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**Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women**  
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### Appendix L2

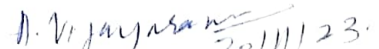
#### (Item No 5 of Check List) Details of Research Publications

S.No	Article	Journal	Other Details Vol/No/Page No/ Year	Published in UGC- CARE / Scopus Indexed/ Web of Science
1	Breaking of the Down in Beverley Brenna's Waiting For No One	Studies in Indian Places Names (ISSN: 2394- 3114)	Vol. 40 NO. 43 Pg. no : 15-18 Feb 2020	UGC Care
2	The Ableism Paradox: Deciphering Disability through a Scholarly Lens	Journal of Literature & Aesthetics	Acceptance received on 04/10/23 2023	UGC Care

\*Proof of list of Journals from Internet to be attached along with copies of reprints.

Scholar : J.B.  20/11/23

Supervisor :  20/11/23  
Dr. M. Anjum Khan

  
Checked By: 20/11/23

HoD/Dean of Respective School

The research scholar Miss. Banumathi, J has published/ got acceptance from the following journals:

1. Studies in Indian Place Names - discontinued in UGC Care List Group I from April 2020 and
2. She got acceptance from "Journal of Literature and Aesthetics" - is indexed and active in UGC Care List Group I from June 2019 to present.

J. J. Gil  
04.12.2023

BREAKING OF THE DAWN IN BEVERLEY BRENNA'S *WAITING FOR NO ONE*

J.Banumathi<sup>1</sup>, Dr. M. Anjum Khan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of English,  
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women

<sup>2</sup>Assistan Professor, Department of English,  
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women

## **ABSTRACT**

Women encompass typical stereotypes in this gender biased society. Gender basis is considering a natural part of ones' life, and it is one of the issues which does not need any explanation. As gender biases differ from 'able-bodied' women to 'Disabled' women. As disabled women have to face two-fold suppression in the form of Stigma and Gender. The present paper focuses on the protagonist plight against gender in the novel *Waiting for No One* by Beverley Brenna.

**Keywords:** Gender, Disability, Stigma, Two-fold Suppression

Gender plays a vital role in ones' life as it through that lens; one sees other person and life. However, 'Gender' meaning has evolved as it first meant to differentiate between sex, but as time evolved, its meaning has been changed in an individual's perspectives. 'Sex' refers to biological differences between male and female whereas, 'Gender' refers to the behavioural patterns, activities, roles, and attributes that have been given by the society to both men and women.

Simon de-Beauvoir says, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (267). In today's world, sex has a fixed meaning, and it does not change anything, but on the other hand, gender plays a massive change in ones' life as it keeps on fluctuating, and it varies from society to society. Diane Estelle Railsback in "Reading for equality: An Examination of gender-bias in Children's Literature" quotes the psychologists Carol Gilligan and Nona Lyons, "Their pioneering work serves as a counterpoint to classic developmental theories where male subjects have provided the basis for understanding moral, cognitive, and gender-identity development" (11).

During the 19th century, women are treated differently even though Bronte sisters are celebrated; their lives are not as easy as it visible. In their era, women have been expected to take care of household chores but not to write. Emily Bronte used to write her works privately as she does not want others to know about her literary works. Charlotte Bronte on the other hand says, "We did not like to declare ourselves women, because – without at the time suspecting that our mode of writing and thinking was not that what is called 'feminine' – we had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice."

The term 'prejudice' has been invented 170years before, yet it means a disproportionate amount of power that prevails in society. Many writers have focused on feminism. However, Beverley Brenna has focused on disabled women and their struggle to survive in the patriarchal society. The novel, *Wild Orchid* centers on the protagonist, Taylor Jane's plight against Asperger's Syndrome in the patriarchal society. Jane has Asperger's Syndrome, and as a result, she has been isolated from the rest of her classmates.

Jane's Syndrome does not allow her to have a good relationship with her classmates. Jane has a special educator called Shauna, to whom Jane has a healthy relationship. However, due to her Asperger's Syndrome, she is judged and avoided by the boys in her class. Jane is called a freak by her classmates.

Jane finds it difficult when she is questioned by many questions at the same time yet it is a normal process for the able bodies. Jane struggles to answer her mother who is enquiring about the interview which Jane has attended:

'So you had the job interview this morning! How did it go?' Now that's the kind of question that always makes me (Jane) mad. *How did it go?* What exactly does that mean? *How* is one of those words that I skip over, and I try to figure out the meaning of the rest of the sentence. In this case, *go* is the verb, used to describe movement. As far I know, The interview never went anywhere. (27-28)

Jane's mother takes care of Jane, as Jane's father leaves them because of Jane's Asperger's Syndrome. In a patriarchal society, men are allowed to leave women as they like, but women have to undergo the crisis alone. Jane is guilty as her father leaves her mother because of her invisible disability. Women are blamed for everything, even when things aren't in their hands.

As Jane is overly protected by her mother, she feels suffocated and she starts to hide things from her mother. For instance, Jane wishes to hide her interview with her mother because her mother will dominate her perspectives towards Jane. As she says, "A lot of things'.... I'm trying so hard to control myself. There is so much I could tell her about the interview but I want to desperately to remember alone, because as soon as my mother is allowed to know about it, she will stick her own perspective on top of mine and that just gets confusing" (27).

Jane finds it difficult to find a place in society as she is not like other persons in society. She requires special attention; instead, she gets humiliated by the other persons. As she says, "When I was in grade two, my teacher had a big cardboard box at the back of the classroom where kids go and work if they felt like it. I spent a lot of time sitting in one corner of that box to escape the classroom setting" (70).

One of the major issues faced by women is getting dominated by the men in their families. It makes a woman incapable of defending herself, and in the end, she has to surrender herself to the men's wish with or without her will. Jane faces one such situation when she is in Cody, Wyoming, to visit her dad. When they visit Rodeo to see a bullfight, Jane's father asks her to take part in the bullfight even though she does not like to:

Eventually, there is a contest where the kids all go down from the stands and chase a black calf with a red ribbon on its tail. The first person to get the ribbon wins one hundred dollars. Dad wants me to go down there, but I refuse. I am not a kid anymore and it is embarrassing that he suggests it. (71)

Humiliation and underestimation are also the parts in gender bias, where every woman has to struggle through. However, in Jane's case, there is a two-fold suppression. First is the society to decide her ability, and second is by her mother, who overly protects her and underestimate her by not allowing her to be an independent soul. Jane's mother expects Jane to give every detail of her in day to day life. Individuals with a disability feel proud when they do things on their own when others think that they cannot. Jane's first independent experience is when she is allowed to go on a bus on her own. As she says, "This is the first time I have taken a bus journey by myself. It occurs

to me to pat myself on the back, although I know that this is just something people say rather than do. I am doing it, though. It feels pleasant” (63).

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet say, “As we age, we continue to learn new ways of being men and women” (30). However, this rule applies differently for disabled individuals, i.e., Jane finds it difficult to communicate with other persons as her Syndrome does not allow her to be like other able-bodied. Charlotte Bronte, being an able-bodied individual struggles to hide her author identity yet, on the other hand, Jane being a disabled girl is unable to hide her inability and gets humiliated by the persons around her.

‘Does art imitate life or does life imitate art?’ The same applies to the dilemma of women in the society. Literature reflects the societal changes as it is mainly dominated by men. The present paper entitled “Breaking of the Dawn in Beverley Brenna’s *Waiting for No One*” to present the injustice done to the women in the society. There is a similarity between Charlotte Bronte and Jane, i.e., they both communicate through their writing; the difference is others read Bronte’s work, but Jane’s isn’t. Emily Bronte, through her work, has dealt with male dominance and women’s role in the society. Jane, on the other hand, writes to let go of her emotions, and she feels happy about it. As she says, “I am satisfied with my new laptop and the freedom it allows me. I can write what I want.... My high school English teacher, Mrs. Thomson, said that writing my feelings down can help me understand them... I really need writing to do is help me change these feelings” (94-95).

Evie Gaughan in her article “Viewpoint: Gender Bias In The Literary World” quotes the author Catherine Nichols (2015) “who has decided to do a little experiment to see if the publishing world really was as gender biased as the figures suggested. Firstly, she sent her novel to 50 agents using her own name and received just two manuscript requests. But when she sent the same material to the same agents, using a male pseudonym, the novel was requested 17 times”. This is evident that Literature reflects the societal changes in the literary works, and many are still forced to use male pseudonyms for their works.

Even though technologies have developed still gender bias prevails in society, and in the case of disabled women, there is a double suppression when compared with able-bodied women. Disabled women are humiliated, underestimated, and stigmatized. However, Jane fights to break this barrier, as she says “I have been waiting to finish high school, waiting to take a university class, and waiting to get a job, and now I have done these things... and I am thinking that I will try to just experience these things instead of waiting for them. I know that life does not always go according to the plan, but I have promised myself to give it my best effort” (174).

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**Banumathi J.**

## **The Ableism Paradox: Deciphering Disability through a Scholarly Lens**

**Banumathi J.**

**&**

**M. Anjum Khan**

### **Abstract**

This research paper delves into the intricate and multifaceted concept of ableism in the context of disability. Ableism refers to the systematic discrimination, prejudice, and exclusion experienced by individuals with disabilities, stemming from deeply ingrained societal norms and beliefs surrounding ability and disability. This paper aims to critically analyse the historical foundations and social construction of ableism, elucidating its impact on individuals with disabilities across various domains of life. Drawing on an interdisciplinary approach, this study synthesizes theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence, and lived experiences to unravel the complexities surrounding ableism. By exploring the manifestations of ableism in educational, employment, and healthcare settings, this research seeks to shed light on the structural and attitudinal barriers that perpetuate ableism, ultimately advocating for inclusive practices and challenging the dominant ableist paradigm. Through a comprehensive examination of literature and case studies, this paper endeavours to foster a deeper understanding of ableism and its implications, promoting social change and empowering individuals with disabilities.

**Keywords:** Ableism, ability, disability, nor mate, eugenics, discrimination

Ableism in disability retains its contemporary relevance as societies continue to grapple with the persistence of discriminatory attitudes and practices towards individuals with disabilities. Despite advances in awareness and legal protections, ableism persists in subtle and overt ways, underscoring the urgent need for ongoing scholarly examination. In contemporary discourse, the intersections of ableism with other forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and classism, further compound the challenges faced by disabled individuals. The COVID-19 pandemic has also laid bare the disparities and ableist biases within healthcare systems, as disabled individuals are disproportionately affected and face barriers in accessing vital resources and support. Moreover, the emergence of new technologies and debates surrounding assisted

reproduction and genetic engineering introduce additional complexities to the understanding of ableism. Thus, this scholarly exploration of ableism in disability not only provides a historical and theoretical foundation but also critically engages with the contemporary context, highlighting the imperative for transformative change to address the persistent and evolving challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in the present day.



**M. Anjum Khan**

The primary objective of this research is to comprehensively examine the concept of ableism within the context of disability, shedding light on its intricate manifestations and consequences. By delving into related concepts such as nor mate eugenics, the study aims to unveil the interconnections and broader implications of ableism. Additionally, this research seeks to illustrate these theoretical constructs through a compelling literary case study, providing a vivid narrative that embodies the experiences of individuals facing ableism in their daily lives. Through a careful analysis of the case study, this research endeavours to deepen our understanding of the lived realities of ableism and its profound impact on individuals with disabilities, thereby contributing to broader discussions on social justice, inclusion, and the imperative for change.

Disability often poses challenges in representing the body, as society typically defines ability based on an idealized body, while labelling those who deviate from this standard as “defective” or “deviant,” thereby categorizing them as disabled. Consequently, the disabled body offers valuable insights into the socially constructed nature of all bodies. In their article “Models of disability: A brief overview,” Marno Retief and Rantoa Letsosa cite Carlson, who asserts that disability is viewed as inherently negative, a pitiable condition that is perceived as “a personal tragedy for both the individual and her family, something to be prevented and, if possible, cured” (3). Consequently, social attitudes towards disability and the representation of the body significantly influence an individual’s identity in society, as the notion of “normalcy” carries negative connotations for those with disabilities.

The concept of eugenics plays a pivotal role in determining one’s abilities, and Sir Francis Galton established a modern system that involved identifying individuals based on their fingerprints. Mackenzie, in *Statistics in Britain*, suggests that one of the motivations for investigating personal identification is to identify independent features suitable for hereditary studies, leading to the idea that every person may possess visible and undeniable evidence of their lineage and close kinship. Fingerprints are viewed as physical markers of an individual, akin to serial numbers inscribed on the body. This perception implies that the body possesses an immutable identity that dictates an individual’s position, aptitude, intelligence, and role in society. This emphasis on eugenics and the pursuit of being “normal” marginalizes those who do not fit into these categories, perceiving them as monstrous or deviant bodies.

The body plays a significant role in distinguishing between able and disabled bodies, as it experiences pain, joy, intense desire, and physical pleasure. The able body sets the standard

for being “able,” with the expectation that the vast majority should conform to the unrealistic ideals of the “normal” spectrum. This notion compels individuals to go to great lengths in order to fit within this normative scale. Dan Goodley, in *Dis/ability Studies: Theorizing Disablism and Ableism*, quotes Kannen, who asserts that the social order is upheld by constructed categorizations of privilege and power, which determine the possibilities available to certain bodies while considering other bodies as “Other” (51). The normative scale has been constructed based on an idealized body that does not exist in reality. For instance, the Greek artist Zeuxis attempted to paint Aphrodite, the goddess of love, by using various female models, each possessing ideal body parts. This exemplifies that the myth or ideal body championed by able-bodied individuals is merely a figment of imagination. Nevertheless, many individuals endure pain in their pursuit of attaining a perfect body, aspiring to experience the luxury and privileges associated with able-bodiedness in society.

In recent times, the concept of “ability” has not only evolved but has taken on a disturbing connotation, emphasizing the negative consequences of disability and perpetuating the notion that being able-bodied is a privilege that affords one the opportunity to pass judgment on those with non-conforming bodies. Fiona Kumari Campbell in *Keywords for Disability Studies*, boldly asserts that “ability” stands in direct opposition to disability, as it serves as a defining factor in an individual’s social structure and status within society. It not only shapes our perceptions but also establishes rigid standards for the body and mind, dictating societal norms that extend into both the present and future. Paradoxically, while purporting to define a livable life, the very term “ability” acts as an adversary to disability, reinforcing an illusionary construct that has been woven into the fabric of our society. It is a construct built on a fallacy—a fallacy that has given rise to social hierarchies and a caste system that permeates every aspect of our existence.

The dichotomy between able-bodied and disabled bodies can be likened to a coin, with each side imposing its own terms and conditions that serve to define and devalue individuals. The notion of being able-bodied grants one the privilege of hope and a sense of security, leading them to believe that their existence holds greater worth than that of disabled individuals. Regrettably, those who fail to meet the prescribed standards are invalidated and relegated to a lesser extent, confined within the confines of a disability status. Lennard Davis in *The Disability Studies Reader*, draws attention to the distressing reality perpetuated by eugenics, quoting an official from the Eugenics Record Office who brazenly declares, “the only way to keep a nation strong mentally and physically is to see that each new generation is derived chiefly from the fitter members of the generation before” (24). This chilling statement exposes the extreme measures employed by eugenics to rid society of disability, perceiving it as a weakness that threatens the very fabric of a nation.

The perception of disability is subjective and varies from person to person. Consider the case of Marcus Sergius, a Roman general who, despite facing amputation, resorted to surgical intervention to equip himself with iron rod hands. Marcus went to extraordinary lengths, undergoing extensive surgery, all in an effort to align himself with the societal definition of

normalcy. He realized that his identity would be undermined if he were to fall into the disabled category. The fear of being labelled as disabled casts a dark shadow over one's existence, compelling individuals to take measures to avoid falling into this stigmatized category. Consequently, ability and able-bodiedness become synonymous with an individual's role within the community. Disabled individuals are portrayed as hopeless, impaired, and failed bodies, constantly subjected to scrutiny, rendering their existence seemingly worthless. Mental or bodily ambiguity is seen as an aberration, a deviation from the norm. Throughout these transformations, the concept of "compulsory able-bodiedness," as described by Robert McRuer in *Keywords for Disability Studies*, perseveres—a relentless pursuit of an ideal that, like heterosexuality, remains unattainable. Broadly speaking, "ableism" encompasses the ideological overvaluation of ableness and the systemic reinforcement of norms that govern the identities of both the abled and disabled, permeating laws, social policies, and cultural values. These norms are instrumental in shaping and being shaped by notions of legitimacy or fraudulence surrounding impaired and non-abled bodies, impacting access to social benefits, legal protections, and social status.

A critical examination of "ableism" within the realm of disability studies shifts the focus away from disability as a self-contained category. Lennard Davis, in *The Disability Studies Reader*, sheds light on the eugenics movement's central focus on what was broadly referred to as "feeble-mindedness," a term encompassing low intelligence, mental illness, and even poverty (7). Ableism signifies an ideology that upholds the notion of a healthy body, a normal mind, and the expectation of appropriate cognitive abilities and emotional expressions. Consequently, individuals with disabilities are marginalized, labelled as feeble-minded and deemed unworthy. As Robert Murphy astutely points out in *The Body Silent*, able-bodied individuals are confronted with constant visible reminders that their society is riddled with inequities and suffering, exposing the counterfeit paradise they inhabit and their inherent vulnerability (55-56). This discomfort experienced by the able-bodied highlights the core elements of ableism: the notion of a "perfect" normality and the divisive implementation of a distinction that renders the deviant, absurd, weak, and ultimately dehumanized.

In postcolonial or postmodern literary works, the concept of ableism is valuable not only for considering disability, but also for other forms of difference that lead to marginalization or disadvantage. Examining ableism entails reflecting on what it means to be "abled" in various contexts today and how those meanings interact with other ideologies of the body and mind, including race, gender, sexuality, and colonialism.

The idea of normalcy or ability is frequently reinforced in society. In the novel *The Moon Children*, Billy, who has been diagnosed with FASD, is traumatized by his illness and becomes socially invisible. His classmates often bully him and overlook him due to their belief in the superiority of able-bodied individuals. As Sara White writes in "Crippling the Archives: Negotiating Notions of Disability in Appraisal and Arrangement and Description":

Impairment are the physical, sensory, or cognitive conditions that cause functional limitations, while disability is how nondisabled people respond to people with functional

limitations in relation to economic, political, and cultural aspects of society. Understanding disability as a form of oppression empowers people with disabilities to confront ableism... (114-115)

Academic research extensively substantiates the immense hurdles that disabilities pose to individuals, acting as formidable barriers that impede their full participation in society. Regrettably, ableism, a manifestation of societal attitudes towards disability, compounds these challenges by constraining the perceived functional capacities of disabled individuals. Beyond mere limitations, ableism assumes the role of a discriminatory and oppressive force, depriving disabled individuals of equitable opportunities and equal access to resources. It is imperative to acknowledge and confront the deleterious consequences of ableism, while actively striving to foster a society that embraces inclusivity and equity for all, irrespective of disabilities.

Illustrating this struggle against ableism, the novel's protagonist, Billy, exhibits unwavering determination to develop and showcase his talents, despite academic difficulties. Through his unwavering passion for yoyo tricks, Billy discovers a wellspring of confidence in his own abilities, propelling him to pursue his talents fervently. With boundless imagination, he envisions scenarios in which he surpasses able-bodied individuals, skilfully demonstrating his capabilities and receiving the recognition he deserves for his remarkable achievements:

'Let's heat it for BILLY RAY, THE AMAZING YO-YO MASTER!' .... Once Billy faltered and he couldn't remember what trick came next, but the song kept going.... And all of them were exactly right.... "Now, regarding the contest winner, congratulations to [...] BILLY RAY, THE AMAZING YO-YO MASTER and, in addition to that, a very fine singer!' (*The Moon Children* 134-138)

Performing tricks, which symbolize power and mastery, becomes an empowering tool for Billy as he navigates a society primarily comprised of able-bodied individuals. By taking the wheel and seizing control of his own narrative, Billy embarks on a journey to confront the barriers and prejudices that seek to confine him within the confines of his disability. With an unwavering belief in his own potential, he dares to defy societal limitations and strives to accomplish feats that challenge the preconceived notions of what it means to be disabled. Through his determination and resilience, Billy demonstrates that ability knows no boundaries and that one's capacity for greatness is not defined by physical or cognitive differences.

Within the novel, Billy's encounter with his father's departure at the onset of his story deeply impacts him, leaving behind a lingering sense of abandonment that shapes his perception of self. As described in the text, "The morning after his father left, Billy went and stood on the front steps of their apartment building... Billy picked up a pebble and threw it half-heartedly in the bird's direction. Dumb bird, thought Billy" (8). In this moment of turmoil and confusion, Billy finds himself grappling with the question of who or what is truly "dumb"—the bird or himself. He internalizes his father's abandonment, attributing it to his perceived shortcomings, such as his struggles with reading or conforming to societal expectations. The weight of disappointment settles upon him, evoking envy and deep pain: "A white bolt of

envy crossed his chest... Dad [...] but he didn't want to think about him... Billy closed his eyes against the memory. He didn't want to think about Dad" (10-12). The emotional turmoil and potential: "He felt as though inside him a storm was breaking free, ready to spill out and dislodge anything in its path" (12). The haunting spectre of abandonment amplifies the void within him, leaving a lasting impact on his perception of his own abilities and worthiness.

Furthermore, Billy's experience with FASD compounds his challenges, particularly in the realm of memory recall, further eroding his self-confidence. He grapples with the frustration of forgetting not only his parents' names but even his own, lamenting, "Billy knew he himself had a longer name, but just now he couldn't remember what it was. Sometimes he filed things in his brain and couldn't find them when he needed them" (15). These memory difficulties, a consequence of his disability, become a source of personal struggle and feelings of inadequacy. Billy becomes acutely aware of the impact of his disability on his daily life, including his relationships with others and his own sense of identity. The inability to remember significant details, such as his parents' names, becomes a constant reminder of his perceived limitations, further undermining his self-assurance and plunging him into a state of distress.

The pressure of societal expectations and able-bodied norms imposes a tremendous burden on individuals with disabilities, as highlighted in the novel. Billy's poignant question to his mother, "Do you ever feel like there's a volcano inside you just waiting to erupt? Or a cyclone, or a flood? Or maybe lightning and thunder?" (16), encapsulates the inner turmoil experienced by disabled individuals who constantly grapple with the need to conform to societal standards. Unlike his able-bodied mother, who navigates through life without the need to prove herself, Billy finds himself consumed by the relentless pursuit of "normalcy," causing a profound erosion of his self-confidence and the struggle to live a life free from judgment and limitations.

Amidst his pursuit of acceptance and inclusion, Billy's journey is further complicated by the challenges posed by his FASD condition, particularly in the realms of reading and letter recognition. The judgment and misunderstanding of able-bodied individuals exacerbate his difficulties, subjecting him to a cycle of marginalization. An instance that exemplifies this is when Billy visits his mother's workplace during the summer and encounters a signboard near the pool that he struggles to read. As he witnesses other children joyfully engaging in pool activities, a sense of discomfort washes over him, leading him to ascend the stairs and block the slide, inadvertently preventing others from experiencing the pleasure of the activity. This behaviour is a direct consequence of the bullying he endures, both within and outside of school. Billy becomes a target for ridicule due to his reading difficulties, leaving him unable to partake in the same carefree enjoyment as his peers. The criticism he faces not only originates from children his age but also from adults who should be providing guidance and support: "Hey, kid, what's the matter with you? Don't you know the rules?" The man who had crashed into him spoke angrily, pushing his long hair out of his eyes and reaching a tattooed arm for the side of the pool. "What are you doing in here alone, anyway? I bet you just walked in off the street!" (19).

In the context of FASD, individuals like Billy often exhibit distinctive facial features and various abnormalities, making them more susceptible to external scrutiny and stigmatization. These visible differences further contribute to the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, magnifying their sense of otherness and reinforcing societal judgments and prejudices. Despite the inherent diversity of their physical appearances, it is crucial to recognize and acknowledge the shared humanity and worth of individuals with disabilities, ensuring that they are not defined solely by their visible distinctions but rather appreciated for their unique qualities and contributions.

Billy's encounters at the pool exemplify the continuous cycle of embarrassment and ridicule he endures in the face of able-bodied individuals' judgment. A man confronts him, questioning his presence and disregarding his need for assistance. To exacerbate the situation, Billy inadvertently brings a dishtowel instead of a swimming towel, adding another layer of perceived incompetence. As his peers witness this mishap, they seize the opportunity to mock him, further intensifying his feelings of humiliation. Despite the persistent humiliation he has experienced throughout his life, Billy remains resolute and unaffected by their laughter. He defiantly distances himself from the crowd, silently bearing the weight of his self-blame and internalizing the notion of his own inadequacy: "Why am I so stupid?" he muttered as the hot water beat down on him... At school, it seemed that everything he did proved how dumb he was" (19). This relentless humiliation, coupled with his struggles in expressing himself, contributes to a deeply ingrained negative self-image, perpetuating the damaging effects of ableism.

Leonard Davis, in *The Disability Studies Reader*, elucidates the predicament faced by individuals with invisible disabilities as they grapple with the societal expectation to conform to the dominant cultural norms. They are compelled to navigate their place within a system that privileges and prioritizes able-bodied individuals, often leaving them feeling marginalized and forced to conceal their disabilities. Davis emphasizes the inherent challenges these individuals face in reconciling their authentic identities with society's prevailing standards, asserting that their experience becomes a delicate balance between assimilation and self-acceptance. The constant pressure to conform, while concealing their invisible disabilities, further perpetuates a cycle of self-doubt and the perpetuation of ableist ideologies:

Many people are more comfortable relating to me and accommodating me if they can be absolutely certain that I am who I say I am, a deaf-blind person. And they are not absolutely certain that I am that person until I bump into a wall or shape my hands into what is to them an incomprehensible language. In other words, I must make myself completely alien to these people in order for them to feel that they understand me. (327)

The concept of an invisible disability highlights the often-overlooked experiences of individuals whose conditions are not immediately apparent. These conditions, which can encompass cognitive or mental health disorders, may not be visible to others but can significantly impact an individual's daily life and functioning. It is important to recognize that invisible disabilities can be constructed around visible disabilities, serving as a constant reminder

of an individual's deviation from societal norms. This intersectionality between visible and invisible disabilities further compounds the challenges faced by individuals with invisible disabilities, including obstacles in accessing appropriate accommodations, social stigmatization, and criticism from able-bodied individuals. By acknowledging and understanding the diversity of disabilities, particularly invisible ones, society can foster inclusivity and empathy towards individuals with unique experiences.

In Billy's case, his struggles extend beyond the interactions with his peers; even his own father fails to comprehend his difficulties. As Billy's father pushes him to read, he expresses frustration and disappointment, emphasizing the societal belief that reading is a fundamental measure of success: "Come on, Billy, you've got to pay attention! You'll never amount to anything if you can't learn to read.' And Billy had tried to pay attention. The trouble was that no matter how hard he tried, something inside his head just wouldn't co-operate" (20). Despite Billy's earnest efforts, his father's fixation on the narrow definition of "normal" prevents him from understanding his son's unique challenges. The pressure to conform to society's rigid expectations of normality often creates substantial barriers for individuals with disabilities, leading to feelings of isolation and exclusion. In Billy's case, the lack of understanding and support from his father exacerbates his already arduous journey toward acceptance.

According to Dan Goodley in *Dis/ability Studies: Theorising Disablism and Ableism*, the able-bodied society's obsession with 'normalcy' presents significant challenges for individuals with disabilities. The focus on attaining a 'normal' body leads able-bodied individuals to assign blame to disabled individuals. As a result, disabled individuals are subjected to various schemes and aid programs that are intended to address their needs but are often treated as peripheral concerns. Goodley highlights:

Our obsessions with our own bodies and biology, fuelled by institutional, expert, scientific discourse and the fascinations of popular culture trains our thoughts on to our individual selves, our minds and our bodies to check how we match up to a normative model of humanity.

(4)

The able-bodied individuals have developed an obsession with maintaining a "normal" and healthy lifestyle, causing them to view any deviation from their perceived standard as a threat or embarrassment. This obsession with a healthy body gives them a sense of privilege and power over persons with disabilities. The able-bodied individuals go to great lengths to maintain their place on the "normal" scale, training their minds to remain obsessed with perfection.

Goodley argues that individuals with intellectual disabilities do not face problems, but rather crises when it comes to accessing transportation or technology, receiving support, participating in school and work communities, and being accepted. According to him, "problems of a disabling society that threatened the very existence of people who were cognitively different to the mainstream" (Goodley, *Dis/ability Studies: Theorising Disablism and Ableism* 7) create these crises. Disabled individuals are capable of accomplishing tasks

that are often considered beyond their abilities by able-bodied people. This very phenomenon poses a threat to the able-bodied because it challenges their sense of normality.

Tanya Titchkosky's concept of normality focuses on the critical examination of disability to investigate the normative ideas related to physical and social aspects such as measuring one's mind, body, emotions, and senses. According to Titchkosky, the able-bodied project the idea that being normal is static, and when an individual has an unwanted condition, they are deemed abnormal. The historical production of disability is uniquely related to the concept of normality. Lennard Davis, as quoted by Titchkosky in *Keywords for Disability Studies*, suggests that "the sense of a normative order required that the human sciences not only make 'man' (humans) an object but also make them knowable, to one another, through 'norms, rules and signifying totalities'" (372). Consequently, Titchkosky argues that being normal is viewed as the dominant version of oneself in modern society. The power of normalcy encourages individuals to compare their bodies in all aspects, which leads to the taken-for-granted assumption that a normal life is the only acceptable way to live.

The concept of normative norms is often used as a reference point to illustrate that being normal exists within a referential system rather than as a pre-given condition of existence. Disability studies have focused on the creation of normalcy and have shown that disability is stigmatized. This demonstrates that the problem is not with disability itself, but with the way normalcy has been constructed to create problems for people with disabilities. Disability studies have also shown that being normal is not a static concept but changes over time. Despite the fact that many individuals live with disabilities, they are often not accepted within the social structure. Therefore, the idea of what is considered normal is determined by the majority of the population.

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's perspective on the concept of "normal" provides a valuable viewpoint. As she argues, "the constructed identity of those who, by way of the bodily configurations and cultural capital they assume, can step into a position of authority and wield the power it grants them" (*Keywords of Disability Studies* 374). This highlights how belonging to the normative scale grants individuals the power to exert authority over people with disabilities. This idea reinforces the belief that being disabled holds less value in society. It is documented that normalcy standards contribute to other forms of dehumanization, which pushes some individuals to the margins of existence.

Disability studies consistently demonstrates that ability is not fixed but varies across groups, perceptions, and locations. Able-bodied individuals often forget that most people experience disability at some point in their lives, yet disability remains unrecognized within social structures. This creates a situation where being "normal" does not reflect the desires of the majority, but rather represents what the dominant population expects. To achieve normalcy, able-bodied individuals must strive to appear flawless and suppress any perceived differences that set them apart. This leads to the conclusion that being abnormal is not a deviation from the norm, but rather reflects what the majority is expected to produce when confronted with

perceived differences. This creates stigma, as described by Goffman, where social and societal processes work against minority groups such as people with disabilities.

Disability studies has the unique ability to scrutinize the power of normalcy to ostracize and stigmatize, as it rejects the idea that normality is an inherent trait. Rod Michalko asserts that "One of the most 'abnormal' things about being 'normal' is attending to its production" (*Keywords of Disability Studies* 82), emphasizing the significance of analyzing how role obligations are employed to conform to, resist, and reconstruct the norm. Nevertheless, scholars, activists, and artists have demonstrated that despite the daily pressures to conform to normalized perspectives of oneself and others, individuals can still disrupt the norm through practices such as crip and queer theory. Thus, it challenges the modern imperative that all group expectations must be normalized.

The term 'normal' is frequently used by able-bodied individuals as a means of prejudice towards disabled individuals. This has a significantly more negative impact on those who are differently-abled. Billy, for example, is subject to bullying from his classmates who use the concept of normality to assert their dominance over him. They take note of his mistakes and use their abilities to belittle him. This is evident when his classmates pass notes about him during class. Despite being aware of these comments, Billy is unable to defend himself due to his inability to read, making him even more vulnerable. "Sometimes, the other kids would write notes about him. Billy knew this because he'd find them sometimes, small scraps of paper with his name on them, but he couldn't read what they said. He just knew they said bad things" (20-21). Billy feels helpless as nobody seems willing to understand his needs or his unique circumstances.

Billy's father exemplifies a similar approach to parenting as Jane's father, as he neglects his responsibilities towards his child and fails to comprehend the challenges posed by Billy's disability. In a parallel manner, he chooses to deny his child's condition and insists on enforcing societal norms of "normalcy," further complicating the situation. Instead of acknowledging Billy's disability, he projects his own subjective perceptions of normality onto his child. This phenomenon, as conceptualized by Sigmund Freud, is a defense mechanism utilized by individuals to evade confronting uncomfortable truths about themselves and their environment.

Billy is capable of remembering to take his medication independently without requiring assistance. The notion of what is considered normal can vary in different contexts. Billy recognizes the importance of taking his medication as it helps him control his hyperactivity and prevent him from behaving erratically. As the text states, "Billy remembered he was supposed to eat breakfast. He ran out to the kitchen and took his pill..." (34). The act of taking medication is a typical practice for individuals with or without disabilities to manage their health. However, society often stigmatizes individuals with disabilities for taking medication, whereas it is viewed as normal for able-bodied individuals. The perception of what is normal can differ based on one's ability status.

Ableism in disability is a persistent issue characterized by discriminatory attitudes and practices towards individuals with disabilities. Despite increased awareness and legal protections, ableism continues to manifest overtly and subtly, intersecting with other forms of oppression. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these disparities, revealing ableist biases within healthcare systems and creating additional barriers for disabled individuals. Scholarly exploration of ableism in disability provides a foundation for understanding its historical and theoretical aspects, while emphasizing the need for transformative change to address the ongoing challenges faced by disabled individuals.

The concept of ableism is intricately linked to society's representation of the body and the idealization of certain physical abilities. Disability challenges these norms, often resulting in the labeling of individuals as "defective" or "deviant." Eugenics and the pursuit of "normalcy" further marginalize those who do not conform to these ideals, reinforcing the perception of disability as a personal tragedy to be prevented or cured. The emphasis on an able-bodied standard perpetuates the privilege associated with able-bodiedness, creating social hierarchies and imposing rigid standards for the body and mind. Addressing ableism requires a critical examination of its manifestations, intersectionality, and the urgent need for inclusive practices that promote social justice and equality.

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