

The Ethical Landscape of English Problem Novels: Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the Philosophical Concept of Otherness in Jodi Picoult's *House Rules* as a Central Case Study

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Abstract

This article delves into the portrayal of adolescents with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in English-language adolescent and youth literature, moving beyond traditional literary studies to explore works centered on people with special needs. Through an analysis of characters in novels by K. Lette, M. Haddon, and J. Picoult, the article examines the philosophical concepts of otherness put forth by E. Levinas, M. Buber, and J. Habermas. This investigation reshapes the conventional image of characters and shifts the focus towards addressing contemporary issues such as genuine communication, empathy, love through responsibility, and the blurring of mental binary oppositions.

The study uncovers motifs characteristic of this genre, including the search for truth, self-determination, the pursuit of identity, lies, and guilt. Notable poetics features, like the presence of a detective storyline and the violation of dialogism principles, contribute to the ethical field prevalent in modern adolescent and youth literature.

المخلص

تتعمق هذه المقالة في تصوير المراهقين الذين يعانون من اضطراب طيف التوحد (ASD) في أدب المراهقين والشباب باللغة الإنجليزية ، وتجاوز الدراسات الأدبية التقليدية لاستكشاف الأعمال التي تركز على الأشخاص ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة. من خلال تحليل الشخصيات في الروايات بقلم K. Lette و M. Haddon و J. Picoult ، تدرس المقالة المفاهيم الفلسفية للغيرية التي طرحها E. Levinas و M. Buber و J. Habermas. يعيد هذا التحقيق تشكيل الصورة التقليدية للشخصيات ويحول التركيز نحو معالجة القضايا المعاصرة مثل التواصل الحقيقي ، والتعاطف ، والحب من خلال المسؤولية ، وطمس التناقضات العقلية الثنائية.

تكشف الدراسة عن الدوافع المميزة لهذا النوع ، بما في ذلك البحث عن الحقيقة وتقرير المصير والسعي وراء الهوية والكذب والذنب. تساهم السمات الشعرية البارزة ، مثل وجود قصة بوليسية وانتهاك مبادئ الحوار ، في المجال الأخلاقي السائد في أدب المراهقين والشباب الحديث.

1.1. Introduction

The article acknowledges the importance of portraying teenagers with ASD, aiming to foster understanding, empathy, and awareness about this often-misunderstood condition. Ethical considerations become central as these works depict the challenges faced by these special individuals. The exploration of identity and otherness reveals the complex nature of human relations, particularly concerning genuine communication and the difficulties of establishing mutual understanding.

The central novel "House Rules" serves as the primary focus of this study, along with the supporting works "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" and "The Boy Who Fell to Earth," all of which present images of adolescents with autism spectrum disorder. By analyzing the relationships between characters, the article demonstrates the significance of empathy, care, and responsibility in overcoming mutual repulsion within various dichotomies.

I think that's the attribute I miss seeing the most in my son: empathy. He worries about hurting my feelings, or making me upset, but that's not the same as viscerally feeling someone else's pain. Over the years, he's learned empathy the way I might learn Greek—translating an image or situation in the clearing use of his mind and trying to attach the

appropriate sentiment to it, but never really fluent in the language. (picoult: p.530).

Ultimately, this article emphasizes the ethical dimension prevailing in the genre of problematic teenage novels and showcases how love, as an expression of empathy and responsibility, can serve as the solution to the communication problems faced by people with autism spectrum disorder. The study sheds light on the relevance of these themes in contemporary society, where understanding, acceptance, and genuine communication are essential for a more inclusive and empathetic world.

The English problem novel has long been a powerful vehicle for addressing pressing social issues and bringing them into the spotlight. Among these issues, the portrayal of teenagers with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has gained increasing prominence. These novels delve into the complexities of ASD, aiming to foster understanding, empathy, and awareness about this often-misunderstood condition. However, in the pursuit of portraying these characters authentically and generating a compassionate response, ethical considerations come into play. This article explores the ethical landscape of the English problem novel centered on teenagers with autism. (Rozema, 2014)

In the literature of the USA and Great Britain in the second half of the 20th - early 21st centuries, the image of the teenage hero has enjoyed unflagging popularity, despite constant development and significant transformation over the 80 years of teenage literature's existence. The diachronization of adolescent images becomes especially evident when identifying the preferred form of self-perception of the hero's otherness in relation to the self. This involves considering how much the hero of the novel (dis)associates themselves from a "normal" teenager in their own eyes, how much the hero (dis)associates themselves from other teenage characters in their own eyes or in the eyes of adult characters, and by what criteria their otherness is revealed.

1.2. Critical Analysis

This perspective allows for a comprehensive understanding of otherness from both external and internal viewpoints. Furthermore, it enables the researcher to focus not solely on one object but also on the mode of relations between objects. In more detail, we will delve into the "I - the Other" relationship when analyzing these works.

The initial interest in the teenage social group was sparked by its changing economic role during the Second World War when teenagers began taking on men's work. Additionally, anthropologists, culturologists, and psychologists started paying more attention to this group (See the works of *G. Stanley Hall's recapitulation*, *E. Erickson's theory of psychosocial moratorium*, and the cultural-historical approach of *L. S. Vygotsky and D. B. Elkonin*). These developments led to the emergence of developmental psychology and fostered an understanding of the otherness of teenagers. (young, 2016)

Mass consciousness started recognizing the idea that teenagers are different from both adults and children. authors who are writing on Adolescent have since explored this otherness in relation to both worlds, that of adults and children. Meanwhile, the concept of Self also undergoes changes within the "I am the Other" system, with the teenage reader being recognized as a distinctive phenomenon, particularly after the Second World War. Literary innovations owe much to the philosophy and aesthetics of modernism. The ecstasy of embracing one's otherness as a discovery is clearly exemplified in the image of Stephen Daedalus, as portrayed in Joyce's novel. Stephen's uniqueness is elevated to an absolute: he stands out not only from adults but also from his peers. The process of establishing his own otherness (extraordinariness) becomes pivotal in the development of Stephen's character and the driving force of the plot (Joyce: 1922). Moreover, with the realization of the decentralization of society and the paradigm of its structure, the depiction of the confrontation between various social groups becomes increasingly significant.

The otherness of adolescents is more frequently portrayed by authors not in terms of the persona and the individual but as a unit within the community (evident in works like "Outsiders" by S. Hinton

(1967). The heroic and idealized image of novels about school and schoolchildren coping with any problems evolved into more realistic characters in the 1970s and 90s. In *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13¾* the protagonist is notorious, yet despite this, Adrian considers himself surprisingly gifted, leading others to often not take him seriously. This novel stands as one of the first instances where otherness does not contradict ordinariness, and both characteristics contribute to the self-identification of the hero (Sue, 1982).

In the 21st century, with the assimilation of new ethical values and the reevaluation of hierarchical structures, the protagonist's commonness is exaggerated in works such as "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" by J. Kinney, "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" by S. Chbosky, and others.

The possibilities of representing the principle of diversity in a teenage novel are practically inexhaustible. M. Curwood highlights the dichotomy of "normality - deviation from the norm" (normality - disability) as a key characteristic of 21st -century teenage novels (Curwood, 2013: 22).

Deviation from the norm in the considered images can be represented by adolescents with serious illnesses in "The Fault in Our Stars" by J. Green (2012), physical, mental, and developmental differences "Natural Disasters" by H. Johnson), issues related to weight or anorexia ("Wintergirls" by L. H. Anderson), the position of an emigrant, or a refugee ("Ask Me No Questions" by (Budhos, 2008)

The novel "House Rules" by Jodi Picoult is the primary object of this study, and "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" by Mark Haddon and "The Boy Who Fell to Earth" by Cathy Lette are additional objects that supports the main idea on autism , present images of adolescents with autism spectrum disorder. The central motif in these problematic teenage and youth novels revolves around the challenges faced by these special children. Literary scholars typically focus on aspects such as the above-mentioned problem of the hero (Curwood , p.20) or the connection between the social and the corporeal (Kokkola, 2018: pp.1-20) when analyzing these novels.

However, society has made significant progress in addressing this issue through the principles of a new ethics. Psychologists have worked on it, a barrier-free environment has been created, and tolerance has been fostered. The policy of inclusiveness is reflected not only in these works of art but in many others with similar motifs. Many of these works shed light on the constant struggle for the rights of autistic children, portraying efforts to overcome social contempt, peer rejection, misunderstanding, and unwillingness to understand. Each of the novels shows some progress in combating society's negative attitudes. This progress is evident, firstly, through the growth and development of the mother and son's skills that obviously appeared in dealing Emma and Jacob, and secondly, society's increasing readiness to accept them. As a result, the problem of socialization remains solvable without losing its relevance (picoult, p. 370)

The concept of new ethics encompasses various aspects of 21st - century mass culture, including the fight against discrimination (racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, etc.), sexualized violence, and harassment. It also discourages the culture of cancellation and upholds social justice, such as promoting diversity in film castings or within large companies' working teams.

The acceptance of diversity as a significant part of this new ethical perspectives allows individuals with mental illness, mental dysfunction, and physical disabilities not only to be treated on an equal footing with others but also to elevate their status by embracing their uniqueness. For instance, one individual with Asperger's Syndrome finds happiness in the absence of vivid imagination. They view logical thinking as a means to avoid wasting time on unnecessary worries or hopes and to protect themselves from disappointment. This showcases the positive impact of understanding and accepting diverse perspectives (Picoult: 2010).

The semantic pairs "logic - imagination," "reason - emotion," and "rules - chaos" are relevant for all novels about individuals with autism. People with autism often excel in mathematics and possess a keen aptitude for numbers, sequences, and cause-and-effect relationships. However, they often perceive the rest of the world as a chaotic realm of

unpredictable emotions. In novels like "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," (Fisher, 2010, p: 7) and "House Rules," the protagonists differentiate between externally set rules and the unwritten rules of communication, which they struggle to grasp intuitively like others (Picoult: 2010).

The ideal life, from the perspective of individuals with autism, involves algorithmization and codification of everything in the world, from food to facial expressions. Yet, these characters are also aware of the utopian nature of such a world. As one protagonist puts it, "Prime numbers are like life. They are very logical, but you will never be able to work out rules for them, even if you constantly think only about it" (Lette: 2021).

These novels not only address the question of inclusiveness and the recognition of its necessity and possibility but also explore the perspective of adolescents who, due to their illness, are immune to a wide range of human emotions and relationships. However, the problem novels delve deeper into the unresolved issues of society. Thus, the research perspective needs to shift in this direction. As a result, the central motif of the novels revolves around the philosophical concepts of identity and otherness. Domestic literary criticism has previously touched upon the problem of otherness in novels about individuals with autism. A problem teenage novel focuses on the global unresolved problems of modern society, such as bioethics, terrorist attacks, teenage suicides, domestic violence, in which a teenager has to survive. (Happé, 2009)

In his major work "Totality and Infinity," Levinas discusses the Other as the face of the other person, which demands a unique ethical responsibility from the self. He posits that ethical obligation arises from the encounter with the Other, and this responsibility takes precedence over one's own self-interests. Levinas's ideas have had a significant influence on the fields of ethics, phenomenology, and existentialism. (Levinas: 1982). That is, the concept of the Other indicates a certain entity in relation to which it is the Other. The concept of such an essence and starting point is the concept of the Self. Therefore, the Other is that

which is not the Self, but presented in relation to me. J. Picoult in "House Rules" shows a violation of the identity and self-identity of the hero. Jacob disagrees with labels: I'm not autistic. I have autism, and I also have brown hair and flat feet.

"So I don't understand why I'm always the kid with Asperger's, 'Jacob says. " (Picoult, 2010: p.542).

However, Jacob can't define himself outside of Asperger's:

"I start to think maybe I've done something wrong. Really wrong. Because I do not know how to fix it, I pick up the remote control and rewind the tape almost back to the beginning, to the time when I was no different from anyone else" (Picoult: 492).

As Habermas pointed out, the identity of a person "cannot be realized alone, the success of choosing one's own identity depends largely on others" (Habermas, 1987, p. 125).

However, Jacob's self-identification is painfully constrained by societal norms and notions of deviations. For him, the Other is not represented by a specific person but rather a collection of traditional ideas. As a result, his access to the Other doesn't lead to genuine communication and fails to contribute to the discovery and development of his own capabilities, hindering the formation of his selfhood. Identity and otherness are closely interrelated: mental processes are shaped by relationships, and the structure of personality reflects this interconnectedness. An autistic individual may struggle with empathy, both in understanding it themselves and perceiving it in others "People are incomprehensible to me" (Haddon, 2004: p. 19).

He perceives all manifestations of feelings through the prism of reason and is compelled to interpret the reactions of others by comparing them with previously learned patterns in order to respond appropriately to their emotions. This clearly indicates that the inclusion of people with autism in a humanistic society occurs not thanks to, but despite their characteristics. In other words, autistic individuals may lack the capacity for a specific aspect of human relations that is crucial for

ensuring inclusion "I think that's the attribute I miss seeing the most in my son: empathy. He worries about hurting my feelings, or making me upset, but that's not the same as viscerally feeling someone else's pain" (Picoult: p.87).

The initial perspective of perceiving the Self through the other and in the Other allows us to see that Jacob is not the sole central character in "House Rules"; rather, he serves as the trigger for the conflict that involves Emma, Jacob, Theo, and partly Oliver. Consequently, the methodology of image analysis also requires adjustment. We believe that the most fruitful approach would be to examine not only the individual characters themselves but also the relationships between them. The philosophy of the modern teenage novel emphasizes the significance of dialogue as the primary component of human existence, and empathy is the main axiological value promoted by the genre. Given that genuine communication cannot be easily achieved for an autistic hero, a problematic teen-youth novel that explores the motif of a special hero addresses the fundamental question of the (im)possibility of establishing "genuine communication". Non-perception of the Other to the shown empathy is a serious challenge. The repetition of failures, the constant feeling of frustration, the feeling of powerlessness, the lack of progress cast doubt on Lucy's identification as a mother. She not only does not feel her worth, but also showers herself with reproaches for her son's illness:

And then I was covered with the pangs of self-criticism. Maybe I ate something wrong while pregnant? Homemade cottage cheese? Sushi?.. Stop, stop! Maybe I didn't eat something?(Lette: p. 15).

The novel "House Rules" intricately portrays the minutest details of Jacob's communication with his younger brother, his mother, and Jess. The weak connection between the boys and their father is indicated by a dotted line, while the relationship between Emma and Oliver is outlined. For almost every such relationship, the inevitable conclusion suggests that mutual understanding is possible, even if not

achieved through empathy itself, but rather through the conscious development of individual practices that constitute empathy—such as care, concessions, active listening, attention, patience, and tolerance.

“I had let every relationship slide, with the exception of the one I’d built with Jacob. I had made choices that other women would not have made. At best that made me a fierce, fighting mother; at worst, it made me single-minded”. (picoult,p.583)

It is noteworthy that the only graduate on the autism spectrum in the novel successfully communicates with Jacob not merely by applying learned theories from his studies and psychiatric practice, but rather by genuinely putting himself in the place of the Other. : “Jess is beautiful, although she says this was not always the case. She lost a lot of weight two years ago after she had an operation. I’ve seen pictures of her before, when she was obese. She says that’s why she wants to work with kids whose disabilities make them targets—because she remembers being one, too. In the pictures, she looks like Jess, but hidden inside someone larger and puffier. Now, she is curvy, but only in the right places” (Picoult: p.72).

Violation of self-identification inevitably causes a violation of the integrity of the individual. “Sometimes I think the human heart is just a simple shelf. There’s only so much you can pile onto it before something falls off an edge and you are left to pick up the pieces” (Picoult: p.90). Uncertainty and frustration extends to other areas of life and other interests of Emma (Jacob's mother), Lucy (Merlin's mother), and Judy (Christopher's mother). First comes the realization that not only the child, but the heroine herself is not like everyone else, and later - the understanding that this is an irreversible condition that cannot be outgrown or changed:

“You not only have a child, you will always have a child. I mean, your child will never become a man, he will become a giant child. With a psychological umbilical cord attached to your life” (Lette: p. 38).

The fact that her whole life will revolve around her son frightens Lucy with the complete subordination of her personality to only one field of activity, and at the same time the most unsuccessful field, since, as we have already noted, the role of the mother is already recognized as failed and lost. The rest of the roles simply will not be able to be realized, because neither Lucy, nor Emma, nor Judy will have the opportunity to devote enough time and attention to themselves to realize your dreams, like writing a book, or getting a promotion at work, or just hanging out with friends:

“Isolation. A fixation on one particular subject. An inability to connect socially. Jacob was the one diagnosed, but I might as well have Asperger’s, too.” (Picoult: p. 50).

Based on the assertion that the structure of personality is determined by a set of multi-vector expressed I-functions, which together make up identity, we observe not only the process of disidentification but also the destruction of the personality as a whole. Returning to the definition of the **Other** as a concept that captures the experience of meeting the Self with an entity similar to it, representing something different in relation to the Self, let's pay attention to the condition of similarity. If a mother does not feel her similarity with other mothers, she cannot feel her difference from them. In the novels *The Boy Who Fell to Earth* and *House Rules*, we see how the mother over time begins to identify with the mothers of autistic children, and not with mothers in general or women in general (picoult, 2010)

It is significant that the meeting with the second wife of her ex-husband does not fill Emma's heart with the bitterness that we might expect - the wife of the father of her sons is too different for her. For a long time she is not able to take Oliver's passionate feelings seriously, consciously and subconsciously denying herself manifestations of femininity and sexuality. However, the destructive processes are not fixated on the “mother-child with autism” couple, but affect anyone who is in a relationship with any member of this couple. Of the three families considered in the novels, there is not a single complete one: Merlin's

father abandons his family, Jacob's father abandons his family, Christopher is abandoned by his mother, then his father betrays his trust, the boy runs to London to his mother and rejects his father.

Thus, in all three novels, the loss of one parent as "superfluous" in the pair "mother-child" or "father-child" is shown for a number of reasons that are also directly related to identification: failure in the role of a parent and the feeling of guilt that the characters try to overcome the birth of healthy children in a new marriage and the "forgetting" of a sick child, as well as the failure of the mother and father of a child with autism to fulfill their marital roles due to the mother's psychological obsession with the child and constant physical and moral fatigue. J. Picoult states the departure of Father Jacob as a fact of the distant past, already so familiar to all family members that it practically ceases to be experienced and is driven somewhere into the subconscious.(picoult:2010)

However, the author doubts that "forgetting" can be a solution to the relationship problem. In the midst of Jacob's trial, Henry returns, also unable to withstand the pressure of an unresolved psychological trauma and determined to go through a difficult process with his first family. His return becomes the key to gaining the truth. The semantics of the motive for searching for truth is relevant at two levels: in the literal, plot sense, it is necessary to find out who killed Jess, in the metaphorical sense, to find one's true self. The paths to both truths are identical to each other and pass through awareness of oneself in the Other, since the mode of genuine communication is possible and in the situation of death: we are still able to love the dead, think about them, take care of them. According to Levinas, death requires from us the highest manifestation of love and responsibility towards the Other, because this is the moment of his greatest weakness and need for care (Levinas, 1982:p.152).

From the standpoint of the relationship between Self and Other, Jacob's concern for Jess after her death is completely natural. The police and the jury, not engaged in genuine communication and seduced by the pseudo-clarity of falsified evidence, see something monstrous in the

fact that Jacob dressed the dead Jess, carried her body under the bridge, sat her down, covered her with his blanket, brought from home especially for this purpose, put it in her pocket jackets carelessly knocked out and wrapped in a napkin tooth. For them, a set of these actions is evidence of Jacob's insanity and guilt, while for a teenager it is a manifestation of love and responsibility towards a significant Other.

An analysis of the relationship between Emma and Jacob, Henry and sons, Emma and Oliver, Jacob and Jess proves that the implementation of the relationship "I - Other" in "House Rules" occurs in terms of not opposition, but correlation, juxtaposition and complementarity. The denouement of the plot is built on the realization of the complementarity of the Self and the Other, which we define at the motive level as "the search for truth". The plot is the murder of Jess under circumstances that allow Jacob to be charged with murder. The teenager does not dispute the justice of the accusation because of his peculiar vision of the world. On the one hand, he is passionate about forensics and finds the whole process interesting. Jacob is playing some kind of game in which justice and the family must correctly interpret the evidence he has fabricated, solve his riddles and come to the true state of affairs, i.e. understanding of his innocence. On the other hand, Jacob is trying to protect his younger brother Theo, whom he considers the real killer and whose traces of being at the crime scene he carefully destroys. The paradox is that Jacob, as an autistic, never lies (this information is constantly repeated in court), but no one guesses to ask a direct question whether the teenager killed Jess. Throughout the novel, people who are accustomed to the fact that anyone can lie in their own interests treat his testimony with a bias and look for the truth in fabricated evidence. And the only chance for justice is the transition to genuine communication with the autistic child and with each other (Picoult:2010).

The degree of relations between the Self and the Other reaches absolute values in the pair "Jacob - Theo". Internal tension and antagonism between teenagers arises due to jealousy towards each other, characteristic of sisters and brothers and an enhanced "feature"

of Jacob. While the eldest gets all the attention of the mother, Theo feels unwanted and unloved. He tries to fill the void with simulacra, entering other people's houses in the absence of the owners and living other people's lives. For an hour or two, Theo lies on other people's beds, watches other people's videos, tastes food from other people's refrigerators, drawing in his mind pictures of the life of a strange, happier, "normal" family. Nevertheless, Theo's destructively expressed sensitivity to the alien is still the same ability to know oneself in the Other. Theo demonstrates this ability to a higher degree than other heroes

Emma says. —When Theo doesn't communicate with me, it's because he doesn't want to. When Jacob doesn't communicate with me, it's because he can't. (picoult: p.560).

It is in the Jacob-Theo relationship that the non-obvious solution to the problem of identity, authentic communication, and truth-finding lies. The only condition is to change the polarity of your attitude towards yourself through the Other, and once Theo already took this step in relation to his mother:

I glanced at my mother, and that's when I saw her crying. Tears were rolling down her cheeks and she wasn't doing anything to try to wipe them away. It was almost as if she didn't know it was happening. <...> I just know that, at that moment, I remember feeling like the world had turned itself inside out. It's the child who's supposed to cry, and the mom who makes it all better, not the other way around, which is why mothers will move heaven and earth to hold it together in front of their own kids. (Picoult: p. 221).

At a critical - responsible - moment, Theo manages to take a step towards his brother.

Jodi Picoult sums up the main idea of the book in the form of a rule mom posted on the refrigerator "Take care of your brother; he's the only one you've got". (Picoult: p.506) This last, fifth, rule comes right after "Don't be late for school", and the first half of the book looks like a

mockery of the difficult life of a small family. And then Jacob innocently explains that he falsified all the evidence to hide the presence of his brother in the house of the murdered woman, and the question of the lack of empathy in autists receives a new answer, and the key word of the novel "rule" becomes synonymous with Levinasian "law": "Submission to the law, which makes the Ego responsible for the other, perhaps bears the bitter name of love. Love, in this case, has nothing to do with the word, long compromised by our literature and our hypocrisy, rather it is authenticity itself in the achievement of the individual and, therefore, absolutely different, which simply shows itself, in other words, remains an "individual of the genus"(Levinas: p.158). Love here means a holistic order or disorder of the psychic or subjective, which from now on ceases to be a chaos of arbitrariness, whose ontological meaning has long been lost and turns into a necessary condition for clarifying the logical category of "single" beyond the boundaries of dilution of the individual and the universal" (Levinas, p.158). The motives of Theo and Jacob, understood through the prism of Levinas' statement, appeal to the golden rule of morality.

In the ethical space of the novels "House Rules," "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," and "The Boy Who Fell to Earth," love is understood not only as empathy but also as responsibility. It represents a genuine feeling that manifests itself in relation to the Other without expecting an identical response, which provides a solution to the fundamental paradox of the problem novel about people with autism. Love, as a responsibility, not only allows one to find oneself in the Other but also enables the Self to perceive and be perceived in the Other.

So, the ethical field dominates in the genre of a problematic teenage youth novel over a detective storyline. In all the considered works, the features of thinking, perception and behavior of the hero are the trigger for subsequent events, the starting point of various conflicts, while the driving force of the plot is overcoming mutual repulsion within all the indicated dichotomies. Mysterious murders are resolved in a non-trivial way for a detective through an open dialogue with a suspect,

while the reader's attention is still focused on resolving the problem of communication in the context of desocialization of a child with autism. Authors of novels about people with the disorder autistic spectrum show that only love (as well as responsibility, empathy and care) can be the solution to a communication problem, shown towards him without expecting an identical response and opening up the possibility of the Self to perceive and be perceived in the Other.(picoult:2010)

Conclusions

Having traced the development of the image of a teenager through the lens of the theory of otherness, we can observe several significant shifts. Firstly, there has been a change in focus in defining the Other: in the mid-twentieth century, otherness was largely determined by social status, while at the end of the twentieth century, it shifted to being characterized by unique individual traits. In the twenty-first century, the concept of the Other is considered in terms of the opposition between "norm" and "deviation from the norm."

Secondly, it is evident that in the pairing of "normality" and "abnormality," neither term possesses a permanent positive or negative connotation. The meaning of the concept of abnormality has evolved from being associated with qualities like 'super capable, talented, unique, and cool, but not understood by society,' to being associated with 'incapable and deprived.' Both meanings, at certain periods of the genre's development, are preferred by authors for their protagonists and, as a result, have implications for societal preferences.

Thirdly, the attention of authors has shifted from solely focusing on the protagonist to exploring the relationships between different characters. These relationships, as observed, can be built upon the principles of recognizing the otherness of the Self and/or the Other. This shift highlights the high importance of the ethical component in these works.

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