SPECIMEN FORMAT FOR THESES OF MONTH

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Branch/ Area:	:	English Literature/Disability Literary Studies
Sub Subject Heading:	:	English Literature/Disability Literary Studies
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Abstract within 300 words:

Disability is a pervasive and deeply personal aspect of human existence, spanning across cultures and epochs. Despite its longstanding presence, the discrimination faced by individuals with disabilities stems not from inherent individual biases, but from entrenched social ideologies. However, the scholarly exploration of disability, particularly within the realm of literature, remains a relatively nascent field of interdisciplinary inquiry. This Ph.D. thesis aims to delve into the underexplored domain of disability literary studies, focusing on the works of Canadian author Beverley Brenna. Notably, Brenna's unique perspective as both a writer and a special educator imbues her narratives with a richness derived from firsthand experience. Her deliberate inclusion of characters with disabilities serves not only to provide representation for disabled readers but also to cultivate understanding and normalization among able-bodied readers. Through an analysis of selected works by Brenna, this study seeks to illuminate the pervasive influence of ableism—the systemic discrimination against individuals with disabilities—and explore avenues for its mitigation. Components such as normativity, stigma, and inclusivity will be examined to elucidate the complex dynamics of the ability divide and propose strategies for fostering greater equity and acceptance within society.

i) Major objectives :

1. Examine the portrayal of the normate‘ concept within Brenna‘s narratives, shedding light on its influence on individuals with disabilities and societal perceptions
2. Investigate how Beverley Brenna‘s literary works depict characters with disabilities in the context of stigma, exploring their contribution to challenging or perpetuating stereotypes
3. Explore the representation of inclusion in Brenna‘s works, highlighting instances of resistance against ableism and their impact on broader awareness and acceptance

4. Analyse the overall influence of Brenna‘s writings on the discourse surrounding ableism, literature, and societal attitudes towards disability

ii) Hypothesis:

In the contemporary world, stark divisions persist, with one particularly conspicuous fault line being ableism—a pervasive social construct wherein individuals deemed normal‘ often wield undue influence over those living with disabilities. This scholarly endeavour embarks on a rigorous evaluation of specific literary works authored by Beverley Brenna, with the overarching aim of shedding a penetrating light on the presence of ableism within these narratives and, in doing so, contributing to the ongoing discourse and rectification of this deeply ingrained societal prejudice

iii) Methodology :

The key scholarly texts, including Keywords for Disability by Adam, Rachael, et al., *The Disability Studies Reader* edited by Lennard J. Davis, and *Culture – Theory– Disability: Encounters between Disability Studies and Cultural Studies* edited by Anne Waldschmidt, Hanji Berressem, and Moritz Ingwersen, constitute the essential underpinnings of this research. The documentation adheres to the guidelines of the *MLA*, 9th edition.

iv) Findings:

1. The initial finding highlights a critical issue: people facing invisible disabilities often confront stigma and discrimination, resulting in deep emotional or psychological wounds.

2. The cumulative impact of stigma, trauma, inadequate support environments, and hostile attitudes significantly undermines the mental and emotional health of individuals grappling with invisible disabilities.

3. The study emphasises the perpetuation of stigma and discrimination towards individuals with invisible disabilities due to society‘s prevailing negative attitudes.

4. Implementing proactive measures, such as offering tailored support for those with conditions like Asperger‘s Syndrome, FASD, and other invisible disabilities, coupled with fostering safe and empathetic environments, holds the potential to alleviate such trauma.

5. Stigma encompasses the web of negative stereotypes, biases, and discrimination that individuals with invisible disabilities, like Asperger‘s Syndrome or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), frequently confront.

6. Combatting stigma requires multifaceted efforts aimed at raising awareness and educating society about the realities of living with invisible disabilities. This approach serves as a catalyst for promoting acceptance, empathy, and inclusion, all of which are indispensable in mitigating the detrimental effects of biases and misconceptions.

7. While combating stigma remains pivotal in ableist societies, there exist numerous challenges linked to invisible disabilities, including difficulties in social interactions, sensory sensitivities, and coping with the resulting psychological stress.

8. During childhood, the provision of nurturing care and support is pivotal for children‘s development, but invisible disabilities frequently become formidable barriers that impede their access to necessary aid.

9. Addressing the internal stigma stemming from feelings of difference and self- pity often necessitates dedicated counselling and psychological support.

10. An essential observation highlights the frequent inadequacy of public spaces and facilities in accommodating the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly those grappling with invisible conditions.

11. A crucial observation underscores the pivotal role of inclusivity in fostering healthy growth and active participation among individuals grappling with invisible disabilities. The presence of a supportive network encompassing friends, family, and professional assistance plays a pivotal role in mitigating the stigma, trauma, and psychological stress experienced by these individuals.

12. To combat these adversities, initiatives aimed at raising awareness, educational campaigns, promoting widespread acceptance, and offering tailored support systems emerge as indispensable steps. By addressing these pressing issues head-on, such efforts are instrumental in not only tackling societal misconceptions but also in uplifting the overall well-being and quality of life for individuals navigating disabilities.

13. A crucial finding underscores the significance of redirecting attention away from the limitations imposed by disabilities and towards recognizing and appreciating the distinct abilities and untapped potential of individuals.

14. The intersectionality of circus culture and disability offers a profound subject of observation within the broader context of societal inclusivity.

15. In examining the symbiotic relationship between circus culture and disability, it becomes evident that the circus serves as a microcosm reflecting the principles of diversity and equality.

16. Addressing the intricate challenges intertwined with invisible disabilities requires a multifaceted and holistic approach. This comprehensive strategy spans various dimensions, encompassing heightened awareness, enhanced educational initiatives, policy reforms, and the cultivation of a more inclusive and empathetic societal framework.

17. Beverley Brenna‘s works exploring disability offer an extensive scope for further scholarly inquiry. Engaging with her literary repertoire presents an expansive terrain for in-depth exploration into the realm of ableism.

18. Disabilities, depicted within literature, challenge entrenched stereotypes and bring forth oft-neglected perspectives. Beverley Brenna‘s poignant portrayal of disability beckons for empathy and inclusion.

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