

Revealing the Commonalities Existing in Depictions of Disabled Female Characters in Prose Fictions: A Study of Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* and Toni Morrison's "Recitatif"

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Abstract—Literature has numerous dimensions, among which novels and short stories are worth the mention. Stories from the past have been including disabled male and female characters in their plots, but the question of how these characters have been depicted is still debatable. When it comes to writers of the disability study, it has been noticed that they have been trying to establish the present state of people with impairments with the help of their deformed or disabled characters. It has been witnessed that novels and short stories concentrate on bringing out the darker side of a disabled person by focusing on his/ her issues and sufferings. The objective of this paper is to expose that literary works rarely focus on the brighter facet of a disabled character, especially a woman. It projects the differences that are endured by fictional individuals. The analysis undertakes the theory of Intersectionality to support its arguments of projecting the discrepancies in the picturisations of disabled female dramatic personas in novels and short stories. Hence, the research with the aid of select prose narratives brings out the conventional sketches of fictional impaired women.

Index Terms—disabled, supporting character, suffering, asexual, evil

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature plays a vital role in aiding a writer to expose his/ her thoughts into language, among which prose narratives have been identified to take the major part. They are known to have significant roles in literature and literary writing. A novel and a short story not only help the writer to evoke his/ her creativity but also trigger the imagination of a reader as well. The characters present in these literary works play an extensive portion in enhancing the plots and structures. Both a novel and a short story at times directly or satirically reflect the realism of a community or the world.

A. Objectives

The main aim of this paper is to exhibit that deformed or disabled female characters have been less exposed and explored in novels and short stories. It brings out that a novel and a short story predominantly depict the negative aspects of physically disabled female characters; where they have usually not been central characters, and whose identities remain implicit. The investigation also showcases that impaired female dramatic personas have been mostly immersed in traumas and tribulations in prose fiction.

B. Methodology

The paper takes up the qualitative research methodology, wherein it undertakes the textual analysis of a popular novel and a short story. The two famous prose narratives that have been made use of in this paper have been the novel *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins and the short story "Recitatif" by Toni Morrison. The analysis of these two literary works has been the focal point of this study.

C. Theoretical Framework

The article avails the theory of Intersectionality to support its study. Crenshaw in the year 1989 explains Intersectionality as the focus of the people who have been favoured, privileged and socially advantaged, which in turn have been marginalising the multiply burdened individuals. He states that the claims have been difficult to understand, which have been the result of discreet sources of discrimination (p. 140). He also argues that black women experience several differences, which is contrary to the assumptions of the world that their exclusion is always unidirectional (p. 149).

Bernstein (2019) puts forth that Crenshaw's definition of Intersectionality considering race is also related to literature. She states that when considering Intersectionality concerning literature, it has been identified that sometimes it has been

referred to the intersectional social categories while at other times it has been indicated to the oppressions faced by the members of the minority groups (p. 2). She also comments that although the Intersectionality Literature mostly points to the intersectional minorities' identity and the peculiar dimensions of discrimination that they have endured for centuries; it has to be noted that all the identities are to some extent intersectional in nature when considering the broader sense of the term (p. 3).

Similar to the statements of Bernstein, Schalk (2016) mentions that when reading from the intersectional dimension, where sexuality, gender, class, race and disability have been represented as the potential analytics, it is seen that there are opportunities where subversion of one or more in turn leads to the adherence of the other. He adds that this statement applies within and across groups (p. 1244). The paper takes into account this wider sense of Intersectionality for the study.

II. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY AND THE DISABILITY MOVEMENT

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and its optional protocol for the rights of disabled people has been adopted on the 13th of December 2006 at the United Nations headquarters that is in New York. This is later opened up for signature on 30th March 2007 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, para. 1). United Nations in the preamble defines that people with disability include those individuals who have long-term physical, mental, and sensory or intellectual impairments; which when having interactions with several hurdles or barriers might at times hinder their complete and effective participation in the society on equal bases with others (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, Article 1, para. 1).

People with disability and their issues have not only been addressed by many Governments but have also been voiced out by movements in the past, especially for the problems of disabled women by feminist activists. Wendell (1989) mentions that women with disabilities have been struggling with the oppression of being women and individuals with disabilities in abled and male-dominated societies. She adds that feminists have been trying to bring the concerns and knowledge of disabled women into feminism, and the feminists' perspectives into the Disability Rights Movement (p. 104).

In correspondence to the above statements, Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009) state that a broad feminist critic of disability studies has emerged in the 1980s, wherein many feminist activists from the northern hemisphere have been very much sensitive to the construction of more of a male agenda in the disability studies and the male control of the disability movement. They have argued that disabled women have found themselves lower than both the abled and disabled men in all socio-economic spheres, which has led to the origin of the concept of multiple disadvantages. They also mention that the lack of a theoretical framework in analysing these multiple-disadvantages has further led to the concept of intersectionality (p. 58).

III. DISCUSSION

A. Primary Sources and Disabled Female Characters

The paper avails two literary works that have been greatly celebrated to undertake the study. Throughout this paper Collins' *The Moonstone* and Morrison's "Recitatif" have been the primary sources that have been researched. The impaired or deformed female characters present in the primary sources have been examined in this research to obtain its objectives.

(a). Wilkie Collins-A Revolutionary Novelist

Wilkie Collins is a renowned English writer, who has attained immense fame as a fictionist. He is known for inventing the sensation novel; and has been a highly paid writer of the Victorian age. He has met Charles Dickens in 1951, with whom he has been in close association and has been popularly called Dickensian Ampersand. Collins has published No Name, a series in Dickens' second weekly journal All the Year Round. He has written 25 novels, more than 50 short stories, 15 plays and more than 100 non-fiction; among which his popular works include *The Woman in White* (1860) and *The Moonstone* (1867) (Allingham, 2021).

(b). *The Moonstone*

The first literary work that has been taken up for this study has been Wilkie Collins' novel *The Moonstone*; which is both a mystery and a sensation. This novel has been known for prefiguring and proceeding the modern-day detective novel. It has been narrated by many narrators and is about the disappearance of "The Moonstone". The plot of the novel revolves around the consequences that follow on the moonstone's disappearance and the search for it.

(c). Toni Morrison-An Acclaimed Writer

Toni Morrison is a famous American novelist, playwright and short story writer. Her works have been known to explore the identity of black women in the United States, where she has been focusing on bringing out the suffering and discrimination that black women have been encountering for centuries. Her major works include *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved*, *Sula* and "Recitatif". She has been the recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Pulitzer Prize and the Noble Prize (Alexander, 2019).

(d). “*Recitatif*”

The short story that has also been undertaken for this study is Toni Morrison’s “*Recitatif*”; which strives hard to remove the racial codes existing in the society, by not explicitly revealing the skin colours of Twyla and Roberta. “*Recitatif*”, the only short story of Morrison has been constructed in five parts, which concentrates on Twyla and Roberta visiting the orphanage and their growing relationship. The story is also about their meeting with Maggie, and how the thoughts of Maggie haunt the girls.

(e). *Rosanna Spearman and Maggie*

In *The Moonstone*, Rosanna Spearman is one of the servant maids of Rachel Verinder. She has been depicted as a deformed woman, where one shoulder of hers is bigger than the other which marks her out from the rest of the characters. Likewise, in “*Recitatif*”, Maggie is the kitchen woman, who works at St. Bonny’s orphanage. She has been picturized as a disabled woman, whose legs are like parenthesis and who is shorter than the other girls in the orphanage. The paper analyses Rosanna Spearman and Maggie to justify its arguments.

B. *The Addressal of Female Impaired Characters*

Rosanna and Maggie have been addressed by names and words that have been related to their deformities and disabilities. Laurea (2020-2021) articulates that in the narration of the novel *The Moonstone*, the subaltern bodies in the narrative have been generally controlled by their constructions and deconstructions through their descriptions concerning their deficiencies; and insists that Betteridge has brought out the portrait of Rosanna through words that are related to her impairment like poor, she failed, troubled, far from strong, no beauty, plainest, plain (repeated twice), distanced, solitary ways, additional misfortune, one shoulder bigger than the other and silent tongue (p. 88).

In the same manner, Maggie has also been called names by Twyla, which has been connected to her deformity. Rennie (2022) voices that through Twyla the readers have been informed that though Maggie has been mute, she has not been a deaf woman. She also says that Maggie has been quiet on listening to the terrible names that have been addressed to her; and has been powerless to the abuses which have been targeted upon her (p. 62). “Dummy! Dummy! She never turned her head. Bow legs! Bow legs! Nothing. She just rocked on” (Morrison, 1983, p. 32).

C. *The Brutality in Physical Descriptions*

The prose narratives have been providing cruel picturisations of the physical disabilities of characters, especially when it comes to women. Wright (2008) mentions that in fiction the disabled and the disability of a person have been usually focalised through the eyes of another character (p. 97). Rosanna in *The Moonstone* is represented with ruthless words by the characters of the novel. Pšenková (2015) comments that Betteridge, the senior male servant in Lady Verinder’s house describes Rosanna as not very appealing in her appearance and has been plain in her attire and manner. He says that Rosanna is greatly sad about her deformity, which marks her out despite covering it with her shawl (p. 27). He also puts forth that Collins’ has portrayed Rosanna as pitiful, who has been unattractive, friendless, shoulder that has been crooked and has been suspected of stealing the diamond due to her past (p. 28).

Usually, the disability and deformity of a female character have been represented with clear visibility; wherein the story portrays her to think that it is her impairment that segregates her from other characters, thereby forcing her to hide her defect. O’Dell (2007) informs that though the readers have not been sure about the indifferences shown by Franklin towards Rosanna have either been due to her lower status or deformity, it has been clear that she thinks it has been her impairment that has been discriminating her, where besides hiding herself in the shrubbery and her shawl, her deformity remains explicit (p. 50). “There was certainly no beauty about her to make the others envious; she was the plainest woman in the house, with the additional misfortune of having one shoulder bigger than the other... there she was, in her little straw bonnet, and her plain grey cloak that she always wore to hide her deformed shoulder as much as might be” (Collins, 2017, pp. 427-452).

Similar to Rosanna, in “*Recitatif*”, since Maggie is a disabled woman, she has been brutally described and continuously teased for her appearance by the orphanage girls. Concerning this comment, Raengo (2013) states that Maggie in “*Recitatif*” is the mute and probably the deaf kitchen woman, who is short like a kid and has been wearing a funny hat which has been hated by the girls like how they despise her. He utters that Twyla describes Maggie’s legs are like semicircles which have been very short for her to rely on when catching the bus. He also argues that she has not been given a visual description of her race, but has been only depicted with joints and disjoints (p. 7). “Maggie couldn’t talk. The kids said she had her tongue cut out, but I think she was born that way: mute... I just remember her legs like parentheses and how she rocked when she walked... “She wore this really stupid little hat—a kid’s hat with earflaps—and she wasn’t much taller than we were”” (Morrison, 1983, p. 32).

D. *The Negligence in the Projection of Race and Character*

Generally, the readers have been unaware of the racial code of the disabled female character when reading a novel or a short story. In “*Recitatif*”, the skin colour of Maggie is not revealed until the end of the short story, which makes the readers get confused with her complexion throughout the narration. Murphy (2011) vocalises that Twyla and Roberta try to recall the race of Maggie, but the readers have been trying to determine the race of the girls and not of Maggie (p. 63); which thereby results in the race of Maggie remaining undetermined. Constructed as an unknowable structure of

race, Collier (2019) states that Twyla has been able to recall only a little about the character of Maggie; where she insists that Maggie's legs have been like parenthesis, who generally has to rock when she has to walk. She mentions that Twyla describes Maggie's body parts are mirroring the empty branches in the apple orchard, where she has been compared to the bigger woman in fairy tales (p. 55). In parallel to this statement, Rennie (2022) utters that Twyla has given the physical description of Maggie, who has not known anything about her in person; wherein through the narration of Twyla, the readers can get to know Twyla and not much about Maggie (p. 60). "I don't know if she was nice or not" (Morrison, 1983, p. 32).

E. *The Inconspicuousness in the Presentation of Identity*

A novel and a short story mostly do not concentrate on exposing the identity of a disabled character, especially when it comes to an impaired female dramatic persona. In *The Moonstone* and "Recitatif", the significance of Rosanna and Maggie is brought out through animate and inanimate objects, rather than exposing them explicitly. The invisibility of specification has been found in the character depiction of Rosanna. Ptacek (2015) says that the readers have not been informed about the private identity of Rosanna (p. 220). Similarly, Gibson (2014) mentions that the distinctiveness of Rosanna is invisible in the shivering sands, in which she ends her life (p. 12). "I think that my grave is waiting for me here... "Do you know what it looks like to ME?" says Rosanna... "It looks as if it had hundreds of suffocating people under it--all struggling to get to the surface, and all sinking lower and lower in the dreadful deeps!" (Collins, 2017, pp. 480-494).

This anonymity of identity has also been mirrored in "Recitatif"; wherein Monzón (2017) says that Twyla and Roberta have been seeing their dancing and sick mothers in Maggie, and have been projecting their childhood traumas in Maggie (p. 7). In the same manner, Kolehmainen (2011) voices out that Twyla and Roberta consider Maggie as resemblances of their mothers which informs the readers that Maggie is a surrogate body, whose self is invisible; where her primary importance in the text is to aid the girls to uncover their identities (p. 48). Çelikkol (2015) argues that the position of Maggie within the symbolic worlds of the girls reveals that Maggie has been the deposit of the girls' apprehensions of their mothers, their subject positions and the trigger of anger (p. 179). "Maggie was my dancing mother... She'd been brought up in an institution like my mother was and like I thought I would be too" (Morrison, 1983, pp. 49-51). Thus, the identities and the self of both Rosanna and Maggie have been overshadowed by the shivering sands and the mothers of the two girls respectively.

F. *The Separateness of Female Characters With Impairments*

In prose narratives, the female characters who have been disabled have generally been distanced from the other dramatic personas. Brittain (2004) vocalises that the second fiddle phenomenon of the six pitfalls of disability fiction includes the treatment of a disabled character as an outsider, who has been considered a figure of alienation and social isolation (p. 7).

The isolation of a disabled female character from the others has been witnessed in *The Moonstone*; where Agnew (1999) says that female characters with some deformity who have been from a lower status and who do not possess beauty have usually been isolated and do not have many friends. She puts forth that in novels the disabled characters' friends would also be disabled. She has also said that this has been noticeable in *The Moonstone*, where Rosanna has a real friend Limping Lucy, who has been a disabled female character as well (p. 30). "Visit to some friends of hers at Cobb's Hole. Those friends were the Yollands... Rosanna's acquaintance with them had begun by means of the daughter, who was afflicted with a misshapen foot, and who was known in our parts by the name of Limping Lucy. The two deformed girls had, I suppose, a kind of fellow-feeling for each other" (Collins, 2017, pp. 2254-2256).

Švegar (2018) also avers that despite being the underdog of *The Moonstone*, due to her past life, Rosanna has been deformed with one shoulder bigger than the other and has been an outcast to society (p. 19). "A heartbreaking sensation of loneliness kept with me... Somehow, I couldn't make friends with them" (Collins, 2017, pp. 5640-5641).

Keith (2004) strongly believes that a disabled character is a classic outsider, which aids the writer toward many possibilities to picturise the individual; and she insists that a teenager who is disabled in fiction is left alone by the rest of the characters (p. 5). This is seen in the "Recitatif", where Maggie has been discriminated against and has been distanced from the orphanage girls because of her deformity.

Vattöy (2020) stresses that Maggie has been inferior to the girls in the orphanage since she has been mute, old and a person of colour; and she brings out that these descriptions of Maggie reveal to the readers that she has been a suspended woman due to her social vulnerability (p. 22). Likewise, Rennie (2022) mentions that Twyla has reassured the readers that Maggie has most probably been mute, where there have been scandals that Maggie's tongue has been cut off thus making her an outsider (p. 61).

In addition to these, Adams (2012) states that Maggie has been looked at by the girls as a marginalised woman, who has been racially alienated as they think she is different from them (p. 146). Adie Nelson and Veronica Nelson (2016) thus argue that more than the male dramatic personas, the female disabled characters have been depicted as other (p. 93).

G. *The Evil Representation and Target of Prejudice*

The female character with a disability has been sketched as evil, sinister, prejudiced and a target of judgement. Beauchamp et al. (2009) argue that disabled characters have been portrayed as evils or monsters in literary works from

children's stories to adult novels and even in plays (p. 3). Keith (2004) informs that a disabled teenager has been represented in fiction as a victim, or a person who encounters prejudices and judgements (p. 5).

Likewise, Barnes (1992) reports that in media a disabled character has been exhibited as evil and sinister (p. 11); which could be noticeable in fiction as well, wherein Rosanna in *The Moonstone* has been portrayed as a robber. "Rosanna spearman had been a thief... and rob from thousands, instead of only robbing from one, the law laid hold of her, and the prison and the reformatory followed the lead of the law" (Collins, 2017, pp. 414-416). In *The Moonstone*, Rosanna too faces these kinds of differences in the incidences that are followed after the loss of the diamond, as she has been a thief in her past. "the Sergeant requesting that I would give him a room to himself, and then send in the servants (the indoor servants only), one after another... Rosanna Spearman went next. Reminded longer than any of them. No report on coming out--dead silence, and lips as pale as ashes... Rosanna Spearman has stolen the Diamond" (Collins, 2017, pp. 2080-2142).

H. *The Recipients of Violence*

The disabled female characters in novels and short stories have been the victims of violence, and have been portrayed and justified as human beings who deserve the violent acts and suffering directed upon them. Similarly, Barnes (1992) puts forth that a disabled person has been an object or victim of violence in the media (p. 10), which has also been seen in prose narratives; where Maggie in "Recitatif" has undergone extreme brutality. "Remember Maggie? The day she fell down and those gar girls laughed at her? "No, Twyla. They knocked her down. Those girls pushed her down and tore her clothes. In the orchard" (Morrison, 1983, pp. 42-43). The mentioned lines from the short story have been projecting how the girls laughed at Maggie due to her defects. Sklar (2011) argues that Maggie has been laughed at by the orphanage girls when she has fallen, which has been a treatment that has been triggered or prompted because of Maggie's appearance or disability or even both (p. 144).

Mizel (2021) states that Maggie's suffering is justified as Twyla thinks the kitchen woman has been disconnected from the rest of the community, which in turn has reinforced the possession of power by Twyla while withholding it from others (p. 14); where the other has been referred to Maggie. "I didn't kick her; I didn't really join in with the gar girls and kick that lady, but I sure did want to. We watched and never tried to help her and never called for help" (Morrison, 1983, p. 49).

I. *The Symbol of Pathos and Helplessness*

The disabled female characters have been the deposit of sympathy and pathos, which has been greatly visible in the character of Maggie in the short story "Recitatif". Barnes (1992) states that in media a disabled person has been depicted as pitiable and sympathetic (p. 7); which is apparent in prose narratives as well. Stanley (2011) argues that despite Maggie being older than the girls in the orphanage, the girls consider her as a helpless child (p. 75). "She wore this really stupid little hat—a kid's hat with earflaps—and she wasn't much taller than we were. A really awful little hat. Even for a mute, it was dumb—dressing like a kid and never saying anything a tall" (Morrison, 1983, p. 32).

J. *The Denial of Love and Romance*

In prose fiction, a deformed female character is depicted to be isolated from romantic relationships and has been believed to be a desire-free person especially when it comes to love. McLeod (2014) avers that there have been authors who depict disabled characters as asexual, and their illnesses and deficiencies as a barrier to romantic relationships (p. 16). In the same way, Banik (2016) says that disabled characters have not been regarded as human beings, who have feelings or desires like other self-respecting individuals (p. 200).

Rosanna is criticised by the characters in the novel *The Moonstone* when they come to know that she has a liking for Franklin and is in love with him. Prytz (2012) puts forth that though Rosanna has been given the right to be romantically ambitious, her love for Franklin has been considered hopeless (p. 11). Comparably, Branfield (2016) says that despite the novel projecting interest in Rosanna towards Franklin as significant, her love has been considered foolish and hopeless. He adds that Betteridge has described Rosanna's situation as an absurdity (p. 12). "He took about as much notice of her as he took of the cat; it never seemed to occur to him to waste a look on Rosanna's plain face" (Collins, 2017, pp. 1060-1061).

Rijzingen (2015) also states that many characters throughout the novel have been saying that Rosanna's love for Franklin is transgressive because she is both a disabled woman and a person who has been socially beneath him (pp. 50-51). In correspondence to the above statement, O'Dell (2007) stresses that Betteridge further discriminates against Rosanna by defining her love and affection for Franklin as laughable (p. 36). Additionally, Shutt (1990) says that despite sharing similar fundamental traits, Rosanna and Rachel have been polarised in the novel; and Betteridge when conversing with Scuff says that the love of Rosanna for Franklin has been the reflection of complete madness (p. 221). "Rosanna had been mad enough to set her heart on Mr. Franklin Blake" (Collins, 2017, p. 2061).

The abled-bodied characters in prose fiction have been picturised in a manner in which they have been surprised to know that impaired female characters have been in love. Agnew (1999) utters that the novel *The Moonstone* represents how Betteridge has been shocked to witness that Rosanna has been thinking of loving someone, despite her low status, a plain face that is without beauty and her deformity. She adds that, this has also been mirrored in Penalapi's statements, who stresses that a woman like Rosanna with physical disfigurement should not foresee her social position; where like

other characters Rosanna herself has been completely emersed in her social beliefs, thereby believing that their attitudes have been justified (p. 27).

The Restriction of Disfigured Female Character's Subjectivity

The disabled female characters in novels and short stories are denied the right to possess personal tastes and emotions. Ptacek (2015) articulates that Rosanna and Lucy, who have also been a disabled female character in the novel *The Moonstone* have been denied the usual subjectivity that the novel grants to the other characters, literally marking these women as abnormal and different due to their physical appearances. He also voices out that the novel reveals Rosanna's subjectivity after her death as it neutralises the text; in which it is clear that Rosanna herself thinks that her tastes and emotions have been different from others (p. 220).

K. The Grounds for the Skepticisms in Storylines

In novels and short stories, it has been clear that the impaired female characters have been the reason for the twists or confusions to arise, where these characters have been left unacknowledged till the end. Morris (2013) mentions that Morrison in "Recitatif" disrupts the notions of what Twyla and Roberta remember about their reactions to Maggie, which have never been objective and have always been informed by power hierarchy that has been based on race, gender, class and ability (p. 174). In parallel to the above comment, O'Dell (2007) says that in *The Moonstone*, the false detection revolves around the marginalised characters in such a manner that class, race and physical disability become the key signifiers of misleading incriminating evidence (p. 22).

L. An Instrument for the Development of Other Characters

The impaired female dramatic personas have generally been stagnant characters, who usually do not develop like the others in fiction. Brittain (2004) says in the second fiddle phenomenon of the six pitfalls of disability fiction that disabled characters have not been completely developed, who at times develop for the understanding of themselves and their disability, and merely for the central character as well (p. 7). Similarly, Keith (2004) mentions that the presence of a disabled character in fiction has been to promote the personal development of an abled-bodied character (p. 5). This has been witnessed in the "Recitatif"; where Stanley (2011) mentions that Maggie has been a character who has been fixed throughout the short story and has not been a transformable character like Twyla and Roberta (p. 71).

Banik (2016) vocalises that a disabled character enters a story to serve many purposes as and when the writer thinks, but has always been second fiddle to able-bodied characters unless the work is an autobiography that has been written by a disabled person (p. 198). This discrimination of the disabled character's portrayal has also been noticed in *The Moonstone*; where Nelson (2016) states that sometimes like Rosanna, many characters with grotesque appearances and inferior statuses have been designed to serve the central characters who have been useful tools in the plots (p. 20).

M. The Tragic Fates of Deformed Female Characters

Generally, a female dramatic persona with a deficiency has an unhappy ending or has been made to die at the end of a fiction. Brittain (2004) remarks in the second fiddle phenomenon of the six pitfalls of disability fiction that an author fails to exhibit a character with an impairment to have a happy and fulfilling life (p. 7). In addition to this, Keith (2004) implies that the death of an abled-bodied character in fictional books for children has been unusual, on the other hand, the death of a disabled or deformed character has been a surprisingly common element (p. 3); which can also be visible in adult's fictions. Apart from these, Banik (2016) avers that in novels and short stories, the tragic fate of the disabled or deformed characters does not bother the readers wherein the readers accept these as poetic or divine justice (p. 200).

The deaths of the fictional disabled female characters have been left ungrieved by the others in fiction; where it has been noticeable that Rosanna's death has been forgotten by the major characters in the novel *The Moonstone*. Cirit (2015) avers that the novel *The Moonstone* experiences the first embodiment of loss by the suicide of Rosanna, wherein the death of Rosanna has gone ungrieved by the characters and her impact in the novel has also been erased (p. 8).

Nelson (2016) puts forth that like Rosanna sometimes the disabled or deformed female characters have been sacrificed at the end of the story (p. 20). Howarth (2011-2012) foregrounds that the death of Rosanna symbolises the undertreatment of characters belonging to the lower classes; wherein though Rosanna is the central element in the mystery of the disappearance of the moonstone, her experiences exclusively rely on her suicidal letter which explicitly showcases that Rosanna has been a marginalised figure and whose death has been overshadowed by the moonstone (p. 31).

IV. CONCLUSION

It has been greatly visible that the disabled or deformed female characters in prose fiction from the past till date have been facing numerous differences when comparing them to their male counterparts. Murray (2018) avers that though the disabled characters' presence informs the structure of the narration, the age-old tendency to configure disability to lack, loss, absence, tragedy and problematic individuals has not shown any disappearance; where there are examples in recent fiction too (p. 146). As Fois (2018) strongly puts forth for many decades now, scholars have been propelling writers to address disability in youth narration as it would promote the ideas of inclusion (p. 3).

Young (2020) believes that books about disabled characters erase the intersectional diversities of the disabled

community. He adds that some picture books may have been reinforcing the disability ideologies of segregation by emphasising otherness in the disabled characters, where they have been purposefully portrayed as different and have been isolated from imageries (p. 6). In close relation to the arguments of Young, Adams (2012) states that while the scholars of disability study have merely been working out of strong awareness of and commitment towards feminism, feminists have been neglecting disability, even when being attentive to other forms of differences that have been embodied (p. 4). He also states that intersectionality has never been about the addition of one term to the other, but how the differences define and reinforce one another (p. 6).

It is essential to look into fiction from the positive perspective of both disability and feminism, as it would aid in creating and representing cheerful and successful disabled and deformed female characters in novels and short stories as well. The writer must concentrate on breaking the stereotypes and traditional depictions of a differently abled female character by picturizing her as an exuberant and propitious individual, rather than portraying her as an inferior sex who has been doubly marginalised and depicting her darker side too. Therefore, as Banik (2016) says the negative depiction of disabled characters leaves a strong and everlasting impression in the minds of the readers, even after forgetting the storyline (p. 2). Thus, these stigmas that have been prevailing for centuries in the portrayal of a disabled female character have to undergo the essential change to bring out an optimistic image of the differently abled female sex.

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