

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates how characters with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are represented in English literature. The theoretical part of the work addresses ASD manifestations in different spheres of life. Based on works from the fields of psychology, disability studies, and English literature, such concepts as autism and Asperger syndrome are introduced. In the theoretical part, main tendencies and stereotypes as to characters with ASD in fiction are presented. Besides, the authors of the analysed novels and their motivation to utilize disability narratives are displayed in the last theoretical chapter. The practical part determines whether the portrayal of characters with ASD in novels follows the symptoms described in specialised literature. The symptoms span three main domains, such as social interaction, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behaviour, interests, activities, and idiosyncratic language used by characters. The language of the protagonists who are depicted in the selected literary works conveys the specificity of the disorder and contributes to a better understanding of the challenges of an individual with Asperger syndrome. In addition, the portrayals of characters in Erskine's and Haddon's novels are compared in order to ascertain common features and differences in the depiction of individuals with ASD in British and American literature.