

Fayoum University

Faculty of Arts

Department of English Language and Literature



**Disability in Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident*, Jean Dominique
Bauby's *The Diving Bell* and Lisa Genova's *Left Neglected*: A Psychological
Comparative Study**

An M.A. Thesis in Literature

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Abstract

This study tackles the representation of disability and the disabled characters in literature through a psychological perspective. The world overlooks the needs of the minorities because the world is built for the majority of its inhabitants. People with disabilities are only one group of people that are discriminated against. The problems the disabled face are categorized as 'disabilities'. Disability studies is a growing field of theorization, which originated in the wake of the civil rights movements of the 1960s. It has taken its place alongside such modes of inquiry as race and gender studies. The disabled characters are found in literature, but they are not presented in the same position of other standard characters unless the story is a biography. Disability is often associated with evil and negative depictions. Scientists, psychiatrists and authors of literary works from 1960 until the present time have portrayed disability without paying any attention to the voices or the experiences of the disabled individual. Literature interacts with fields such as psychology, history, philosophy and so on. It is a discipline wherein language is used as a medium to interpret man's existence, feelings, and culture. This relationship is considered as a mode of Comparative Literature. Literature supports psychology by depicting the human psychological status. One might ask why there are few examples of literary works that have characters with disabilities, although disability is considered as a natural part of life. In Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Jean Dominique Bauby's *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* and Lisa Genova's *Left Neglected*, the authors made use of the narrative strategy of letting the individual with disability control the whole narrative which is something unusual because finally the disabled bodies are given the voices to speak up their entities. This study focuses on applying the Theory of Mind, loss of identity and alienation, and trauma to the selected novels. The use of such narrative strategy, as the first person narration, shows how the personal experience of disability is valued.

Key Words: Alienation, Comparative Literature, Disability Studies, loss of identity, Psychology, Theory of Mind, and trauma.