

Abstract

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 normalisation 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.