

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCLUSION

After analysing Jodi Picoult's *House Rules*, I come to some conclusions. From the beginning, the novel tells a story about Jacob Hunt, a boy who suffers from Asperger's Syndrome which makes him different from other boys of his age. Jacob is seen as a rigid, insensitive, aggressive and obsessive person by his surrounding because of the syndrome which causes him to have problems with his social skills so society tends to misjudge him. His limitation as an Asperger's also brings him to the situation which makes his life more complicated, namely as the suspect of Jess's murder.

People have seen the rigidity of Jacob through the fact that Jacob obeys the rules and concentrates on things he loves. It is caused by the brain defect in every Asperger's Syndrome's sufferer. According to Jacob, he himself is not a rigid person. For him, every action is basically about obeying the rules which have been taught earlier. For a person with Asperger's Syndrome, obeying rules is easy as for them the world is simply black and white without any exaggerated expressions including the House Rules which may place him in difficult situations.

In relation to his rigidity, his surrounding sees Jacob as an insensitive person. He is only sensitive to the things that really affect him. He measures

everything from his own perspective and through his inability to understand and express emotion which is caused by impaired ability to identify social cues. Jacob's wrong expression makes people think that he is insensitive and capable of committing a murder as we can see through his laughter while Dr. Nussbaum seriously explains the autopsy of Jess's death in the court and also when he does not show his sadness when his mother says that Jess is dead. However, this characteristic actually comes as a result of his inability to sense any emotion and his brain is incapable of interpreting it. He simply does not understand what is emotion. Only few people around him who understand his limitation in communication.

Jacob is also seen as an aggressive person since he cannot express himself properly in his communication especially when the plans are changed and when he faces things that he cannot stand. For example, when Jacob assaults Mimi, his classmate, because he feels that she breaks the rules, and when he shows his tantrum because of he cannot watch *CrimeBuster* TV shows which Jacob regularly watch or when he is touched by his cellmate who has red head while in the prison. On the other hand, he is not aggressive. For Jacob, it is just a normal response towards a set of things he dislikes and whenever a rule is broken. His being aggressive does not mean that he is violent; he just reacts to the rules and the routine that has been changed or whenever he feels that people break the rules.

Jacob is also seen as an obsessive person when his surrounding notice the notes that are found as the evidence of Jess' death. Jacob writes down the analysis of the crime scene which is similar to Jess's crime scene and he puts the notes into practice by re-arranging Jess's crime scene based on one of the episodes of *CrimeBuster* TV show. Jacob does all these things without drama; he simply loves such things very much. What makes people regard him as an

obsessive person is his focus on detail instead of the big picture of a thing which means he only thinks about detail such as the crime scene without thinking of the consequences as the big picture. Because of his obsession, Jacob's surrounding considers him a cold-blooded murderer.

Jacob's impairment makes people assume that Jacob might have killed Jess. The author creates such a protagonist to show to the reader the real condition of a child with Asperger's Syndrome. Due to his illness, he will always be blamed by society. Thus society who does not have enough knowledge on Asperger's will consider Asperger's Syndrome as a mental illness instead of physical disfunction. The fact is that Asperger's can also be caused by birth defect whereas mental illness is emotional disfunction triggered by pressure from outside and can happen on normal people who have normal brain function.

The author successfully fulfills her purposes of writing this novel. The first purpose is to give the reader a clear description of the characteristics of a person with Asperger's Syndrome by using multiperspective points of view to explain Jacob's feeling and the people around him in detail and the second purpose is to give illustration of what will happen to Asperger's if he or she is involved in a situation dealing with law enforcement community such as the police and the trial through Jacob's story. Picoult wants to convey to the reader that one will have prejudice when one does not have enough understanding of Asperger's, one tends to blame them because they do not understand them.

In the end, after reading and analysing this novel, I would like to say that we can learn much about Asperger's Syndrome from this novel. People with Asperger's cannot interact well with society because of their limits through emotional understanding while emotion is important in socializing with other people. People with Asperger's Syndrome will only react to unambiguous things. They have patterns and rules inside their heads and they live according to the

rules which have been taught to them which they will hold firmly. It is not easy for them to face pattern changes. If the patterns change suddenly, they will respond by, for example releasing tantrum. Tantrum is a normal form of response that appears when they cannot control the situation.

In a bigger picture, Jacob simply lives differently from normal people and they should not be perceived as bad or wicked people because they can hardly understand emotion which are essential in social life and as the novelist reveals "being different is not synonymous with being bad" (547).