Identity Through the Lens of Disability, an Intersection: Insights from Shelley's *Franken Stein* and Haddon's *The Curious Incident*

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Abstract

Disability in literature is more than just a plot device it is a powerful lens through which identity, humanity, and societal norms are explored. This paper examine show characters with disabilities are portrayed in literature and how these portrayals shape our understanding of identity. It also explores the complex relationship between disability and identity in literature, with a specific focus on Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Mark Haddon's The Curious Incident of the Dog int he Night-Time. The study is based on the social model of disability, which highlights how social barriers contribute to both physical and mental impairments. It shows characters as more than their disabilities, literature has the power to dispel stereotypes, promote empathy, and humanise disability. At the same time, it criticises instances in which marginalising disabled identities in literature serves to reinforce biased ideas. This paper help store think disability not as limitation but as a part of the human experience, reflecting the diverse ways in which people navigate Identity and belonging in an often – unforgiving world.

Keywords: Disability, Identity, Social Norms, Intersectionality, Marginalized.

Introduction

With countless aspects of identity examined in literary fiction, the convergence of disability and identity is of special interest, offering insights into how individuals negotiate societal norms, biases, and inner conflicts. Disability, frequently consigned to the verge of debate, becomes a prism looking at broader questions of belonging, alienation, and self-definition. Within the context of literature, the prismise specially effective in challenging how society structures its views of people who are different and how these individuals come to see themselves. This study examines the meeting of identity and disability in two texts, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Mark Haddon's The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-

Time. Shelley's Frankenstein explores the social rejection and isolation of a Creature whose physical form is not normative, raising ethical and philosophical questions regarding identity. Conversely, Haddon's novel is a highly individualized account of Christopher Boone, a young man with A sperger's syndrome, negotiating a world frequently in hospitable to his neurodivergence. It helps reader store consider the narratives surrounding disability, not as limitations, but as vital elements of human complexity and individuality.

Literature Review

Disability Studies is a multidisciplinary field that examines the social, cultural, and political forces that define our conception of disability. At the center of this field, there are two prevailing models, the medical model and the social model of disability. According to the medical model disability is a personal defect or impairment to be treated medically or rehabilitated.

Whereas the social model, focuses on societal barriers, pointing to how, the different barriers such as physical, attitudinal, or institutional, play a crucial role in creating and sustaining conceptions of disability. This model points that disability does not result from fundamental attributes within people instead, it emerges due to poor accommodation and inclusion within the society.

One of the motifs that recurs throughout this study is identity, its construction through the lens of one's self and validation by external factors. Critics say that literary portrayals of disability reflect society's values, including inclusivity and bias. Literature encourages readers to the extent we have depth in such characters who work between disability and identity understanding of nuanced dimensions of the human condition.

Materials and Methods Materials

This study analyses two texts, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818) and Mark Haddon's The Curious Incident of the Doginthe Night-Time (2003). The novels were chosen for their representation of characters whose physical and cognitive differences intersect with identity and marginalization by society. Frankenstein is a classic Gothic text that confronts social reactions to physical difference, and The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time Offer contemporary understanding of neurodivergence.

Methods
- **Theoretical Framework**

To analyze the convergence of disability an did entity in Frankenstein and The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, the researcher has used Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory and the theory of narrative identity. Erikson's psychosocial stages of development offer a model to discuss the issues disabled characters encounter in finding their place within societal expectations and personal identity. His model focuses on critical stages of life, each marked by a conflict that shapes identity. For example, the identity vs. role confusion stage, which is common in adolescence, is especially applicable to Haddon's protagonist, Christopher Boone, who has difficulty balancing his self-image and societal expectations. Likewise, Shelley's creature battles intimacy vs. isolation, as his physical nature results in rejection, preventing him from seeking out companionship and belonging.

Narrative identity theory adds to this strategy by high lighting how people for ma sense of self through narrative. In literature, we can find how the narrative structure influences how characters, especially those with disabilities, are understood by readers. The first-person narrative of Christopher in The Curious Incident provides the readers with direct access to his thoughts and feelings and, thus, his neurodivergence on his terms.

By contrast, in Frankenstein, the Creature's identity is refracted through Victor Frankenstein's skewed narrative, highlighting how other people's understanding can distort or deny agency to those with disabilities. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein provides a rich examination of identity through the creature, an individual whose experience and existence subvert societal norms and ethical boundaries. The novel uncover show rejection by society, based on the creature's physical form, informs his identity and existence, providing a powerful critique of how people deemed to be "other" are treated.

Mark Haddon's The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night – Time offers a heart-touching exploration of identity from the perspective of Christopher Boone, an Asperger's teenager. The novel explores Christopher's distinctive cognitive and emotional reality, both revealing the difficulties he experiences and the talents he has to offer. Haddon's adoption of a first- person narrative technique deeply influences the reader's perception of Christopher's identity, giving an engaging representation of neurodivergence.

- **Comparative Analysis**

In Frankenstein and The Curious Incident of the Doginthe Night-Time, disability is a primary frame for understanding identity.

In Frankenstein, the Creature's disability is firstly physical, characterized by his monstrous appearance, which leads to automatic rejection. Physical abnormality crosses over with societal prejudice because the creature's absence of a familial or societal identity adds to his alienation. Unlike Christopher, whose disability is one of neurodivergence, the creature's disability is an externally perceived one, making him a visible representation of societal prejudice and fear. His absence of a name also denies him individuality, high lighting how disability intersects with the lack of societal identification to define his marginalized self.

In The Curious Incident, Christopher's Asperger's syndrome crosses over with societal expectations of adolescence and masculinity. While Christopher subverts traditional Constructions of masculinity through his emotional vulnerabilities and love of solitude, his mathematical brilliance becomes a compensatory signifier of his identity. In contrast to the Creature, Christopher has a support system, such as his parents and teachers. Although this support is complicated, the novel also demonstrates how socioeconomic factors shape the experience of disability.

Findings and Results

This study highlight show Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Mark Haddon's The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night – Time explores the tangled relationship between disability and identity. Through close readings of the texts, informed by disability studies an did entity theory, the findings reveal that the portrayal of marginalized characters sheds light on societal biases, self-perception, and evolving cultural attitudes toward difference.

Both Shelley and Haddon use narrative as a tool for fostering empathy. Shelley achieves this through the creature's poignant monologues, which humanize his suffering. Similarly, Haddon's use of first-person narration immerses readers in Christopher's perspective, Enabling them to understand his unique worldview. These narrative strategies demonstrate the power of storytelling in challenging societal biases and reshaping perceptions of disability.

Conclusion

This study has examined the inter section of disability and identity in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Mark Haddon's The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Revealing common themes of alienation, rejection by society, and the search for acceptance. In Frankenstein, the Creature's physical difference and rejection by society high light the devastating effects of marginalization, while Christopher's experiences in The Curious Incident demonstrates the inner turmoil and victories of a neurodivergent person living in An often-unwelcoming world. Both novels demonstrate how disability informs identity, affecting how people see themselves and are seen by others. These narratives remind us that identity is not just defined by societal judgment but also by the Courage to exist authentically. In a world that often fears what it doesn't understand, their stories challenge us to embrace diversity, reject prejudice, and rethink the boundaries of

normal. Literature, as seen in these two works, becomes a bridge away to see ourselves in the light of "others" and imagine a more inclusive future.

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