



Broken Bodies, Breaking Boundaries: Representations of Bodies with Disabilities in Sri Lankan English Literature

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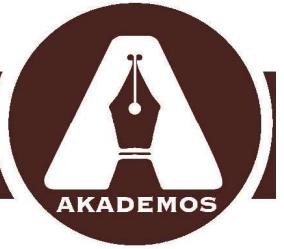
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Abstract

This study critically interrogates the representations of bodies with disabilities in Sri Lankan English novels as sites of immense possibilities that provide an in-depth engagement with hegemonic constructions/ normative readings of “traditional” Sri Lankan/South Asian identities. Studies on Sri Lankan English literature have analyzed portrayals of gender, ethnic and racial identities, creating a huge lacuna in research that explores its depiction of disabilities. Thus, this study aims to critically examine the representations of bodies with disabilities in the Sri Lankan English novels, *Anil's Ghost* by Michael Ondaatje and *The Road from Elephant Pass* by Nihal de Silva to argue that, such bodies can be marked as new epistemic spaces where the hegemonic understandings of gender, ethnicity and knowledge are challenged, demanding in that process a re-negotiation of the traditional identity markers that are considered unassailable. The study critically analyses the two selected novels by drawing on theories on critical disability and intersectionality to contend that, disability as an identity marker that cuts across different social identities is crucial to interrogate the multi-layered experiences uniquely felt by South Asian countries due to their common struggles such as ethnic crisis, religious fundamentalism and economic disparities. Using the two novels, this study points out that bodies with disabilities can be employed as alternative grounds where struggles such as continuing western influence in the production of knowledge, the impact of hegemonic religious beliefs, persistent stereotyping of gender identities can be contested: a third space similar to what Homi K. Bhabha describes in his theory of hybridity. Moreover, the study explores the performance/ pretense of disability with special reference to the novel *The Road from Elephant Pass* to portray the disabled body as an agent of empowerment thereby recasting disability in a more positive light. Therefore, this study concludes that bodies with disabilities or the broken bodies can be observed as bodies as breaking boundaries, and therefore of immense possibilities that can be employed by South Asian authors in depicting the unique experiences of living in South Asia to a global audience.

Keywords:Bodies with disabilities, identity politics, South Asia, Sri Lankan English literature, alternate space.





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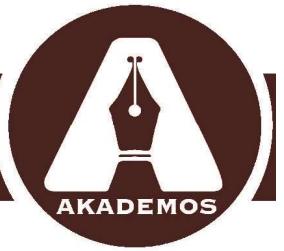
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Nestled between the Indian Ocean and the Himalayas, South Asia is home to a multitude of cultures, languages and religions that account for its rich diversity. Due to its unique geographical location, South Asia was prone to waves of invasions both from the countries outside the region as well as its own members, resulting in that process a vibrant mix of cultures of not only eastern but of western origin. What we identify today as South Asia is therefore defined by such cultural exchanges which happened over centuries. Such cultural negotiations continue to be crucial in determining the cultural topography of South Asia, even though they are mediated today by post-globalized, neo-liberal forces that define us in our contemporary realities.

South Asian culture enjoys a high popularity across the world today; the reception of Hollywood movies such as *Monsoon Wedding* and *Lagaan*, cultural practices such as henna designs as well as authors such as Rushdie, Mukherjee, and Roy bare evidence to its place in the global arena(Brians 1). According to Paul Brians “South Asia is now chic in the West in the way that Japan was a decade ago” (1). Thus, it challenges the cultural hegemony of the western centres which defined tantras and incantations of the eastern countries as superstitious and mystical. “Multidirectional flow” of cultural artifacts and practices that was made possible by the increasing permeability of the previously static geographical boundaries have led to a re-negotiation of such cultural relationships; people in the United Kingdom celebrated “Holi festival” virtually during last February due to lockdown measures, while in the countries like Sri Lanka Chinese recipes such as Vegetable Chop Suey and Chinese Kankun Stir became trending dishes to prepare when staying at home.

On the other hand, South Asia as a region is characterised by a unique but a common past that they share with each other. For instance, these countries are indelibly marked by the colonial handprint due to centuries of western domination. In 1498, Vasco da Gama became the first Portuguese invader to set foot in the Indian subcontinent while their ships found the way to



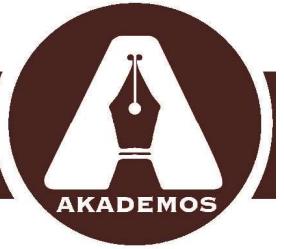


Sri Lankan coast by 1505. Thus, began a history of westernization and colonial misappropriation, the impact of which could be felt not only politically and economically but also socially and culturally. Thus, by the time the colonizers left South Asia English language and the English medium education had become “the way to success”, indigenous economic systems were replaced by plantation agriculture and the communal harmony between various religious and ethnic groups was damaged beyond repair. For instance, there was a burgeoning mistrust between Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka when they received independence which culminated in a thirty-year communal war while Indian subcontinent was partitioned into two countries as India and Pakistan, a part of which became Bangladesh in the subsequent years. Therefore, what we could observe in the postcolonial South Asia is a group of nations which were navigating between their years of western dominance and the remnants of a pre-colonial history to which they no longer can fully return, while struggling to build their nations from what has been left behind for them. During the decades that followed the independence from western colonizers, South Asian countries were also exposed to waves of technical advancement, neo-liberalization of economies and scientific progress that added new layers to such experiences, the totality of which may define what South Asia is today.

Stemming from such a diverse background, representing South Asia and the experiences of living in South Asia becomes a complex and a daunting task. As a region that battles its own demons of religious fundamentalism, terrorism, economic disparities and political corruption while all its member nations having their own story to narrate, such representations in literature and today in other pop cultural media, continue to be multifaceted (Johan and Kurian). Therefore, this study takes as its point-of-departure the argument that, bodies with disabilities may act as an alternate space that could be exploited to provide a nuanced representation of South Asia to a global audience. It examines the strength of the characters with disabilities in South Asian literature to capture the unique experiences of South Asian people while positioning such bodies as new epistemic spaces where the traditional assumptions of gender, race, ethnicity and knowledge could be contested, thereby allowing us to re-interpret our common challenges collectively, while representing our experiences more coherently to a global audience.

This study critically analyses the selected Sri Lankan English novels, *Anil's Ghost* (2000) by Michael Ondaatje and *The Road From Elephant Pass* (2003) by Nihal De Silva to achieve its research objectives. Set during the years after the second insurrection of Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna or what is widely known as the JVP in Sri Lanka, *Anil's Ghost* is an attempt to give an identity to a burnt out body that the protagonists, Anil Tisara and Sarath Diyasena found from a

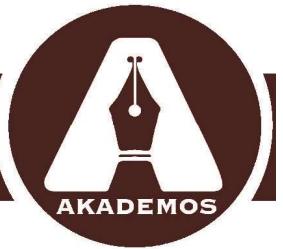




“restricted area, accessible only to the police”(Ondaatje 58). Sphere headed by Rohana Wijeweera, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna aimed to bring forth a socialist revolution in Sri Lanka through militant activism in two attempts, famously referred to as 1971 JVP insurrection and the 1987-1990 JVP insurrection, both of which were brutally squashed by the prevailing governments (Asia Foundation, 2017). In the meantime, the conflict between the state government and the Tamil rebels in Sri Lanka became a fully-fledged communal war in 1980s, turning death and violence to a common day reality (Groundviews, 2013). Both Anil and Sarath believe that, the dead body that they discovered and later named as Sailor will become an evidence to prove the politically sanctioned murders that took place in the country during the decade of 1980s. Taking this chaotic situation of the country as the background, Ondaatje engages his readers in a journey of discovery where the taken-for-granted understandings of reality, truth, knowledge and identity are contested over the dead body of Sailor (Sanghera; Renaux). In the meantime, Gratiaen Prize winning novel, *The Road from Elephant Pass* by Nihal De Silva takes the readers into a different landscape: war-torn north of Sri Lanka in early 2000s where an army captain, Wasantha Rathnayake is engaged in an arduous mission to deliver a female L.T.T.E. carder, who promises to “divulge vital information” “that could end the war”, to the army Headquarters in Colombo (Silva 18). During their journey from Elephant Pass to Colombo which cuts across the L.T.T.E. territory and the Vilpaththu jungle, one of the largest wildlife sanctuaries in the country, De Silva engages his characters in heated arguments that tap into muddy waters of Sri Lankan politics, opening in that process a critical space to interrogate identity politics that plague not only Sri Lanka as a country but also South Asia as a region.

The focus of this study is on the characters with disabilities in the selected texts, or what it calls ‘broken bodies’, to investigate their potential to work as new epistemic spaces where the hegemonic understandings of gender, ethnicity and knowledge could be challenged. Using the characters of Palipana the epigraphist, who lost his eye-sight due to Glaucoma during his old age and Sailor or the beaten dead body discovered by Anil and Sarath in Ondaatje’s *Anil Ghost*, along with the army captain Wasantha Rathnayake who assumes the identity of a person with a disability to cross the “enemy territory” in De Silva’s *The Road from Elephant Pass*, this study contends that the characters with disabilities can be observed as bodies with the potential to disrupt or destabilize what seems as static , which becomes crucial when demanding us to renegotiate traditional identity markers that are considered to be unassailable. Therefore, it intends to conclude that bodies with disabilities or the broken bodies can be observed as bodies as breaking boundaries, and therefore of immense possibilities that can be employed by South Asian authors in depicting the unique experiences of living in South Asia to a global audience.





This study is primarily grounded in the theories of disability studies and intersectionality, in its attempt to examine the bodies with disabilities as bodies with immense possibilities that disrupt our hegemonic beliefs and perspectives, while opening space to provide a more nuanced representation of South Asia and the unique experiences of living in South Asia. Disability scholars consider social model of disability advanced by Mike Oliver in 1980s as the corner stone in the contemporary discourse on disability studies. According to the social model, disability is recognized as “the outcome of social arrangements that work to restrict the activities of people with impairments through the erection of social barriers” (Thomas 40). Therefore, the social model can be regarded as a reactionary movement against the biomedical model of disability, which recognizes disability as “the inevitable and tragic consequence of being impaired” (Thomas 40). Social model of disability also challenges moral or religious models of disability, which interpret disability “as a punishment from God for a particular sin or sins that may have been committed by the person with disability” (Retief and Letšosa, 2018; Bennett and Volpe, 2018). Thus, the social model of disability detaches disability from such physiological and moralistic understandings and recasts it as a “natural” or inherent aspect of society that can and should be accommodated. Expanding on this naturalization of disability are the critical disability theorists who argue that, disability is not only a natural or an inherent aspect of our existence, but also an enriching experience for both disabled and the able-bodied individuals because, it allows us to discover cracks in our otherwise perfect realities. They contended that such cracks can remain invisible in the absence of persons with disabilities because, it is their very presence that exposes those cracks to us. Drawing on this theoretical perspective the present study argues that, the incorporation of bodies with disabilities into South Asian literature nuances our representation of South Asia, plunging the readers into an in-depth discussion of what it means to be a South Asian.

In its attempt to read the selected novels as constructing new epistemic spaces that nuance our representation of South Asia to a global audience, this study combines the above theorizations of disability with the ideas of intersectionality. Introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1988, intersectionality brought into focus the issues with compartmentalizing gender, racial and ethnic identities, arguing that such identities intersect when defining who we are. As Crenshaw 3), points out, understanding “subordination as occurring along a single categorical axis”, or as “mutually exclusive” is problematic as human experiences are interlaced with intersecting identities. Thus, reading human experiences as the outcomes of multitude of identities that cannot be considered in isolation but work in unison when defining ourselves becomes crucial in making the “invisible” “visible”, as it opens us to witness the complexities of the contemporary societies (Hancock 74). In other words, interpreting a Sinhala Buddhist,





upper-cast Sri Lankan woman only based on her gender identity may be challenging as there are other intersecting religious, cast and national identities that either may work to oppress or liberate her. Using this understanding, Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her famous essay *Under Western Eyes* (1988) points out the following.

“I argue that assumptions of privilege and ethnocentric universality on the one hand, and inadequate self-consciousness about the effect of Western scholarship on the “third world” in the context of a world system dominated by the West on the other, characterise a sizable extent of Western feminist work on women in the third world. An analysis of “sexual difference” in the form of a cross-culturally singular, monolithic notion of patriarchy or male dominance leads to the construction of a similarly reductive and homogeneous notion of what I call the “Third World Difference that stable, ahistorical something that apparently oppresses most if not all the women in these countries. It is in this process of homogenization and systematization of the oppression of women in the third world that power is exercised...” (Mohanty 336)

As Mohanty argues in the above extract, “universalising tendencies” of the individual experiences of the South Asian women “result in decontextualized, monolithic images” that are inadequate when capturing the multiplicity of their experiences which are uniquely bound with the individual circumstances that they are vested (Mohanty 333). Taking this argument as a point of departure this study contends that, representing South Asia and the experiences of living in South Asia is a complex process where the bodies with disabilities may provide an alternate space, a space which hitherto has not been explored adequately, despite their potential to capture the uniqueness of South Asian experiences more aptly because, as Anderson argues, “people with disabilities are the world’s largest multicultural minority” (369).

The objective of this section is to critically examine the role of broken bodies or the bodies with disabilities in literature when representing South Asia and the experiences of living in South Asia to a global audience. It observes how such bodies become forces of disruption that allow us to attack our set assumptions which we consider to be unassailable. Furthermore, it points out that such destabilizations lead us to interpret bodies with disabilities as alternate epistemic spaces where new knowledge can be discovered and constructed. It also highlights the important role those representations can play when recasting disability in a new light, thereby rescuing it from hegemonic assumptions of “disability”.





The role of broken bodies or the bodies with disabilities in the selected Sri Lankan English novels becomes disruptive; a force that works to dismantle what we assume to be “static” and “natural”. For instance, Palipana’s role in the novel *Anil’s Ghost* as an epigraphist who have lost his eye-sight during his old age becomes central to examine the continuing cultural dominance over the processes of knowledge production and validation, especially in South Asian countries. Palipana was “the centre of a nationalistic group that eventually wrestled archaeological authority in Sri Lanka away from the Europeans”, whose reputation was questioned after his “publication of a series of interpretations of rock graffiti that stunned archaeologists and historians” (Ondaatje 51). Thus, the place he occupies in the narrative is unique, a person who had the authority to discover/construct knowledge but was denied that authority once his claims were denounced in the basis that there was “no real evidence” (Ondaatje 52). Therefore, Palipana’s journey as an epigraphist sheds light onto the Foucault’s remark that experiences of power and knowledge are intrinsically linked (Foucault).

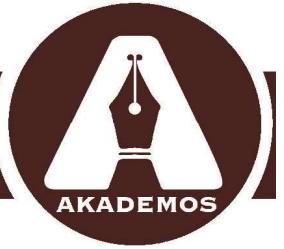
In the narrative, we see Anil and Sarath visit the Grove of Ascetics to seek Palipana’s help with reconstructing Sailor’s scull, by the time of which Palipana had lost his eye-sight (Ondaatje 53). The following extract is taken from their first encounter.

“Sarath bent down and touched the old man’s feet, then led him to the bench. ‘This is Anil Tissera. . . . We’re working together.... ‘How do you do, sir?’ ‘A most beautiful voice.’ And Anil suddenly realized he was blind. He reached out and held her forearm, touching the skin, feeling the muscle underneath; she sensed he was interpreting her shape and size from this fragment of her body (Ondaatje 55-56).

What is evident in the above extract is Palipana’s attempt to construct knowledge in an alternate means due to his disability; he attempts to draw a mental picture of Anil by feeling her arm in an effort to compensate for his lost vision. Thus, his feel of Anil’s arm becomes his root to read the physical stature of Anil which opposes the “traditional” means of identifying a person by looking at an individual. Similar to the above is Palipana’s exploration of Sailor’s scull, he uses his fingers as the means of knowing instead of his eyes to picture Sailor’s scull. Ondaatje points out,

“Palipana fell silent. Anil watched his fingers, beautiful and thin, moving over the outlines of the skull Sarath had given him, his long fingernails at the supraorbital ridge, within the orbital cavities, then cupping the shape as if warming his palms on the skull, as if it were a stone from some old fire. He was testing the jaw’s angle, the blunt ridge of its teeth. She imagined he could hear the one bird in the forest distance. She imagined he could hear Sarath’s sandals pacing, the scrape of his match, the sound of the fire





roasting the tobacco leaf as Sarath smoked his beedi a few yards away. She was sure he could hear all that, the light wind, the other fragments of noise that passed by his thin face, that glassy brown boniness of his own skull. And all the while the blunt eyes looked out, piercing whatever caught them". (57)

Thus, Palipana's attempts to understand Sailor's scull through his fingers brings into light new ways of constructing knowledge, ways hither-to have been overshadowed by the looming presence of the "traditional" knowledge systems which take the centre stage. For instance, Palipana's fingers and ears, upon which he relies heavily to gage the world around him, provide an alternative to a person's eyes which is considered as the primary means of acquainting oneself with his or her surroundings. In light of that, Palipana's body stands as an alternative to the hegemonic ways of constructing/discovering knowledge, a process that becomes crucial in propelling us to critically engage with our traditional assumptions of the processes of constructing knowledge.

A similar process can be observed with regard to the body of Sailor, the burnt-out corpse to which Anil and Sarath strive to give an identity. Anil who is a forensic pathologist, expresses "her scientific interpretation of facts", aiming to reconstruct Sailor's identity through her investigations into his born structure and the fractures in the limbs, whereas Sarath is adamant in following his protégé's, Palipana's, footsteps in excavating Sailor's identity through archaeological investigations (Renaux 5). In the meantime, Ananda, the professional artificer who was given the task of reconstructing Sailor's scull brings in a new element to this process of identifying Sailor, adding a new layer to the multifaceted attempts at constructing and discovering knowledge. Ondaatje points out,

"In the afternoons when Ananda could go no further with the skull's reconstruction, he took it all apart, breaking up the clay. Strangely. It seemed a waste of time to her. But early the next morning he would know the precise thickness and texture to return to and could re-create the previous day's work in twenty minutes. Then he thought and composed the face a further step. It was as if he needed the warm-up of the past work to rush over so he could move with more confidence into the uncertainty that lay ahead". (112)

Thus, Sailor's broken body becomes the space to battle such attempts of constructing and discovering knowledge which invites the readers to identify the multiplicity and complexity of that process. Diverse ideas of what is "correct" or "valid" are competing to be heard above each





other, while Sailor's body becomes the centre stage for those ideas to enact themselves, a body which is broken and burnt out. For instance, Anil's "Western ways are not necessarily repudiated" by the characters like Sarath and Palipana, "especially since they reflect a devotion to scientific objectivity" (Barry 1). The following extract which is taken from a conversation between Anil and Palipana where she explains the forensic techniques of identifying the age of a dead body substantiates the said conflict:

"If we can get hold of such a machine, we can guess any age this way.' 'Guess,' he muttered. 'Five-percent margin of error. I'd guess that the person whose skull you inspected was twenty-eight years old.' 'How certain . . .' 'More certain than what you could know feeling the skull and the brow ridges and measuring the jaw.' 'How wonderful.' He turned his head to her. 'What a wonder you are.'" (Ondaatje 63)

The presence of the broken body of Sailor becomes the force that propels such different opinions, allowing them to clash in the open air. Such clashes play a crucial role in dismantling western or the eastern dominance in the production of knowledge, thereby pushing us to engage more deeply with the power relationships that are embedded in the production and the validation of knowledge. Furthermore, it helps us to expose the cracks in such systems of producing knowledge which are seen to be inherently flawless. For instance, the below extract throws into light Anil's difficulty in explaining her techniques of discovering Sailor's identity through forensic pathology to Ananda who comes from a different knowledge paradigm:

"Anil wished she could trade information with him, but she had long forgotten the subtleties of the language they once shared. She would have told him what Sailor's bone measurements meant in terms of posture and size. And he—God knows what insights he had" (Ondaatje 112).

What we witness in the above extract is the mutual exclusiveness of the different knowledge paradigms; the attempts of erecting rigid boundaries between various disciplines have led people to be stranded in each other's territory while being unable to converse with someone who is outside their territory. Thus, in their attempts to name Sailor, Anil becomes lost in her own world of forensic pathology while Ananda and Sarath are travelling in their separate worlds, three worlds that are forced to collide with each other due to the presence of Sailor's body. This collision compels these individuals to look back at their own existence more critically while delivering a blow at our attempts to keep our disciplines mutually exclusive. It invites us to reconsider our efforts to safe-guard our disciplines from the influence of the other by frowning upon at the endeavors to go inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary. In that regard, both Palipana's and Sailor's bodies work as threats to the hegemonic assumptions of knowledge,





production of knowledge and the validation of knowledge while demanding us to re-negotiate our taken-for-granted assumptions.

It is also interesting to examine the representation of bodies with disabilities in the novel *The Road from Elephant Pass* as a way of destabilising hegemonic understandings of gender and ethnicity. The novel features Wasantha Rathnayake, a Sri Lankan army captain who is tasked with bringing in an L.T.T.E. “female informant” who has promised vital information for questioning (Silva 5). His mission goes haywire once they were struck by enemy fire, forcing him and the Tamil tigress, Kamala Velaithan, to flee across the Tiger territory and Vilpaththu jungle to reach Colombo. As a cover story to pass the Tigers’ territory unnoticed, Velaithan suggests Wasantha to pretend to be her brother who was injured by a “falling rafter” during the combats between the army and the L.T.T.E., leaving him “concussed and disoriented” (Silva 29). Thus, the army Captain was forced to embody a new identity, the identity of a person with a disability which leads the readers to re-evaluate certain assumptions regarding gender and ethnicity. For instance, the embodiment of the identity of a person with a disability leaves the masculine army soldier who represents the Sinhala Buddhist majority of Sri Lanka on a woman who belongs to the Tamil minority. De Silva points out that “She stood up and adjusted her haversack, then stretched out her hand to make a show of helping me up. Cold hands, like a mortician’s. I followed her meekly, head down and mumbling to myself. (Silva 37)

What is evident in the above extract is a scathing criticism of identity politics of Sri Lanka which derives its strength from the hegemonic assumptions of gender, ethnic and racial identities that are considered unassailable. For instance, through his depiction of a male who belongs to the majority ethnic group of Sinhala Buddhist as dependent on a female who represents minority Tamils, De Silva overturns the traditional assumptions of gender and ethnicity which demand Wasantha Rathnayake to be in control, the very thing that he lacks until they cross the L.T.T.E. territory. However, their strategy allowed them to camouflage themselves from the eyes of the tigers while laying the foundation for their later relationship. Hence, De Silva brings into light the potential of bodies with disabilities to work as forces of destabilization that become crucial in challenging what we consider to be unchallengeable.

Thus, the above discussion leads us to position bodies with disabilities as alternate epistemic spaces which provide the critical distance to observe our assumptions of the world around us. Such a distance is crucial in an attempt to re-interpret hegemonic beliefs that we consider unassailable, leading us to discover new knowledge which hither-to have been lying in the shadow of such hegemonic beliefs. For instance, Palipana’s exploration of Sailor’s scull through his fingers along with the broken and burnt-out skeleton of Sailor become new epistemic spaces that throw into light the diverse means of constructing and discovering





knowledge, which might be overshadowed by a polarized reading of western and eastern modes of knowledge production. Therefore, such bodies can be recognized as bodies with immense possibilities that become central in our representation of South Asia to a global audience. They expose the intervening forces that work together when defining South Asia and life in South Asia while exposing the cracks in our belief systems which we otherwise consider to be “perfect”. Examining in that light, those bodies bare a predominant importance in portraying the complexities of South Asia to a global audience.

Observing bodies with disabilities in this light also helps in recasting disability in a positive light, as an enriching experience for both the able-bodied and the disabled. Perceptions of disability are mediated by social and cultural beliefs which always do not interpret it in a positive viewpoint, often reading it as a fault that lies with that particular individual (Thomas, 2002). Such ideologies may seep into literary representations, colouring our understandings of what it means to be disabled. For instance, representations of disability in literature appear to be motivated by a tendency to treat “disability from a clinical, medical or therapeutic perspective” which therefore places more emphasis on the portrayals of such individuals’ efforts to re-orient themselves to match the demands of the able-bodied hegemony (Banik 3). In light of that, disabled characters” are made to play “the second fiddle to the able-bodied characters” while been used as the means of “accentuating the normality and correctness of those characters” (Banik 3). On the other hand, such characters may serve as prototypes, often intended at setting a moral story of courage and good-heartedness, which indeed is a process of stereotyping that takes away their essence as individuals. Thus, the visually challenged teenaged boy in Love and First Sight by Josh Sundquist who has to fall in love with a physically unattractive girl, to set out a moral lesson that love should surpass surface values, may stand as one of such examples whose individuality is taken away by stereotypical representations.

What captures readers’ attention regarding the representation of characters with disabilities in the selected novels is the fact that, they neither accord a peripheral importance to such characters, nor do they try to portray them as pornographic figures who have outstanding courage and moral values. Despite the fact that disability is not considered as the central theme or the focus of those novels, their attempts to portray disability as a natural and an inherent aspect of our existence are commendable. Such attempts recast characters with disabilities to be crucial to our experiences as individuals, but not as unessential or second place citizens. They re-interpret disability as an enriching experience for both the disabled and abled-bodied individuals.

This study examined the representations of bodies with disabilities, or what it termed as broken bodies, as alternate spaces that have the potential to represent South Asia in-depth to a





global audience. It discussed the important role such bodies can play in destabilizing our established notions of knowledge, gender, ethnicity and race which we assume to be inherent and essential. It brought into light the significance of challenging such taken-for-granted understandings when discovering and constructing new knowledge/understandings, a process that is made possible by the presence of characters with disabilities. Such attempts of destabilizing set readings of identity markers become crucial in representing intervening forces that define South Asia and the experiences of living in South Asia. In the meantime, these representations lead us to re-negotiate our perceptions of disability, allowing us to recast it in a positive light, as an experience that enriches both the disabled and the able-bodied.

Thus, this study brings into light an important research area which had not been in the lime light of the contemporary studies that concern South Asian literature in English. Therefore, it intends to highlight the significance of conducting more research into the conclusions that have been put forth by this study. Studies on representations of disability in South Asian literature will allow us to nuance our critical readings of South Asia as a region while motivating creative writers to test the potential of such characters which still remains as a largely unexplored narrative trope.

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