrs Albans reminds Mr Tushman of “all the money [they]’ve put into the school,” and the fact that they have “a lot of friends in the school board” (Chbosky, 2017, 01:20:57). In the novel, Mrs Albans similarly emphasises her position within the school board (Palacio, 2014, p. 162). Julian’s parents have a very negative out-group attitude. They are equally negative towards Auggie both in the book and in the film. In the book, Mrs Albans sends various e-mails to Mr Tushman about how she criticises his decision to accept Auggie into Beecher Prep. In the film, Mr and Mrs Albans are called to Mr Tushman’s office after the fight between Julian and Jack. The statements that Mr and Mrs Albans make during this conversation are in line with the e-mails in the book. Examples of these similar, negative statements are: “We think the transition to

middle school is hard enough without having to place greater burdens or hardships on these young, impressionable minds,” (Palacio, 2014, p. 162) by which she means being in a class with Auggie, and: “The children are too young to deal with this kind of thing. Julian has nightmares because of that kid. We had to take him to a child’s psychologist” (Chbosky, 2017, 01:24:00). She argues that intergroup contact with Auggie would bother the children. The difference between these two scenes is that in the film, Mr and Mrs Albans are physically present in the scene, whereas in the book they are not: the reader is only provided with Mrs Albans’ e-mails. Besides their opposing role, Mr and Mrs Albans are significantly flat characters.

1.2.3. Identification

First of all, identification with Julian’s parents for the implied reader or implied watcher is unlikely due to their age and occupation. The school-going implied reader/watcher will presumably judge Mr and Mrs Albans as unlike them, not feel a connection with them and not see them as individuals towards whom to aim their orientation. This goes for the book as well as for the film. Disidentification with Mr and Mrs Albans is therefore probable.

The fact that Mr and Mrs Albans appear in the film makes identification with them more likely than in the book, but only slightly. The fact that the watcher sees their appearance, facial expressions and hears their opinions directly instead of through the distance of an e-mail may create a closer connection. However, in both media, they are clearly portrayed as the opposing ‘bad guys,’ since they oppose the narrators. Other than what Mrs Albans tells Mr Tushman (see quote above), no interiority or defamiliarising features are provided in either medium. Especially the fact that, as opposed to the characters with a positive out-group attitude, they do not narrate any part of the book or scene of the film, identification with them is far less likely than with the positive narrating characters. This discouragement of identification aids the process of improving positive out-group attitudes, according to the social cognitive theory.

2. Final passage: Award Ceremony

Finally, one of the last chapters in the book and the very last scene of the film requires attention due to its overarching sense of conclusion and emphasis of acceptance of Auggie by almost all characters. Narrated from Auggie’s perspective, it deals with the end-of-year award ceremony, at which Auggie wins the Henry Ward Beecher medal. Mr Tushman describes what makes a student deserving of this medal:

‘I came upon a passage that [Beecher] wrote that seemed particularly consistent with the themes [...] I’ve been ruminating upon all year long. Not just the nature of kindness, but

the nature of *one's* kindness. The power of *one's* friendship. The test of *one's* character. The strength of *one's* courage...'

[...] These are the qualities that define us as human beings, and propel us, on occasion, to greatness. And this is what the Henry Ward Beecher medal is about: recognizing greatness.

[...] 'Greatness,' wrote Beecher, 'lies not in being strong, but in the right using of strength. . . . He is the greatest whose strength carries up the most hearts [...] by the attraction of his own.'

[...] 'So will August Pullman please come up here to receive this award?' (Palacio, 2014, p. 304)

Mr Tushman explains Beecher's ideas behind the prize, but does not specify why Auggie wins it. This is a gap which the implied reader/watcher is able to fill in based on the knowledge they gained throughout the narrative. They thus need to use what they learnt in a process of sensemaking. They need to think of how Auggie has been kind to his classmates despite being treated poorly; about how Auggie's friends faced being criticised themselves for spending time with him, but were willing to deal with that for the sake of their strong connection with Auggie; about how Auggie's character entails much more than his out-group-positioning appearance; and about how Auggie has to stand up for himself, and even to himself, to stay positive. The implied reader may recall any of the striking instances from the plot in interpreting this passage, which is cognitively engaging as well as personally involving.

In the film, Mr Tushman makes a similar speech, that additionally focusses on the phrase "who carries up the most hearts" (Chbosky, 2017, 01:37:01). The implies watcher is also required to make meaning of this metaphor themselves. I argue that in the film, it is less challenging to make a connection between Auggie, the narrative, and the prize. As Mr Tushman speaks about 'carrying up the most hearts,' there are imaginative visions, or flashbacks, of Jack standing up for Auggie by punching Julian; of Summer smiling and sitting down at Auggie's lunch table; and Amos (a former bully) smiling and fist bumping Auggie (Chbosky, 2017, 01:37:30), thus focussing on how Auggie taught his classmates about his own character, and by extension, out-group attitudes. These images aid the watcher in making sense of whom Auggie has inspired to be more kind, as well as in which ways.

Auggie continues:

People started applauding before Mr. Tushman's words actually registered in my brain. I heard Maya, who was next to me, give a little scream when she heard my name, and Miles, who was on the other side of me, patted my back. 'Stand up, get up!' said kids all around me, and I felt lots of hands pushing me upward out of my seat, guiding me to the edge of the row, patting my back, high-fiving me. (Palacio, 2014, p. 305)

This is a great development, with in particular the focus on how everybody touches Auggie, considering children like Miles and Maya used to play a game called 'the Plague,' in which touching Auggie made one 'contagious.' This game was an influential factor of Auggie's unhappiness before. Now, not only is he publicly awarded a prize, but his classmates have also officially let go of this hurtful habit. Auggie continues:

I wasn't even sure why I was getting this medal, really.

No, that's not true. I knew why.

It's like people you see sometimes, and you can't imagine what it would be like to be that person, whether it's somebody in a wheelchair or somebody who can't talk. Only, I know that I'm that person to other people, maybe to every single person in that whole auditorium.

To me though, I'm just me. An ordinary kid.

But hey, if they want to give me a medal for being me, that's okay. I'll take it. I didn't destroy a Death Star or anything like that, but I did just get through the fifth grade. And that's not easy, even if you're not me. (Palacio, 2014, p. 306)

I couldn't really understand why I was getting a medal. It's not like I blew up the Death Star. All I did was get through fifth grade just like everyone else did. Then again, that may be the point. Maybe the truth is, I'm really not so ordinary. Maybe if you knew what other people are thinking, we'd know that no one's ordinary. And we all deserve a standing ovation at least once in our lives. My friends do. My teachers do. My sister does for always being there for me. My dad does for always making us laugh. My mom does the most, for never giving up, on anything, especially me. It's like that last precept Mr Brown gave us. Be kind, for everyone is fighting a hard battle. And if you really wanna see what people are? All you gotta do, is look. (Chbosky, 2017, 01:38:27)

In both of these ending monologues, Auggie reflects on why he himself thinks he won the prize. In both versions, he discusses the concept of ordinariness. In the book, he emphasises how he feels like he is ordinary, and how on the inside, he feels non-affected too. That, although he knows it is not truly the case, in his own mind he is just as in-group as any of the other characters I have discussed. He challenges the reader to see that, from his perspective, they share out-group positionings in other matters of diversity. Meanwhile he also acknowledges his own out-group position while taking the in-group perspective of the implied reader himself, when he refers to people with other disabilities or anomalies. This highly corresponds with what Kidd and Castano argue about multiple perspectives and how they trigger ToM, which results in defamiliarisation and cognitive effect.

Whereas in the book, Auggie states that he thinks he is ordinary but actually acknowledges his own out-group position, he does the opposite in the film. He states: 'maybe the truth is, I'm really not so ordinary,' but then argues that *nobody* is ordinary, thus establishing an overarching, all-including in-group. He underlines that fifth grade may be hard for anybody, which builds a bridge between him and the implied watcher. He mentions all the people important to him, and the ways in which they are special or stand out. He emphasises shared experiences and creating of connections may establish identification, similar to the scene in which Via confronts Auggie with the hardships of school.

I argue that the book-version of this ending is more nuanced and is likely to enhance more positive cognitive effect on out-group attitudes. The fact that Auggie does truly acknowledge and touch upon his out-group position and the way in which other may see him, may be more graspable for the implied reader than the film's final 'grand speech'. Although the message that everybody is equally unordinary is a positive one, it contradicts the narrative of *Wonder*, which entirely revolves around Auggie's out-group position. Touching upon this position, and taking the in-groups perspective by explaining that he understands what it is like to wonder what 'it would be like to be *that* person,' is a powerful moment in which Auggie himself aids the implied reader by stepping in *their* shoes. I therefore conclude, that the book may have a greater, more nuanced cognitive effect than the film.

All in all, the general thread throughout this analysis points towards the hypothesis that the book contains more complex, well-developed and broader features that may positively influence the out-group attitudes of its implied readers. Generally speaking, out-group positioning showed an arch more often in the book; identification based on interiority is more likely to have an impact through the first-person narrators of the book; and although defamiliarization was often similar, the book uses stylistic devices, similes and metaphors in particular, more frequently and extensively. I expect the film to have a positive effect as well, but the influence to be less substantial or refined.

Chapter 5 - Results

In this chapter, I will present the findings of the interventional book- and filmtalks, questionnaires and written responses. I will elaborate on the relation between these findings and my hypotheses, as well as what may have caused any differences between the two, in the discussion.

1. Questionnaires: Before¹⁶

Before the interventional book- and filmtalks, all participants filled out questionnaires that provide information on the level of their development of the essential social skills or empathy, Theory of Mind and identification. The questionnaires serve an image of the participants' initial self-reported out-group attitudes towards (cranio)facial anomalies as well. The questionnaires were filled out again a few days after the intervention. I will discuss the differences between the two at the end of this chapter.

1.1 (Cranio)facial anomalies (FA)

All five participants gave positive responses to all statements concerning out-group attitudes towards (cranio)facial anomalies (the first four FA statements). 14 out of these 20¹⁷ statements were assessed very positively, the remaining six moderately positively. Contrary to the psychological studies on social stigmatisation of facially affected persons, this implied that the participants already had positive out-group attitudes before the booktalk. This may imply that positivity found in the participants' out-group attitudes is not the effect of the booktalks. However, the participants were not yet explicitly introduced to what a 'facial anomaly' entails and, I argue, were in a context in which they were likely to give socially desirable answers. The last statement in the category of (cranio)facial anomalies, which dealt with identification, "I can imagine what it is like to have a facial anomaly,¹⁸ was also assessed moderately positively by all participants, meaning they could imagine this.

Similarly to the book group, all six participants of the film group assessed the first four FA statements positively. This implies a positive initial out-group attitude. What I stated on this positivity in the book group also goes for this group. There was a difference in the assessment of the last FA statement concerning identification with the out-group. Half of the participants were moderately negative and the other half moderately positive. This implies that half this group may have difficulty identifying with Auggie.

16 The questionnaire can be found from page 31 onwards.

17 By 20, I here mean a total of five (participants) times four (statements).

18 "Ik kan me voorstellen hoe het is om een gezichtsafwijking te hebben."

The book group thus has somewhat of a head start in possible identification with Auggie, which may result in greater cognitive effect than the film group.

1.2 Empathic concern

Four out of five book-group participants scored positively on all the statements of the empathic concern scale. One participant scored predominantly negatively on the EC statements. This means that in general, cognitive effect through empathy may occur.

All six film-group participants scored predominantly positively on the empathic concern scale. Two of these participants assessed all EC statements positively. Thus, the individual participants of the book group that did score positively seem to be more empathic, whereas in the film-group all participants are moderately empathic. Both groups may gain cognitive effect through empathy.

1.3 Identification

Four out of five book-group participants scored positively on the identification scale. Three out of these four participants answered all ID statements positively. One participant scored predominantly negatively on the ID statements. In general, cognitive effect through identification may occur.

Four of six film-group participants scored predominantly positively on the identification scale. Two of these participants answered all ID statements positively. Again, cognitive effect through identification may occur.

There is only a slight difference between the extent to which the two groups rate their ability to engage in identification. As with empathy, the film group as a whole may gain more effect whereas the book group's individuals may show a stronger sense of identification. Still, both groups have the necessary skill, which is why I do not expect that this would be the cause of any differences in the results.

1.4 Theory of Mind

Three out of five book-group participants scored positively on the Theory of Mind scale. Two out of these three participants assessed all ToM statements positively. Two participants scored predominantly negatively on the ToM statements. For the majority of the group, cognitive effect through ToM may occur. This might be more difficult for the two other book-group participants.

Three out of six film-group participants scored predominantly positively on the Theory of Mind scale. Two of these participants assessed all ToM statements positively. The negative assessments were all moderately negative. Cognitive effect through Theory of Mind may thus occur in half of the film-group participants.

There is only a slight difference between the two groups' ability to perform Theory of Mind. The book group might be somewhat stronger in this regard, but I do not expect this to cause significant inequalities in the results.

1.5 Conclusion questionnaires: before

As for (cranio)facial anomalies, the book group may have somewhat of an advantage in terms of cognitive effect through identification with Aggie, which may affect the results. However, the other essential social skills are quite similar, which suggests that both groups are relatively equal and any relevant results of this explorative study can be considered to be caused by the interventions.

2. Book- and filmtalks

I tested the participants' understanding of the defamiliarising devices, identification, and out-group attitudes. I will discuss the various statements that were made during the interventional book- and filmtalks per medium, then compare them.

2.1 Booktalks

2.1.1 Identification

In accordance with Chambers' "Tell me" approach, the first questions I asked the five participants in the book-group were what they liked or disliked about the story, what stood out to them or what puzzled them. One girl mentioned she normally did not like to read, but that she would in fact read *Wonder* because she found it very interesting. I asked her what made it interesting to her, to which she replied that it was very recognisable. She referred to the passage in which Via tells Auggie that everyone has bad days and that he needs to learn to cope with that. I classify this statement as 'identification' because it is based on a shared feeling that is familiar and creates a connection. I find this of great importance because she stated this unprompted and used hand gestures and high tempo, which implies that this statement is genuine.

Another instance of identification presented itself when I asked the group what they thought would happen if Auggie were in their class. One girl stated she thought he would not be bullied as badly as in the book, but that classmates would be likely to stare at him. I asked her if she thought this was a bad thing, to which she answered: "I think it's different, maybe. I mean sometimes I am at places where there are a lot of white people, because I am dark-skinned and wear a hijab, there are people who stare at me then, which bothers me sometimes but most of the time it doesn't because I don't care – maybe it's

the same with Auggie.”¹⁹ The girl imagined how the staring would make Auggie feel by making a connection between herself and Auggie through empathy. This personal story was told spontaneously, by which I mean I did not ask this girl about herself or her own connection to Auggie, but she actively performed cognitively. Therefore I attach value to this statement and interpret it as genuine and important to the discussion of identification.

Another subject that the participants seemed to connect to identification or which had a connection to themselves or something they could picture clearly was the general or universal phenomenon of ‘otherness.’ They brought this up repeatedly. I asked the participants if they could imagine having a facial anomaly like Auggie’s. Most participants answered ‘no.’ Two girls said maybe they could, for which they gave the following explanation: “I think the first couple of days at school would be hard, because, of course, you’re different, but if you’re in a class that handles it in a normal way you are actually going to accept it.”²⁰ The other girl said: “Yes, I also think it can be hard, but if people- first you think that people won’t accept you because you’re different, but as soon as they do accept you it’s a very nice feeling.”²¹ They empathised with Auggie as to imagine how he would feel, and partly oriented themselves towards him in thinking of in what way they would recognise such feelings.

I also explicitly asked them which of the narrators they identified with most. Two girls said they identified with Summer the most. One girl said Summer, because she would like to sit with Auggie, if he turns out to be really nice, continue to be friends with him, like Summer.²² Two girls stated they identified with Jack. The first one said so “because he has huge respect for August and then it doesn’t matter what people look like, you know.”²³ None of the participants identified with Via, Miranda or Justin. I did not question them further on these characters, since they did not bring them up themselves and I was interested in what they would state freely. It was clear from their somewhat slow pace and frequent use of hesitation markers like “uh” that they only thought about identification prompted by my question. This means their statements may still be genuine and important to my discussion, but less valuable than the spontaneous personal connections. In general, they all agreed that hearing the story from different perspectives helped them have a broader understanding of the story.

¹⁹ “Ik denk dat dat verschillend is misschien. Ik bedoel soms ben ik ook op plekken waar heel veel witte mensen zijn, omdat ik dan donker ben en een hoofddoek draag dat er ook veel andere mensen naar me kijken en soms vind ik dat vervelend maar meestal niet want het doet mij weinig dus misschien is dat ook bij Auggie, of August.”

²⁰ “Ik denk de eerst dagen van school best wel lastig omdat je natuurlijk wel anders bent maar als je gewoon een klas hebt die daar gewoon mee om kan gaan dat je het daarna wel gewoon accepteert eigenlijk.”

²¹ “Ja het kan inderdaad wel lastig zijn, maar als mensen- eerst ga je denken dat mensen je niet zouden accepteren zeg maar omdat je anders bent, maar als dat eenmaal wel zo is dan voel je je wel fijn.”

²² “Ik denk Summer omdat ik zou ook bij hem zitten [...] als hij heel aardig blijkt te zijn zou ik wel gewoon verder met hem om willen gaan.”

²³ “Ik denk Jack want hij was zeg maar hij had wel zeg maar enorm respect voor August en dan maakt het ook niet uit hoe mensen er uitzien als ze maar aardig zijn weet je, dan maakt het niet zoveel uit.”

I also inquired into their (dis)identification with Julian. One girl stated to be irritated by Julian, “I thought he was very annoying,”²⁴ and all the other participants immediately agreed with raised voices. They worded these opinions in a high volume and fast tempo, emphasising the intensity of their negative opinion on Julian.

They were much less responsive when I asked them about Julian’s parents. When nudged, they mainly stated they just did not understand why Julian’s mother would think that Auggie needs to go to a special school. “He is just a boy and he is not disabled, so he should not have to go to a special school because there would not be a special school for him.”²⁵ They repeated what Mr Tushman said in the scene that I read out to them, but were less comfortable or able to speculate on Mr and Mrs Albans’ thoughts and feelings than those of Julian or other peers. This demonstrates disidentification with Mr and Mrs Albans.

2.1.2 Defamiliarisation

I asked the participants if they understood why Auggie won the Henry Ward Beecher medal. The answer partially corresponded to the way I think the implied reader is expected to fill in this gap. By ‘gap,’ I mostly mean the metaphor of ‘carrying up the most hearts.’ One girl answered: “Because, it didn’t matter to him what people thought of him, which can inspire other people to do the same.”²⁶ She spoke slowly and in a soft voice, which suggested that she was not sure how to phrase what she meant. The other girls then made very similar statements by repeating what she said. I argue that the girls meant that Auggie inspired his classmates to stand up for both Auggie and themselves and to be true to themselves. I deem this reasoning to agree with Mr Tushman’s speech.

I also invited them to engage in ToM by asking, before reading this passage out loud to them, how they thought Auggie would respond to winning this prize. Three participants reacted to this gap-filling issue. They all agreed that he would feel more confident after winning the prize, and they thought he lacked confidence before. Moreover, they expected him to be surprised that he won the prize due to this lack of confidence. They also expected the atmosphere in the school to be more positive after him winning the prize, and that there would generally be more respect for him.²⁷ I deem this to be correspond with Auggie’s reaction in the book. Auggie is indeed surprised and initially asks himself why he won the prize. He mentions that he thinks that “everyone should get a standing ovation at least once in their

24 “Ik vond hem erg vervelend.”

25 “Omdat hij is ook gewoon een jongen en hij heeft inderdaad geen beperking dus dan zou hij ook niet naar een speciale school hoeven want dan zou er ook geen speciale school voor hem zijn.”

26 “Omdat zeg maar het maakt hem niet uit wat mensen van hem vonden, wat dat kan andere mensen ook weer raken om, ja, dat zelf ook te hebben ofzo?”

27 “Ik denk ook wel dat de sfeer op de school, ook wel meer respect voor hem wordt getoond ook omdat hij dan wel die prijs heeft gewonnen.”

lives,” (Palacio, 2014, p. 313) which arguably connects with a ‘confidence-boost’ like the girls mention. Moreover, after the ceremony, all of Auggie’s classmates (bar Julian) want a picture with him, which does demonstrate respect and good atmosphere. I thus argue that they successfully engaged with the defamiliarizing metaphors in Mr Tushman’s speech.

Another feature I tested was the defamiliarising typographic device of Justin not using any capital letters. Only one out of the five participants noticed this. After this one girl had pointed it out the others did notice it, too, but admitted they had not spotted it before. The number of participants who noticed this is thus small. Still, I overall argue that the participants successfully engaged with defamiliarizing metaphors and speculation using social skills.

2.1.3 Out-group attitudes

From the start of the booktalks, all participants repeatedly stated that they thought Auggie was “just a normal boy,”²⁸ who is in no way disabled, which attests to positive out-group attitudes. The speculation that he would not be bullied as badly in their class as in the book also implies positive out-group attitudes, since they imagine that Auggie would be accepted into the in-group to a greater extent than in the narrative. They also showed to judge his character on his personality rather than his out-group position, of which the girl who identified with Summer is an example again, since she states she would want to continue to be friends with Auggie only if he was nice. Moreover, all participants had annoyed or even angry reactions towards negative out-group behaviour by Julian. They also showed disidentification with his parents. They disassociated themselves with the characters opposing Auggie. They disapprove of negative out-group attitudes, which implies their own positive out-group attitudes.

2.2 Filmtalks

2.2.1 Julian: Both defamiliarisation and identification

Again, I initially asked the participants about their likes and dislikes. The first response was the question whether *Wonder* was on Netflix. One boy asked this loudly and enthusiastically. He explained: “It was really interesting, I’d like to watch the whole movie.”²⁹ I interpret his interest in the movie as a sign that he found the narrative engaging, which is may enhance potential effect. Upon asking the participants what it was that stood out to them, another boy responded: “That the bully eventually realised what he did, and that it actually made him feel really bad.”³⁰ I asked them why they thought Julian’s attitude changed, a gap they needed to fill in by tapping into cognitively demanding skills. One boy stated:

28 “Gewoon een normale jongen”

29 “Het was super interessant, wil hem wel afkijken.”

30 “Dat de pester uiteindelijk, hoe heet het, had gezien wat ie eigenlijk had gedaan en dat ie zich eigenlijk heel slecht voelde.”

“Because he saw what August had in front of him, like all the notes.”³¹ The other participants agreed. The fact that this moment of realisation stood out to them most, I interpret as a sign that this scene about bullying and the effect it might have left an impression on them. Later, I inquired more about whether they could understand where Julian’s behaviour originated from. Most participants said they could not understand why Julian would bully Auggie, distancing themselves from him. Then, one boy said, hesitantly but loudly: “I think his mother and father were quite strict. Maybe he had problems at home, which he is trying to lose by bullying others.”³² The boy showed the ability to apply ToM to make sense of a gap, making Julian a rounder character, thus increasing potential identification. After the boy said this, all other participants spontaneously agreed with this theory firmly. Thus, the participants used their social skills to speculate on Julian’s interiority, therefore heightening his identifiability. This is in line with what I stated on this scene in the analysis of the film: Julian’s character allows for identification only after he realises what he has done by bullying Auggie. This scene of redemption indeed triggered speculation and assessment of identifiability by the film-group participants.

2.2.2 Identification

One participant spontaneously addressed identification through shared experiences. She reacted to my question if they could rephrase why Auggie thinks he won the Henry Ward Beecher medal. She answered: “That he should not be angry, because everyone is fighting their own battle, with how they look, how they feel, what their grades are.”³³ She emphasised the fact that *everyone* struggles. For instance, she articulated firmly and included the subject of grades, whereas this was not mentioned in the movie, which shows she made a connection between Auggie’s views on middle school and her own. Other participants then agreed by nodding and uttering “yes,” both with this common school-related experience and the general phenomenon that “everyone is different.”³⁴

When I explicitly asked the participants which character they identified with most, one boy immediately said Summer. “Just because, you don’t give a shit about what everybody thinks of someone and you just think he is nice and I want to get to know him.”³⁵ He made a connection between himself and Summer based on how he thinks that Summer cares about what other people think – thus engaging in a chain of both empathy and ToM. Many of the other participants nodded their heads to this reply. One girl

31 “Dat ie een beetje inzag wat August voor zich had, met al die briefjes bijvoorbeeld.”

32 “Ik denk dat zijn moeder en vader waren een beetje streng. Misschien dat hij dan thuis problemen heeft en probeert kwijt te raken door andere mensen te pesten.”

33 “Dat hij niet boos moet zijn dat hij anders is omdat iedereen zijn eigen strijd voert, met hoe die er uitziet, hoe ie zich voelt, wat zijn cijfers zijn.”

34 “Iedereen is anders.”

35 “Gewoon omdat je gewoon schijt hebt aan wat iedereen van iemand denkt en gewoon denkt van jij denkt gewoon dat ie aardig is en ik wil hem wel leren kennen.”

agreed: “I also think Summer. I would not bully someone anyway and it doesn’t matter what you look like.”³⁶ Her orientation towards Summer is based more on observed behaviour. Another boy answered Jack: “I would feel sorry for someone if others would do something to him just because he looks different, because he can’t help it, right?”³⁷ This boy used empathy to imagine what feelings lay underneath Jack’s decisions to befriend Auggie. One girl said she thought she would have identified with Auggie before, but currently more with Summer. “I used to be bullied really badly because I was really short. I only had one friend in school, and her best friend would bully me when I was at home.”³⁸ She explained that she felt a connection to Auggie due to having been bullied, and orientated herself towards him for that reason. However, since she is not bullied anymore and has left that behind her, and also grew a little taller, she says she now feels closer to Summer. Since the connection between her and Auggie that she observed initially – of being different and of being bullied – shifted, her sense of connection shifted. In None of the participants identified with Via, Miranda or Justin. These characters all share that they are older than the participants, which I argue made them less identifiable.

I asked them if they could imagine what the situation would be if Auggie was their own classmate. One boy said resolutely: “I think the same. Yeah, he does look different and people always have something to say about that.”³⁹ I asked them what they would do in this situation, to which another boy answered: “I would help him and try to stand up for him.”⁴⁰ They did assume that Auggie would be bullied. I will discuss this in greater detail when I discuss the groups’ out-group attitudes.

When I asked them if they could imagine looking like Auggie, they all answered “no.” The girl who stated earlier she would have identified with Auggie when she was younger said “I could imagine standing in his shoes in terms of being bullied, but not of knowing what it would be like to look like him.”⁴¹ She shows the ability to empathise with Auggie and uses her own past experiences to do so, creating a personal connection. I argue this is in line with what Appleyard states on readers as thinkers and their ability to partly identify with a character (Appleyard, 1991, p. 102), meaning she has moved past immersive identification.

Furthermore, the participants distanced themselves from Julian. They speculated about where his actions originated from only after he dropped his negative behaviour, which made him more identifiable.

36 “Ik zou ook denk ik Summer. Ik zou sowieso niet echt iemand pesten en maakt niet echt uit hoe hij er uitziet.”

37 “Ik zou het wel zielig vinden als iemand iets bij hem zou doen alleen omdat ie er anders uitziet, hij kan daar toch zelf niets aan doen?”

38 “Vroeger werd ik heel erg gepest omdat ik heel erg klein was. Ik had maar één vriend op school en haar beste vriendinnen gingen mij pesten thuis.”

39 “Ik denk hetzelfde. Ja, hij ziet er toch anders uit en daar hebben mensen altijd wel iets over te zeggen.”

40 “Ik zou hem wel helpen en proberen voor hem op te komen.”

41 “Naja vooral een beetje in de schoenen staan van erg gepest worden maar niet echt van hoe het is om er zou uit te zien.”

However, there is a clear disidentification with his bullying behaviour. One girl worded this in the following way: “I would be really ashamed if I was his mother.”⁴² She stated this in high volume and fast tempo, implying the intensity of the negative feelings towards Julian. This statement obviously bears witness to disidentification with Julian’s parents, too, which the following quote further exemplifies: “She said ‘my son has nightmares and needs to go to a psychiatrist so it’s not good for him,’ that makes no sense at all.”⁴³ The discourse markers of increasing volume and rising pitch in “at all” indicate clear, genuine feelings of negativity towards Julian’s parents.

2.2.3 Defamiliarisation

The main defamiliarising device I tested was the symbol of the astronaut. One boy shared the interpretation I expected from the implied watcher: “If you’re in an astronaut’s suit, nobody knows what you look like.”⁴⁴ Three other participants explicitly agreed with this statement. One other boy thought it might stand for Auggie’s dream to become an astronaut. More hesitantly, i.e., in lower volume and pitch, he stated: “Because I think Auggie wants to become an astronaut and because you can kind of achieve what you want. Not everybody can become an astronaut but if you do your best it can just happen.”⁴⁵ He used ToM to imagine how Auggie sees his future and speculates about how this may relate to the astronaut.

I also inquired into their skills in ToM and empathy by asking how they thought Auggie would feel and what he would think about winning the Henry Ward Beecher medal. The first response was: “I think he is surprised, that he would think like, why did I get that prize? I eh, I am ugly, why did I get that prize?”⁴⁶ A similar response was articulated by another boy: “I think he is very happy because he won something while he thought he was worth nothing.”⁴⁷ The boys perform ToM, resulting in the general idea that Auggie has a negative self-image. I discuss the implication of these statements in the section of out-group attitudes.

Lastly, another boy even made a prediction about Auggie’s behaviour based on ToM: “I think, I’m not sure, that maybe he will share his prize with his friend Jack because Jack protected and defended him.”⁴⁸ Apart from being a cognitively active statement, this underlines Jack’s role in Auggie’s success. On

42 “Ik zou me er echt voor schamen als ik zijn moeder was hoor.”

43 “‘Mijn zoontje heeft nachtmerries en moet naar een kliniek dus voor hem is het ook niet goed,’ dat slaat helemaal nergens op.”

44 “Als je in een astronautenpak zit dan ziet niemand hoe je er uitziet.”

45 “Omdat Auggie denk ik astronaut wil gaan worden en omdat je dan ook een beetje dat je kan bereiken wat je wilt. Niet iedereen kan astronaut worden maar als je goed je best doet dan kan het gewoon gebeuren.”

46 “Ik denk dat hij verbaasd is, dat ie denk van waarom heb ik die prijs? Ik eh, ik ben lelijk waarom krijg ik die prijs?”

47 “Ik denk dat ie wel heel erg blij is omdat hij iets heeft gewonnen terwijl hij dacht dat hij niets waard was.”

48 “Ik denk dat, ik weet het niet zeker, dat hij misschien die prijs gaat delen met zijn vriend Jack omdat Jack hem ging beschermen en verdedigen.”

top of that, it shows the boy's engagement with the story and his ability to use the information he gathered from the narrative, to speculate on how it may continue.

2.2.4 Out-group attitudes

The fact that the participants identified with the positively attituded Jack or Summer, or even partially with Auggie himself, indicates positive out-group attitudes. This is supported by their strong disapproval of Julian's bullying behaviour. Identification with Jack or Summer was based on their efforts to befriend and/or defend Auggie, thus on their positive out-group attitude. However, when they engaged in ToM, there seemed to be a general consensus among the participants that Auggie was expected to have a bad self-image, for which they used words with strong negative connotations (ugly, not worth anything). I argue these assumptions on how Auggie feels about himself are slightly derogatory. I would say the group's overall attitude was positive.

2.3 Comparison

With respect to identification, most participants from both groups related to either Jack or Summer predominantly. Contradictory to my expectations, identification with Summer in the film was not hindered by the fact that she did not focalise. The statements she made through dialogue were sufficient enough for the participants to copy. What is more, identification with three of the narrators that did narrate did not occur: Via, Miranda and Justin were mentioned by none of participants. As mentioned, I expect the age of these characters to be the cause of this.

I noticed a difference between the book and film group with regard to the participants' identification with Auggie. Especially implicit identification, by which I mean statements that rely on a shared experience resulting in orientation towards Auggie without the participant explicitly stating so, was more likely to occur in the book group. What stands out most is that the reasons for identification were more personal and less often had to do with appearance in the book group than in the film group. In the film group, all participants bar one explicitly stated that they could not imagine what it would be like to stand in Auggie's shoes, and did not make any other implicit utterances that indicated (partial) identification. The one exception was a girl who stated she was likely to have identified with Auggie before, and that she could partially imagine being him, on the grounds of having been bullied herself due to her height. This same girl was the only film-group participant who made a spontaneous reference concerning common high school experiences. In other words, this girl had a shared experience with Auggie in the sense that she was also bullied because of her physical appearance which she could not change. I argue that this is a more specific, shared scenario than those that arose in the book group. For instance, one book-group participant spontaneously connected herself to Auggie in the sense of looking

different because she wore a hijab due to her religion. Two other girls said they could imagine what it would be like to be Auggie in the sense of “otherness,” by which they did not specifically mean being bullied but the general fear of being different. Another girl explicitly stated she enjoyed the book because it was so “recognisable.” In summary, in the film group, identification with Auggie only occurred in a person with a shared experience of being bullied due to something they cannot help, whereas in the book group more participants were able to see connections between Auggie and themselves in a somewhat broader sense. Moreover, familiarity/recognisability was mentioned as an important factor for the enjoyability of the book during the first initial response in the book group. I argue that this implies that the book allowed for a more easily attainable sense of orientation towards Auggie in the participants.

Not only did I notice a difference in identification with Auggie; I also observed a dissimilarity in how both groups oriented themselves towards Julian and Mr and Mrs Albans. Interestingly, the film group speculated more and applied ToM towards Julian’s character to a greater extent than the book group, which corresponds with the findings from the analysis. Initially, all participants from both groups stated, almost aggressively, that they could not understand Julian’s bullying behaviour. Both groups showed strong disidentification with him. However, Julian was not mentioned by the book group until I asked about him, whereas in the film group, he was the first character that was mentioned instead of Auggie. This implies that Julian’s character attracted more attention from the film-group participants than from those of the book group. The film group showed more identification with Julian than the book group, but only after Julian had redeemed himself and had stopped bullying. This identification with the bully does therefore not indicate a more negative out-group attitude.

The participants in the book group expect Auggie to be bullied less in their own class than in the book. The participants in the film group expect the bullying to be similar. In the booktalks, a girl mentioned that the atmosphere in the school would probably be better after Auggie won the Henry Ward Beecher medal and that respect was an important factor. In the film group, one boy stated that people will always have something to say about Auggie’s appearance. This difference suggests that the book group expects Auggie to be accepted into the in-group more easily than the film group would, which indicates that the film group sees Auggie as more ‘different’ or fixed in his out-group position.

As for defamiliarisation, the book and film group performed in filling in the gaps I challenged them to on similar levels. Neither of the groups performed perfectly, as the ideal implied reader/watcher would, but they showed sufficient levels of empathic and ToM skills to fill in gaps and make sense of stylistic devices. No significant differences between the two groups in this regard were found. I therefore assume that potential differences in the book- or film-group participants’ out-group attitudes are not caused by differences in comprehending the defamiliarising features.

In terms of out-group attitudes, all groups were largely positive towards the out-group. As discussed, all participants demonstrated identification with either the out-group member (Auggie) or

positive non-affected in-group members (Jack or Summer) and disapproved fiercely of bullying behaviour. Participants from both groups commented on Auggie being an ordinary boy and on accepting and befriending Auggie. In the film group, there was a slightly bigger focus on protecting and defending him⁴⁹.

Moreover, in the book group, two girls made statements about Auggie's low self-esteem, but thought he had gained confidence by the end of the book. In the film group, two boys made comments on Auggie's self-esteem too, but did not expect a change like the book group did. I argue that the film-group participants connect Auggie's confidence issues with his unchangeable appearance. They were also stronger in their verbalisation, using words such as 'ugly' and 'worth nothing' when they discussed how Auggie thought about himself. In any case, respondents from both groups assumed Auggie initially had low self-esteem. Since I exposed both groups to the passage/scene in which Auggie calls himself "ugly," this is no far stretch. However, when discussing the end of the narrative, the book-group participants agreed that they thought Auggie would gain confidence from winning the Henry Ward Beecher medal. They also indicated that they thought he did not care what others thought about him, and speculated that the atmosphere in the school would improve. The film-group participants, by contrast, contemplated that Auggie would be surprised about winning the medal. Two different participants used strongly negative words to describe Auggie's self-image and thought he would not understand why he won the prize. Apart from one participant who thought Auggie would be "happy," they did not speculate about the effect winning the prize would have on Auggie's self-esteem. Whereas the book group exhibited a curve and development of assumptions, the film group members were more fixed in their ideas. I argue that this means the book group took the roundness of Auggie's character into account to a greater extent. This allows a broader understanding and more complete view of his personality, based on greater levels of interiority and thus possible higher levels of identification, and consequently even a more positive out-group attitude. Moreover, the film group members paid more attention to Jack's role in Auggie winning the Henry Ward Beecher medal: they ascribe part of Auggie's success to Jack. In my view, a greater deal of attention for Jack in this enabling position enforces my earlier statement on the film group's focus on the in-group saviour role versus the out-group victim role, which I will elaborate on in the next section.

3. Written responses

After the interventions, I asked the participants to write a short response. This functions as support in case participants were uncomfortable speaking up, or more honest when writing down their opinions anonymously. Moreover, the forms used included a picture of Nolan Faber, a boy with Treacher Collins

⁴⁸ This came forward in the book- and filmtalks only subtly, which is why I choose to not elaborately discuss the implication of a protector-role in this section. However, the fact that it was mentioned is significant because it plays a bigger role in the written responses. Therefore, I refer to it here, and explain its meaning in the comparison of the written responses.

syndrome. Although TCs is only one example of a craniofacial anomaly and Nolan Faber only one person, these responses may reveal whether the (potential) effect of the participants' out-group attitudes were exhibited towards Auggie only, or to other craniofacially affected people as well. Moreover, as explained in the method section, the participants engaged with the concept of 'facial anomaly' ("gezichtsafwijking") without having been introduced to what this entails⁵⁰ until formulating their written responses. In other words, the participants were not exposed to the intended real-life out-group until this penultimate stage of the explorative study. A discrepancy between their attitudes during the book-/filmtalks compared to the written responses may therefore partly be attributed to this new visual information. By contrast, consistency across the interventions may indicate that the results from the book-/filmtalks do indeed represent attitudes on craniofacial anomalies in general and not just to the fictional character Auggie Pullman.

I phenomenographically summarised the written responses from both groups to the main words or themes that came forward as explained in the method. I will present the outcomes of the first question by the book group, then the film group, then compare the two, then repeat this for the second question. I will conclude this section with a comparison to the verbal responses.

3.1 Book: "What did you think of Auggie?"

The participants in the book group's responses can be divided into the following categories:

- Brave/strong/positive. Three participants respected the way in which Auggie dealt with his anomaly. "I thought he was strong, because he thought he was 'ordinary,' which is true, but if people told me that I was not 'ordinary' I would think so too, so I think Auggie is a strong, nice and positive person."⁵¹ I would like to emphasise that this girl uses apostrophes around the word 'ordinary,' and explicitly nuances that Auggie is, in her opinion, indeed ordinary. Moreover, she makes an explicit connection between Auggie's interiority and her own. She thus involves Auggie into her own in-group, which blurs the out-group distinction, which I argue attests to a very positive attitude on top of these already very positive words.
- Kind/nice/friendly. Three participants stated they would like to be friends with Auggie because of these positive traits they saw in his personality. They judge his personality separately from his appearance, which means they are able to look past his out-groupness. I classify this as positive.
- Smart. One participant explicitly stated she thought Auggie was smart. Again, their attitude is based on something irrelevant to his out-group position. I classify this as positive.

50 A cleft-lip/palate or other facial anomaly, either cranio- or attained, which compromises (speech) functions or acquired difference, covering more than a quarter of the face.

51 "Ik vond hem een sterk person, omdat hij zichzelf 'gewoon' vindt wat ook waar is, maar als tegen mij gezegd werd dat ik niet 'gewoon' ben zou ik dat ook denken en dus vind ik Auggie een sterk, gezellig en positief persoon."

- Interesting. One participant explicitly stated she thought Auggie was interesting. This attitude is based on his out-group position, and may be argued to emphasise it. The participant in question meant it as a positive term, since she related it to ‘fun,’ but due to its out-group establishing element of otherness I deem it to be an ambivalent term.
- Pitiable (‘Zielig’). One participant stated she felt sorry for Auggie, but explicitly nuanced that this was not because of his anomaly but because of the way he was treated.⁵² As with ‘interesting,’ this out-group specific judgement may be seen as emphasising Auggie’s position. However, since the participant specified she based this assessment on how he was treated and *not* on his out-groupness, I do not deem this statement as negative towards the out-group.

3.2 Film: “What did you think of Auggie?”

The film-group participants’ answers can be divided into the following categories:

- Brave/copes with his anomaly well. Two participants thought it was brave that Auggie kept going to school and inspired people to realise it does not matter how one looks. This assessment is out-group specific. They respect Auggie for his bravery, but emphasise the role of his otherness therein. However, they also mention that they think appearance does not matter. Since these issues are somewhat contradictory I classify this category as ambivalent.
- Kind/sweet. Three participants stated that they thought Auggie was kind. One especially emphasised Auggie remained sweet to others despite being bullied himself. Apart from his appearance being the underlying reason for why he was bullied, this category overall focuses on Auggie’s personality. I thus classify these affectionate terms as positive.
- Pitiable. Two participants wrote down that they felt sorry for Auggie, mainly because he was bullied. One participant said he felt this way specifically because Auggie cannot help the way he looks.⁵³ In case of the participants who specifically state this is ‘mainly’ because of how he was treated, it may be argued that this is ambivalent as in the book group. Not all participants included this nuance. I thus classify this as partly ambivalent and partly derogatory.
- Different. Two participants stated that Auggie was a little different.⁵⁴ One of these participants explicitly nuanced that this difference was only appearance-wise. This emphasises his out-group position, which is why I classify this as negative.

52 “Ik vind het ook wel zielig maar niet omdat hij een beperking heeft maar hoe de kinderen op hem reageerde.”

53 “Hij kan er niks aan doen dat hij een gezichtsafwijking heeft.”

54 “Een beetje anders.”

3.3 Comparison: "What did you think of Auggie?"

What stands out most is that the book group wrote down a larger variety of positive words to describe Auggie's personality than the film group. The film group focuses more explicitly on Auggie's anomaly, otherness and his being bullied than the book group: almost all answers by the film group mention this. Moreover, two participants said they felt sorry for him, whereas it was hardly mentioned by the book group (except for one participant who directly nuanced it by saying she felt that way not because of his appearance but of the way he was treated). This focus on the way in which Auggie is different from them underlines his out-group positioning, which I classify as negative. Still, they generally meant well and mentioned they respected him, which I classify as positive. Moreover, three film-group participants mentioned kind/sweet. The overall attitude towards Auggie is thus somewhat ambivalent. The book group is more convincingly positive. On top of the wider variety of positive words, participants stated they did think Auggie is ordinary, accepting him into an in-group position, as well as that they do not pity him for his anomaly but for his being bullied.

3.4 Book: "What would you think if someone with a facial anomaly was in your class, and what would you do?"

The answers of the participants in the book group can be divided into the following categories:

- Neutral (would not mind). One participant stated that Auggie is human like everyone else, so she does not mind. She elaborated on her answer with a personal story about one of her classmates in primary school who was blind in one eye. He was bullied and people would play a game called the [his name]-virus. She states that she was still best friends with him and that she would do the same with someone with a facial anomaly if they are nice to her. She thus emphasises she find it important to not judge based on out-groupness. I thus classify this as positive.
- Friends. Three participants state they would befriend them if they would be nice. The openness to intergroup contact in this statement is emphasised by the participants focussing on the person's personality and not their appearance. I therefore classify this as positive.
- Treat him normally/accept him. Four participants mentioned they would treat this person like any other and accept their appearance. Due to aforementioned reasons concerning going beyond the out-groupness and accepting this person into the in-group, I classify this as positive.
- Fun. One participant stated she thinks it would be fun, because she finds it interesting. As this emphasises the out-group position of the person in question despite the relation with 'fun,' similar to the 'interesting' in the verbal response section, I classify this as ambivalent.
- Ask how they are doing. One participant states she would approach this person and ask how they are doing, but that she would be careful not to ask too many questions. She makes a direct connection to herself, writing that she also does not like it when someone asks too many

questions.⁵⁵ This personal connection attests to an orientation of the self towards this person. Through empathy and ToM, this participant blurs the out-group distance with Auggie, which I classify as positive.

- Get used to him. Two participants stated that they would probably need to get used to their appearance at first, but would still befriend them (see below).
- Stand up for him. One participant states she would stand up for them if needed.

3.5 Film – “What would you think if someone with a facial anomaly was in your class, and what would you do?”

The answers of the participants in the film group can be divided into the following categories:

- Friends. Three participants state that they would try and befriend this person. They did not elaborate. Still, I classify this as positive.
- Not judge them on their appearance. Two participants describe different ways they would act around this person like they would around anybody else. One boy writes he would definitely talk to them and not judge them on their appearance.⁵⁶ The other participant writes that he would try to act normally and judge this person on their behaviour.⁵⁷ This focus goes beyond the out-groupness, but emphasises an in-group connection. I classify this as positive.
- Strange/would need to get used to them. Three participants mentioned they would probably find it a bit odd, but that they would get used to it. “I would find it weird but that person can’t help it so then you just have to learn to deal with it.”⁵⁸ This assessment focusses on this person’s otherness and out-group position. However, the participants actively emphasise that is their own responsibility to better their attitudes. I classify this as ambivalent.
- Stand up for him. Three participants state that they would stand up for this person. Two of these participants specify that they would stand up for they if they were bullied. I emphasise this because this extra clause means that Auggie getting bullied is a possibility but not necessarily the case. I argue that the participant that merely states they would stand up for this person assumes that they would get bullied. In both cases I argue that standing up for this person is somewhat derogatory, since the in-group does not grant the out-group member agency of their own. I therefore classify this as ambivalent or negative, depending on the nuance of getting bullied being a possibility.

55 “Ik zou als eerste vragen hoe het gaat, maar ik zou ook niet zo veel zeggen omdat hij ook zijn eerste dag heeft en als iedereen aan mij zoveel vragen zou stellen dan zou ik dat ook niet leuk vinden.”

56 “Ik zou sowieso met diegene gaan praten en niet alleen naar uiterlijk gaan kijken.”

57 “Ik zou [...] proberen zo normaal mogelijk te blijven doen en hem beoordelen naar hoe die doet.”

58 “Ik zou het wel raar vinden maar diegene kan er zelf niks aan doen dus daar moet je dan gewoon mee om leren gaan.”

3.6 Comparison: What would you think if someone with a facial anomaly was in your class, and what would you do?"

The answers of the book group are more nuanced than those of the film group. Despite framing most of their assessments positively, many film-group statements focused on the person's otherness. Oppositely, the book group frequently emphasised this person's potential in-group connection. Moreover, more film-group participants stated they would stand up for this person: three film-group participants versus one book-group participant. The book participants and two film participants specify they would only do so if needed, one film participant does not specify this. An equal number of participants wrote down they would want to befriend this person. Only the book group specified they would want to do so only if the person is nice, thus judging them like any other person. The book-group participants demonstrated a wider variety of responses. Lastly, the book group also made more personal connections between themselves and the hypothetical person with a facial anomaly. One book-group girl recounts a story about a primary-school friend, another one referred to herself ("I would not like that either") and another book-group girl stated she has an interest in this subject. These personal statements did not occur in the film group. I argue this implies a higher sense of personal engagement with the subject in the book group compared to the film group.

3.7 Comparison with the verbal responses

As stated, dissimilarity of the attitudes present in these responses compared to the verbal ones may mean that the participants attitudes only changed towards Auggie, instead of this thesis' general out-group. Oppositely, consistency across the interventions may indicate that the results from the book-/filmtalks, i.e. with regard to the fictional Auggie, do indeed represent attitudes on real craniofacial anomalies in general.

These results corroborate that the latter is the case. Within the book and film groups respectively, I do not identify any attitudinal difference that may be caused by the (visual) difference between the textual description of Auggie's appearance, the artificial portrayal by Jacob Tremblay, and a real boy with Teacher Collins syndrome. In both the verbal and written responses, the book group was more overall positive, nuanced, and broader in their answers. In the film group, both the verbal and written responses were often framed positively but focused more on the out-groupness of facial anomalies. In conclusion, I argue that the verbal responses may be assumed to be representative of attitudes towards the intended out-group, since they are similar to the written responses.

Another reason for the written responses was to ensure all participants' opinions would come forward. However, in both groups all participants were relatively equally verbal during the book-/filmtalks. In combination with the fact that there are no significant differences between the book- and

filmtalk results and the written responses, I deduce that the results from both these interventional strategies represent all the participants of the groups in a well-balanced manner. The similarity also indicates that there was no difference between the levels of comfort the participants experienced for sharing their thoughts with me in the verbal versus the written responses.

4. Overall comparison: book group versus film group

Overall, both groups showed positive out-group attitudes in the verbal as well as the written responses. They used positive words to describe the out-group member, and indicated they were willing to befriend them. In the verbal responses, intense dislike for the bully came forward. However, I did notice some differences and nuances between the book and film group. First of all, the range of words used to describe Auggie in the first question of the written response was broader and more positive in the book group. The underlying ideas attest to a greater sense of in-group acceptance in the book group, whereas in the film group they were frequently linked to otherness. The higher level of nuance in the book group implies that Auggie was perceived as being a rounder character in the book group. Their responses were more personal and complex. The same goes for the answers to the second question of the written responses, which dealt with how they would act if a person with a facial anomaly would join their class. The book group exhibited a broader range of positive answers, implicating a rounder and more complete image of the out-group member, suggesting a more positive overall attitude.

Secondly, the higher level of nuance in the book group, in both the verbal and written responses, also stood out in general. In the book group one girl mentioned she would stand up for someone with a facial anomaly in her class, *if* they were being bullied, meaning that the participant was aware that bullying would be a possibility but did not necessarily assume it would occur. Some film-group members provided similar nuances as well, but it was not a general tendency. Moreover, all possibly ambivalent statements by the book-group participants were nuanced, often by statements relating to themselves. This was not the case in the film group. For example, one-book group participant said that she respected Auggie for thinking he was ordinary. She emphasised that she did indeed think he was ordinary, clarifying that her respect did not stem from Auggie having a facial anomaly but from the fact he defied other people's beliefs about him. This nuance was informed by her own orientation toward Auggie, thus creating a moment of identification: "If people told me that I was not 'ordinary' I would think so too."⁵⁹ Moreover, this girl's statement implies that Auggie, the out-group member, is more capable of doing something she, the in-group member, would struggle with. I argue that this view demonstrates a closer sense of orientation of the self towards the out-group member and a more positive out-group attitude than came forward in the film group. The same goes for the book-group participant who stated she would

59 "Als tegen mij werd gezegd dat ik niet 'gewoon' ben zou ik dat ook denken."

ask someone with a facial anomaly some questions, but not too many, because she herself would not like that either. This, too, shows a personal projection of ToM and empathy onto the out-group character, thus blurring the distinction. All in all, nuanced and personal connections in the book group point towards an overall more positive out-group attitude.

Moreover, the film group focussed more on Auggie's position of weakness and presented themselves more in the role of saviour versus victim than the book group. This became evident in various ways. For instance, there is a difference between the book group's and the film group's expectations on the hypothetical real-life situation in which someone with a facial anomaly would join their class. On the one hand, the book group thought that although some classmates would stare or need some time to get used to this person, they would not be bullied as badly as Julian bullies Auggie. This implies that they see the person as someone who could potentially simply belong to their in-group. On the other hand, the film group thought this person would be bullied as badly as Auggie, emphasising the out-group position. What is important is that they stated, both in written and verbal responses, that they would stand up for him. The fact that standing up for someone with a facial anomaly was a common and recurring answer in the film group indicates that this group's members assumed this person would be bullied and in need of protection, which they as non-affected in-group could provide. I argue that this, to some extent, implies they think of people with a facial anomaly as unable to stand up for themselves, as opposed to their own imagined and assumed capability to stand up for someone else. In other words, I notice a positioning of out-group as victim and in-group as saviour. The in-group becomes superior and the out-group is not granted agency. Despite the participants' good intentions, I deem this to be a negative, or derogatory, out-group attitude and a (too) positive in-group attitude, respectively.

5. Questionnaires: after⁶⁰

In this section, I compare the results from the questionnaires that the participants filled a few days after the interventions, with those from the questionnaires they filled in prior to the book- and filmtalks. I elaborate on and interpret the differences in the next chapter.

5.1 (Cranio)facial anomalies

Before the booktalk, all five participants assessed all out-group FA-category statements positively. After the booktalk, all five participants still scored positively on the statements concerning out-group attitudes towards (cranio)facial anomalies. In the first four statements that consisted of out-group attitudes, the

60 The questionnaire can be found from page 31 onwards.

participants were very positive about 14 out of the total of 20⁶¹ statements before the booktalk compared to 13 out of 20 after. The remaining seven statements were assessed moderately positively. This is a decrease of 1 point. The last statements within the FA the category dealt with identification: "I can imagine what it is like to have a facial anomaly."⁶² Before the booktalk, all five participants assessed this question moderately positively, meaning they could imagine this. After the booktalk, two participants answered moderately positively and two participants answered moderately negatively. One participant circled both moderately negatively and moderately positively on their after-questionnaire. I have not included this participant's response to this statement. Half of the participants shifted to a negative assessment. This may have various different explanations, but I argue that it shows a more nuanced view on the out-group position of people with a facial anomaly, or a better understanding of the particular out-group meant in the statement.

Before the filmtalk, all six participants were positive about all statements that concerned out-group attitudes towards (cranio)facial anomalies. 14 out of 24 statements were answered very positively, the remaining ten moderately positively. After the filmtalk, one participant assessed one statement moderately negatively. This concerned the question: "If somebody looks different from what I am used to due to a facial anomaly, I find this unpleasant."⁶³ I would like to stress that this person did score very positively on the remaining three statements, which makes it unlikely that this one negative answer corroborates an overall negative out-group attitude. Moreover, one person did not answer the question. Consequently, 13 out of 23 statements were answered very positively, the remaining nine moderately positively. Overall, the questionnaire confirms that the group has a positive out-group attitude.

Before the filmtalk, half the participants assessed the identification FA-statement moderately negatively, the other half moderately positively. After the booktalk, four participants answered negatively, three of whom moderately negatively and one very negatively. One person did not answer the question. The remaining one person answered the question moderately positively. This is an increase of one very negative answer. This participants thus find it harder to step into the out-group person's shoes after the interventions. As I stated in the section on the before-questionnaires, this may have to do with the understanding of what (having) a 'facial anomaly' entails.

After the interventions, the number of negative answers and the intensity of these negative answers increased in both groups. This rise was higher in the book group (three participants from moderately positive to moderately negative), but stronger in the film group (one participant from moderately positive to entirely negative). This slight difference may imply that the book's influence in this regard was a bit more nuanced, whereas the film group's distance towards Auggie remained larger.

59 By 20 statements, I mean a total of five (participants) times four (statements).

62 "Ik kan me voorstellen hoe het is om een gezichtsafwijking te hebben."

63 "Als iemand er anders uitziet dan dat ik gewend ben door een gezichtsafwijking vind ik dat onprettig."

5.2 Empathic concern

Before the booktalk, four out of five book-group participants scored positively on all the statements of the empathic concern scale. One participant scored predominantly negatively on the EC statements. This remained the same after the booktalk. This means that the interventions had no general effect on the participants' empathic social skills.

Before the filmtalk, all six participants scored predominantly positively on the empathic concern scale. Two of these participants assessed all EC statements positively. This remained the same after the filmtalk. This means that the interventions had no general effect on the participants' empathic social skills.

The outcome of this category is similar for both groups, which means that effect on the social skill of empathy specifically did not differ between the two groups.

5.3 Identification

Before the booktalk, four out of five participants scored positively on the identification scale. Three out of these four participants assessed all ID statements positively. One participant scored predominantly negatively on the ID statements. This remained the same after the booktalk. The interventions thus had no general effect on the participants' identification skills.

Before the filmtalk, four out of six participants scored predominantly positively on the identification scale. Two of these participants assessed all ID statements positively. This increased after the filmtalk: one extra person assessed all ID statements positively. This means a one-person increase in positive identification skills.

In general, there was a slight increase of identification skills only in the film group. However, since the person in question already scored predominantly positive on the ID scale, I do not deem this difference to be significant enough to assume that the film group was generally affected by the intervention in this regard.

5.4 Theory of Mind

Before the booktalk, three out of five participants scored positively on the Theory of Mind scale. Two out of these four participants assessed all ToM statements positively. Two participants scored predominantly negatively on the ToM statements. After the booktalk, one extra person scored predominantly positively on the ToM statements. This shows an increase in Theory of Mind skills.

Before the filmtalk, three out of six participants scored predominantly positively on the Theory of Mind scale. Two of these participants assessed all ToM statements positively. This increased after the filmtalk: one extra person assessed the ToM statements predominantly positively. Moreover, one extra

person scored positively on all ToM statements. This means a one-person increase in overall positive identification skills, and a one-person increase in all positive assessment.

In general, the levels of identification skills in the book and film group were similar before the interventions, or slightly higher in the book group. After the interventions, there was an extra person who predominantly assessed the ToM statements positively in both groups. Since there was a one-person increase in participants that assessed all ToM statements positively, this change is slightly more extensive in the film group. However, since both groups had a one-person increase, I deem the effect to be comparable.

Conclusion questionnaires: After

The main goal of the questionnaires one week after the interventions was to check if the participants' answers were influenced by having discussed the subject immediately preceding the response or my presence, as well as to provide insight into the potential long(er)-term effects of having read the book/having seen the film. The after-questionnaire indeed confirmed that both groups had overall positive out-group attitudes. However, this was also the case before the interventions. I discuss this in greater detail in the discussion.

Moreover, the participants' social skills were not significantly affected by the interventions. There was only a somewhat substantial increase in ToM skills in both groups. This means that the cognitive effect caused by both narratives may have stretched further than just with regard to (cranio)facial anomalies, but to ToM skills in general.

Chapter 6 - Discussion and conclusion

In this thesis, I analysed and identified the potential cognitive effects of reading *Wonder*, the novel by R. J. Palacio versus watching the film by Stephen Chbosky on the implied reader and watcher. On top of that, it contains an explorative inquiry into the real effects of reading versus watching *Wonder* on the attitudes of non-affected first-year students of Dutch secondary education (in-group) towards main character August Pullman and craniofacial anomalies in general (out-group), as they occurred during interventional book-/filmtalks. In this chapter, I discuss how the results of my interventions relate to the studies I examined in my theoretical framework, as well as to the findings of my analysis. I will also touch upon the limitations of this thesis and make suggestions for future research of this topic.

6.1 The results and the theoretical framework and analysis: A comparison and potential causes

Prior this analysis and these interventions, I gathered and discussed various studies from within the field of cognitive literary criticism and (psycho)cinematics. I concluded this theoretical framework by hypothesizing that, although the parasocial extended contact hypothesis and social cognitive theory may also be applied to film, and although it is a cliché that interiority can only be discussed in books, readers of the *Wonder*-narrative are more likely to gain positive out-group attitudes compared to watchers. This hypothesis was based upon the following: a questionnaire-based study into empathy and Theory of Mind in reading versus film watching (Witte and Scholtz, 2015); serious limitations in the studies that researched contact hypotheses in film (Schiappa et al. 2013); and Nikolajeva's work within cognitive literary criticism on identification, engagement and schemes, especially with regard to physical appearance (2005, 2014). I drew upon the studies I discussed in my theoretical background to draft a model of analysis. In my analysis I demonstrated that both book and film contain many indicators for possible positive effect on out-group attitudes, but that the book's potential is embedded in a deeper cognitive complexity. In other words, the analysis both confirmed and nuanced the initial hypothesis: the book would indeed be more likely to cause positive out-group attitudes, whereas the film might also achieve this effect albeit to a lesser extent.

I tested this hypothesis in two explorative interventions. The pre-interventional questionnaires told me that both groups had similar levels of empathy, ToM and general identification from the onset. Both groups also had similar initial out-group attitudes. This equality in the required competencies suggests that any differences between the results from both groups may indeed be the result of the interventions.

However, all participants scored positively on all statements in the category of facial anomalies already before the interventions. It could be argued that this suggests that the positive post-interventional out-group attitudes are not an effect of the book- and filmtalks, since the respondents

already harboured a high degree of positive out-group attitudes from the onset. However, I would like to stress that multiple empirical academic studies into the social stigmatisation of affected children, discussed in the introduction of this thesis, show that the majority of children do experience significantly higher levels of social stigmatisation (as shown in a study that used reports of affected children and their parents (Masnari et al., 2012, p. 1664)) and are often attributed less favourable characteristics than non-affected people (as shown by the responses of non-affected persons who were shown pictures of people with facial anomalies (Masnari et al., 2013, p. 115)). Moreover, a study with non-affected participants also showed “less willingness to interact with or befriend a child with a facial difference” than with non-affected children (Masnari et al., 2013, p. 115). Thus, I have reason to doubt the positive self-reported attitudes that come forward in the five statements I added to the psychologically established Interpersonal Reactivity Index. Potentially, the participants did not self-reflect on any subconscious negative out-group attitudes that studies have found are common. Moreover, they filled out the questionnaire before having been explained what exactly I meant by “facial anomaly.” Therefore, I cannot know how the participants interpreted this term, which makes the results to these five statements prior to the interventions relatively untrustworthy. This is supported by the fact that both groups scored less positively on the question: “I can imagine what it is like to have a facial anomaly”⁶⁴ in the post-interventional questionnaires. This increase of both very negative and moderately negative answers in both groups could represent a negative out-group attitude. However, I do not expect this to be the case, considering the participants’ more elaborate responses during the book- and filmtalks, as well as the written responses, which were generally positive. Rather, I would argue that they gained a clearer image of the complexity of, and the social stigmatisation that comes with, having a facial anomaly and what it entails. This bolsters the case that the trustworthiness of his category is unconvincing. I deem the rest of the questionnaire, which consists of the statements focusing on ToM, empathy and identification as articulated in the psychologically acclaimed Interpersonal Reactivity Index to be undependable of these issues and therefore still credible.

Overall, the post-interventional questionnaires showed no significant changes in the EC and ID category. There was a one-person increase in the ToM category in both groups. This means that both versions of the narrative may have had cognitive effect on the participants’ ability to imagine what other people think. No intergroup discrepancy surfaced. To an explorative extent, this means that the book- and filmtalks had similar effects on the essential social skills that were required in this study.

I will now discuss more elaborately the findings from the verbal and written responses. In summary, both groups showed positive out-group attitudes both verbally and written. They used positive words to describe the out-group member, and indicated they were willing to befriend them. However, the

64 “Ik kan me voorstellen hoe het is om een gezichtsafwijking te hebben.”

book group exhibited a more personal and more nuanced image of the out-group than the film group. The book group attested to a greater sense of in-group acceptance, whereas the film group referred to the out-group's otherness more frequently. The film group also showed a greater focus on Auggie's position of weakness and presented themselves more in the role of saviour versus victim than the book group.

Overall, these differences are in line with my analysis. I hypothesised that the book contains more complex, well-developed and broader features that may positively influence the out-group attitudes. The intergroup contact and positioning in the book was generally more nuanced; identification based in interiority was more likely to have an impact through the first-person narrators of the book; and although defamiliarization was often similar, the book uses stylistic devices, similes and metaphors in particular, more frequently. I expected the film to also have a positive effect, but that this effect would be less substantial and refined. Indeed, there are many similarities between my analysis and the interventional results.

For instance, in the film group, identification with Auggie only occurred in a person with a shared experience of being bullied because of something they could not change about their physique. In the book group more participants were able to see connections between Auggie and themselves in a somewhat broader sense. I argue that this implies that the book allowed for a more easily attainable sense of orientation towards Auggie in the participants. I presume this difference originates from the varying presence and level of complexity in interiority and defamiliarising stylistic devices, and thus personal engagement, between the book and the film as pinpointed in the analysis. In the novel, the characters were generally rounder and had a more complex background, both in their sense of self and in their attitude towards Auggie. Identification with the various characters was more likely in the book for all narrators except Jack. Identification with Jack was indeed one of the most common choices of the participants. The expectations the analysis of both media brought about were frequently reflected during the interventions.

Another instance for which this is true, is the dissimilarity I observed in how both groups oriented themselves towards Julian. The film group speculated more and applied ToM towards Julian's character to a greater extent than the book group. The scene that brought about this speculation is one in which Mrs and Ms Albans occur – a scene that is not included in the book. I argue that this is the reason for the difference in consideration and understanding of Julian's behaviour between book- and film-group participants. Julian shows regret and a change of behaviour in the film, which is not the case in the book. This closely parallels the expectations that followed the analysis of the book and film; it implicates and confirms that participants engaged more with Julian in the medium where he is a round character exhibiting behavioural development and redeeming qualities. In my view, this does not oppose the disidentification with the villain or bully as required by the social cognitive theory for positive effect on out-group attitudes, because the participants showed a changed orientation towards Julian only from the

moment he dropped his own negative out-group attitude. As Julian redeemed himself, something that only happens in the movie, he became less villainous to the participants. Moreover, the film-group participants were more verbal in their discussing Mr and Mrs Albans, which suggests that their presence in the film compared to their absence in the novel (apart from an e-mail) was, as expected, significant.

Moreover, in both groups all participants declared to identify most with either Jack or Summer. What is interesting, is that in some cases gender and ethnic background did not seem to matter in this orientation. Two girls felt most closely connected to Jack, who is a boy. Moreover, one Caucasian boy from the film group stated he identified with Summer, who is played by a girl of colour. This deviates from the assumptions connected with the implied reader/watcher that characters are best understood and identified by people who are like them. This refutes the strict expectation that the book is more approachable for a much wider audience due to its greater diversity. However, I still expect that representation and recognisability is of importance in identification to some extent. In my view, this is supported by the fact that none of the participants oriented themselves towards Via, Miranda or Justin, presumably because of their age. One girl explicitly evaluated Via's comments on school life as very familiar, and still did not think of her when asked with whom she felt most closely connected. I surmise the age difference – with the respondent being a 12-year old in her first year of middle school, and the character of Via being a high school freshman – to be behind this failure to identify. I suspect that age, possibly augmented by the setting of middle school instead of high school, prohibited self-reported identification for this respondent with this specific character. As the examples show, implicit or partial identification was still possible.

Another prominent difference was the film group's tendency to position themselves towards the out-group in the role of protector. I argue that this makes the film group have a less positive out-group attitude, since it is derogatory and emphasises the out-group distinction. This is articulated by Auggie too, when in the book he states that: "Via doesn't see me as ordinary. [If she did] she wouldn't feel like she needs to protect me as much" (Palacio, 2014, p. 3). One possible explanation for this issue may be gender-related. I do not wish to go into too much detail on gender-based behavioural stereotypes, but it is the case that the film group members were predominantly male and the book group consisted of female respondents entirely. Stereotypically, the protecting saviour role is a male one (Brooks, 1990, p. 346). The fact that I did not find a significant difference between these social skills between the two groups may counterbalance the idea that the demographics of the groups would be the cause of this issue. The questionnaires showed that both groups were equally capable in the social skills needed to adopt out-group attitudes through extended contact, namely empathic concern, Theory of Mind and identification. The questionnaire showed that regardless of gender, both the book and film group scored predominantly positively on all three of these mediators. However, I would like to point out one questionnaire response of a film-group boy that could suggest the statements made during the film talk

are insincere. To the EC statement “I would describe myself as a sensitive person”⁶⁵ he answered: “agree” but wrote down next to it: “But I would never show that.”⁶⁶ As M. Addis and J. Mahalik state, “popular stereotypes portray men [...] having difficulty sharing vulnerable feelings with friends and family” (2003, p. 5). Thus, a gender-related discrepancy between what the participants feel and what they show to the outside world may be a potential explanation of the film groups’ structural response that attested to a saviour versus victim positioning.

Lastly, the fundamental difference between the two showing modes, in combination with the particular out-group this thesis revolves around, may have affected the outcomes of this study. Physical appearance is at the root of the (cranio)facially affected out-group. Because the film visually shows, and thus makes the watcher aware of, Auggie’s appearance whenever he is on screen, it is arguably unsurprising that the film group focused more on Auggie’s otherness. On the other hand, the reader is not constantly exposed to that which makes Auggie different. In fact, for a big part of the novel, the reader is even unaware of what Auggie looks like at all. The cognitive effort and engagement it takes the reader to fabricate their own image of Auggie is already mentioned as one of the potential reasons for the attitudinally more positive outcome in the book group. Here, I argue that the visual emphasis on Auggie’s appearance may shine through the film group’s results. If this is the case, this means that reading about an out-group, whose positioning is based on physical appearance, may even be more effective than real-life intergroup contact, surpassing the parasocial contact hypothesis.

In conclusion, in accordance with the findings of Vezalli et al. (2015), who concluded that reading *Harry Potter* reduced stereotypes towards various different out-groups, I argue that reading *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio may indeed improve the out-group attitudes towards craniofacial anomalies. Confirming, to some extent, what Witte and Scholtz (2015) found in their questionnaire-based study, the book group showed a greater ability to step into someone else’s shoes than the film group. (Implicit) identification with Auggie was more common in the book group, and these participants made more personal connections to the out-group character than those in the film group. Nevertheless, film-group participants also showed the ability to speculate on the interiority of characters and to identify with them. This endorses Hutcheon’s (2006) claim that the idea that interiority can only be achieved by novels is only a cliché. Both groups were able to fill in defamiliarising gaps and eventually showed positive out-group attitudes. Overall, the results of the explorative interventions confirm my hypothesis: although both groups responded positively, the book group showed positive out-group attitudes on a deeper, more nuanced level. The film

⁶⁵ “Ik zou mijzelf omschrijven als een gevoelig person.”

⁶⁶ “Maar dat zou ik nooit vertonen.”

group exhibited a victim-versus-saviour pattern that might account for the more superficial nature of their view of the out-group member.

Limitations and future research

I already touched upon some of the demographical limitations of this study. Whereas one group consisted solely of girls, the other group predominantly contained boys (four boys and two girls). As mentioned in the discussion, gender and the corresponding social expectations may have affected the results. During the book- and filmtalks, some participants may have verbalised attitudes that differed from what they truly felt. Of course, this limitation does not only include expectations related to gender. The participants may have made assumptions about what I expected of them. However, I myself have explicitly maintained a neutral stance throughout the interventions and emphasised there were no correct or incorrect answers. I believe that the participants were very colloquial and open towards me, which gives me confidence that the results of my study reflect their out-group attitudes.

As discussed above already, I doubt the trustworthiness of the FA-category statements of the questionnaire. Moreover, I did find a difference between the out-group attitudes of the book and film participants, but no significant contrast in social skills between the book and film group. According to the studies in my theoretical framework that deal with these social skills in relation to cognitive effect on our knowledge of others (Nikolajeva (2005, 2014), Keen (2006), Kidd and Castano (2013), Vezalli et al. (2015)), this is contradictory. I argue that a self-reported questionnaire is not a trustworthy tool to make claims about such a change in cognitive skills in an intervention of only five or six participants per group.⁶⁷ Apart from bigger sample sizes, future research may want to use psychologically acclaimed tests to control for the children's attitudes and as well as their social skills, and may want to keep track of a potential correlation between the results of such tests and the demographics and outcomes.

Moreover, this study is only an explorative inquiry into the cognitive effects of reading versus film watching. It cannot lead to generalisable claims, but may serve as inspiration for future research. I merely analysed my results qualitatively. The interpretations are my own; therefore, they are subjective. I did not use control groups. Future research would benefit from control groups and bigger sample sizes that can be statistically analysed. Control groups of teenagers who did not read the book or see the film, or who are exposed to a book or film that is unrelated to the out-group, may be used to test the overall cognitive effect on out-group attitudes of reading versus film watching in general.

⁶⁷ In the previous chapter, I mention that I do deem the questionnaire-categories based on the Interpersonal Reactivity Index to be credible, and state that the pre-interventional outcomes may imply that my results are indeed intervention-related. In this footnote, I would like to emphasize that I do indeed think the questionnaire was useful pre-interventionally, but that the combination with the post-interventional questionnaire is not sufficiently accurate to also demonstrate and provide generalisable evidence for a *change* in skills.

Furthermore, it is desirable to empirically test the model of analysis I designed. I argue that the mediating function of the three concepts that followed from my theoretical background; identification and interiority, gaps and defamiliarisation, and intergroup contact, are convincing, but may need to be academically endorsed. An example would be taking into consideration each participant's ability to successfully comprehend defamiliarising features and its correlation to the post-interventional out-group attitude.

Another limitation of the explorative study due to its small-scale set-up is the fact that the interventions' duration was less than one hour. Participants were not exposed to the full book or movie. The passages I read out loud and scenes I showed lasted half an hour each. The portion of a 348-page book covered by a 30-minute read aloud is of course smaller than the share of a 30-minute excerpt in a 104-minute feature film. Future research may consider ways to find a more representative balance in this regard.

All in all, the findings of my explorative interventions align with the expectations presented in the theoretical framework and analysis of *Wonder* (Palacio, 2014; Chbosky, 2017). I hope and trust it provides an empirical suggestion into further, larger-scale research with control groups and bigger sample sizes that can be analysed statistically and may lead to generalisable conclusions on this subject. I think such conclusions may provide strong arguments for promoting the use of out-group narratives in classrooms. I believe it goes without saying that improving out-group attitudes is desirable, and the findings of this study suggest that through parasocial, extended contact, founded in social cognitive theory, narratives have the strength to achieve this effect. Future research may find generalisable evidence and more specific differences between reading and film watching. If such proof were to align with the findings of this thesis, it may also provide arguments for the promotion of reading. It is valuable to teach children critical and nuanced attitudes. The results of this research imply that book reading is more likely to lead to such attitudes than film watching. Improved out-group attitudes may not only be extremely valuable to our 'knowledge of others' and 'knowledge of the world' on a large scale; its use within classroom settings may even suggest useful tools to deal with micro-level cases of bullying.

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Appendix A

Jacob Tremblay as Auggie Pullman in *Wonder*, 2017.



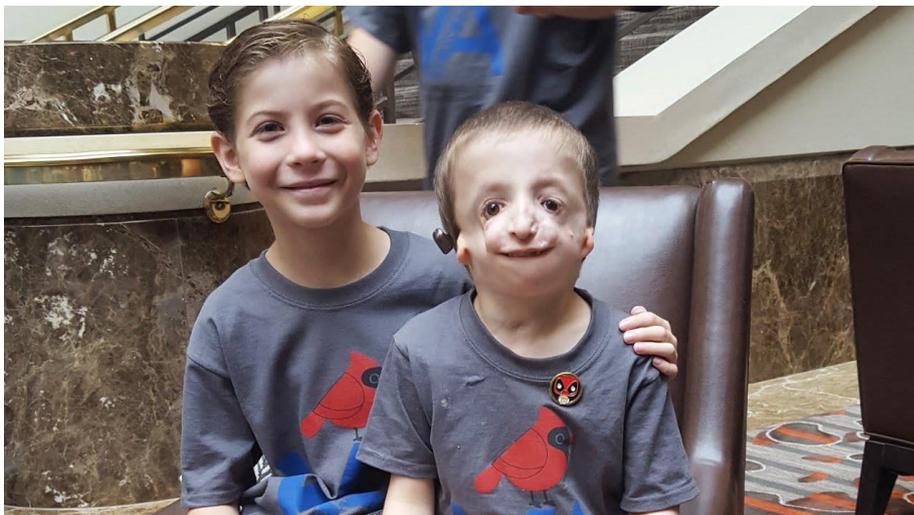
(Source: (2019). St. Charles' Random Act of Kindness Week - "The Wonder" Movie. *Arcada Theatre*. Web, retrieved June 10, 2019.)

Appendix B

Picture of Nolan Faber, book group:



Picture of Nolan Faber, film group, together with Auggie-actor Jacob Tremblay:



(Source: Faber, Ally. (2017). Travel Vlog The Heart of DC & Auggie Pullman Ally Faber. *YouTube*. Web, retrieved 14 January 2019.)