

SPECIMEN FORMAT FOR THESES OF MONTH

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Branch/ Area: : Canadian Literature & Disability Studies

Sub Subject Heading: : -

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Title of the thesis : Disabled by Body or by Barriers? A Social Model of Disability Analysis in Jean Little's Selected Works

(i) In Roman Script
(ii) In roman Script

Nomenclature of Degree: : Ph.D

Month & Year of Enrolment: : July 2018

Month & Year of Registration: : July 2018

Month & Year of Submission: : March 2024

Month & Year of Award : July 2024

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Abstract within 300 words:

Canadian literature in disability studies explores the themes of identity, disability, and societal views from a variety of viewpoints and voices. Indeed, the inclusion of characters with disabilities in Canadian literature has helped to build empathy and an appreciation for a range of viewpoints in the classroom. For children with disabilities, education is essential because it enhances their language ability, promotes communication, and progresses their cognitive development. Consequently, they advocate for inclusivity and empowerment. The Canadian writer Jean Little made a big impact on literature by writing about the difficulties experienced by children with disabilities. Little's disability-related works highlight the significance of comprehending and meeting the educational requirements of children with impairments. Through her work, Little has contributed to a greater understanding of diversity and the special educational needs of children with disabilities. She frequently draws attention to the difficulties experienced by individuals with disabilities in her writings, as well as the important role that assistive technology plays in improving their quality of life. The Social Model of Disability is used in her writings to highlight the difficulties and limitations faced by children with disabilities. To establish an inclusive and accessible society for people with disabilities, this study places a strong emphasis on changing societal structures, attitudes, and policies. To assess the efficacy of education, particularly special education and inclusive education, as reflected in Little's writings, this study will analyse social attitudes, depictions of inaccessible systems within her narratives and insights, and identify areas in need of additional development. It also seeks to take stories and observations from Jean Little's writings to offer a thorough analysis of the difficulties and solutions associated with disability in the context of her fiction and nonfiction writing.

i. Major objectives :

1. To extract narratives and glean profound insights on the multifaceted subject of disability embedded with Little's writings.
2. To delve into the representation and portrayal of inaccessible systems, discerning their impact on the experiences of individuals grappling with disabilities.
3. To examine education, as a pivotal factor, under scrutiny for its dual potential- both as an empowering force and as a potential perpetuator of barriers for those with disabilities.

4. To dissect prevailing social attitudes, recognising their profound influence on the lived realities and societal integration of individuals living with disabilities.

ii. Thesis Statement

As Jennifer Litton observes, "The world is disabling and needs to be fixed." This quote serves as a powerful preamble to the overarching theme of disability and the pressing need for change. Despite advancements in awareness and accessibility through government policies, disability remains a universal and enduring issue shaped significantly by societal attitudes and inaccessible systems. This study delves into the selected works of Jean Little, an author with a disability, to shed light on the persistent challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. It offers insights from a social model of disability perspective, highlighting both the systemic barriers, societal attitudes, and potential solutions that continue to affect the lived experiences of people with disabilities in contemporary society.

iii. Methodology :

For this study, adherence to the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* serves as a foundational guideline. The methodology employed is firmly rooted in the conceptual framework of disability theory, with particular emphasis on the Social Model of Disability. This theoretical framework, elucidated by scholars such as Mike Oliver and expanded upon by thinkers like Tom Shakespeare, has been drawn from various

authoritative sources, including books and scholarly articles. Among these sources, *The Disability Studies Reader (Fifth Edition)* by Lennard J. Davis serves as a central pillar of theoretical underpinning. In addition to this seminal work, several other scholarly texts have been consulted to provide a comprehensive and multifaceted analysis.

Findings:

Following a meticulous examination and comprehensive analysis of the six primary texts, consisting of four fictional works and two nonfictional works, conducted through the lens of the social model of disability as elucidated in the three core chapters, the researcher has arrived at a multitude of significant findings. These findings offer valuable insights into the underlying themes and messages that Jean Little conveys through her writings, encompassing the domains of disability, education, and society. They serve to illuminate the intricate interplay between these themes, shedding light on the complexities and nuances inherent in Little's exploration of the experiences and perspectives of individuals with disabilities within educational and societal contexts.

Firstly, Little's works emphasise the importance of education and its ability to empower individuals with disabilities. Her characters' experiences illustrate how education can help individuals with impairments gain independence, self-confidence, and social acceptance, allowing them to navigate challenges and become successful members of their communities.

Children with disabilities face unique challenges in accessing education and achieving academic success. Despite the efforts of many organisations and governments to promote inclusive education, children with disabilities continue to face significant barriers in obtaining a quality education. This is because many schools are not equipped to provide the necessary accommodations and support to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Inclusive education is an approach to education that aims to provide access to the general education curriculum for all students, including those with disabilities. This approach recognises that children with disabilities have the right to an education and should be provided with the necessary accommodations and support to succeed. Inclusive education programs typically involve collaboration between regular and special education teachers, and can provide children with disabilities with the opportunity to participate in the same activities and lessons as their non-disabled peers.

Little's works emphasise the significance of special education in the lives of children with disabilities. This type of education provides children with impairments with the opportunity to identify assistive and adaptive learning methods that suit their individual needs. Special education is designed to meet the specific requirements of students with disabilities, providing them with personalised attention and services, as outlined in the essay "Special Education: The Importance of Special Education" published on the *Help Me* website. This specially designed instruction includes related services and supplementary aids and services.

Special education services play a crucial role in addressing the unique needs of children with disabilities. These services, encompassing individualised instruction, adapted materials, and assistive technology, are specifically designed to facilitate academic success and comprehensive participation in the educational journey for these children. Little's works shed light on the significance of special education, as her characters who have attended special schools or schools for the visually impaired exemplify the benefits of this specialised approach. Through their experiences, Little convincingly demonstrates how special education provides a nurturing environment and necessary assistive technology, ultimately easing the

learning process for these individuals. It is evident that the characters in Little's works who have received special education not only derive significant advantages from it but also deeply appreciate the enriching experiences afforded by this form of education.

Little's works serve as a poignant reminder of the social model of disability, a perspective that challenges the notion of inherent flaws in individuals with disabilities and instead directs attention to the barriers and discrimination imposed by society. Through her characters, Little effectively portrays how societal attitudes can exacerbate the challenges faced by people with disabilities, extending beyond their physical impairments.

The study extensively explores the social model of disability as a framework for addressing the societal barriers and instances of bullying experienced by individuals with disabilities. According to this model, it is the structures and norms of society that contribute significantly to disability, leading to various forms of physical, mental, social, and financial hardships. This perspective has gained widespread acceptance as a means to understand and conceptualise disability on a global scale, positing that an impairment only becomes a disability when it hinders one's social functioning.

Another significant finding underscores the crucial role of family in the development and well-being of children with disabilities. Families and parents play a pivotal role in the lives of these children, providing them with the essential support, love, and care they need. It is imperative that families take the initiative to integrate children with disabilities into society. Jean Little's works strongly emphasise the significance of education for children with exceptional needs, urging parents to prioritise their special child's educational journey. Through her literary creations, Little effectively portrays that education is not only essential for the inclusion of children with special needs but also serves as a pathway to a better life for them.

Little's works shed light on the significant role of assistive technology in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Assistive technology serves as a transformative tool that empowers disabled individuals, enabling them to participate fully in society and overcome the barriers they face. By leveraging assistive devices, individuals with disabilities can mitigate the effects of their impairments and enhance their social inclusion.

In the realm of education, assistive technology plays a vital role in supporting children with disabilities. These technologies encompass a range of software, hardware, and devices designed to facilitate access to the curriculum and enhance classroom participation for

children with disabilities. For instance, speech recognition software can be a valuable tool for children who struggle with typing or writing, while audio books and text-to-speech software can greatly benefit children with visual impairments.

Peers play an immensely significant role in the integration of children with disabilities within educational and social settings. The inclusion of these children alongside their non-disabled counterparts not only fosters a profound sense of belonging and security but also mitigates the risk of them being cast aside as outsiders. Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the lack of awareness and understanding surrounding disabilities among non-disabled students can give rise to apprehension when it comes to forming friendships, and in some cases, may even manifest as taunting or disruptive conduct.

This study serves to underscore the profound significance of inclusion for individuals with disabilities, illuminating its pivotal role in fostering social connections, facilitating active participation in various activities and events, ensuring equitable access to opportunities, and dismantling barriers and peer exclusion. By prioritising social accessibility and promoting active engagement, the ultimate objective of inclusion is to engender acceptance from peers, foster the development of problem-solving skills, and cultivate a positive self-image for individuals with disabilities.

An additional significant finding revolves around the intricate relationship between migration and disability, wherein the already challenging topic of migration becomes even more complex when coupled with disability. Jean Little, the author under examination, adeptly draws upon her personal experiences to exemplify this thematic connection. This intersection of migration and disability poses unique and arduous challenges for individuals, families, and societies, as expounded upon in Margherita Pisoni's enlightening article titled "Intersectionality between Migrants and People with Disabilities," published on *A Path for Europe's* website.

Another significant observation and challenge pertains to the process of learning a new language, which is an inherent aspect of the migration experience. The examination of Anna's struggles to learn English despite her disability presents an important and thought-provoking subject for analysis. By delving into Anna's personal journey, profound scholarly observations can be made regarding the intricate process of language acquisition.

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