Chapter III

Critiquing Institution and Science in *The Fifth Child* and *Ben in the World*

History shows us the change of attitude of the people to disability over the years. People's attitude tends to changes from time to time towards 'deviant' bodies. They were wonders of the primitive era, promulgators of God's power in the Christian era, 'abnormal' in the modern world, later have become 'objects' in the twentieth century, now in the twenty first century scientists are trying to make them end up as objects subjected to correction through genome sequencing and genetic engineering (Thomson, 1997: Shildrick, 1998 Wilson and Wilson, Barnes).

Irrespective of time, place, and people we see disability everywhere. Exclusion of the disabled people into the institutions is not a recent phenomenon, have been witnessing it ever since the advent of industrialization, and with the advancement of medical science. I do not mean to say that discrimination was hardly seen rather there is evidence which shows how disabled people were treated undesirably even in the past. The banishment/ killing of the defective infants was seen in Greece, as is the case in the Oedipus myth (Stiker, G N Kama). According to G N Karna in the pre-historic society disabled children were killed, mostly the primitive tribes by discarded their disabled children on the grounds of physical unfitness. Snyder and Mitchel discuss different kinds of punishments given to the defective people in the middle ages.

Aristotle's description of the 'deviant' body is again another scale to understand the discrimination of disability in the ancient Greek world (Thomson, Shildrick, ).

Despite discrimination, ancient history shows their full participation in daily life and there is enough evidence to show the disabled people in inclusion of social life. Institution or
institutionalization of the disabled people is not a sudden development. The removal of social 'deviants' into the institutions was seen in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries itself. (Snyder and Mitchell, Barnes and Mercer, Michael Oliver) It is important to see the stages undergone of before coming to the stage of Institution enrolment.

Charity Model

Charity movement for the social deviants was popular in the medieval period, in the Christian era. Church fathers are the founders of the charity system (Stiker, Barnes). The defectives were taken care of in the monasteries or in the hospitals. There is evidence for the charity measures available for the 'deviants' in the monasteries or in the hospitals (Stiker, 1999). Alms giving was also considered as an act of benevolence by rich people to reach the sphere of God. According to the medieval Christians pleasing the social deviants was considered equal to pleasing the Almighty (Stiker). Anyway this charity system does not continue owing to its showcasing of the disabled people as helpless or dependant (Barnes and Mercer).

Following the medieval charity homes, emerged the rehabilitation programmes. The birth of rehabilitation took at the time of World War I. The wounded war veterans are the first to benefit from the rehabilitation programmes. According to Wachara Riewpaiboon and Stuart Blume rehabilitation programmes in Europe and North were deeply entwined with processes of industrialization and with the emergence of welfare states and entitlements. Rehabilitation programmes with vocational trainings aimed at to helping the deviants lend for theirselves. G N Kama says rehabilitation programmes were to help the patients to get the physical and psychological fitness to care for himself/ herself. He also explains about the two schools of thought regarding rehabilitation:
There are, basically, two schools of thought regarding the concept of rehabilitation, one with a purely medical perspective, which perceives rehabilitation in terms of assisting all those medical measures which expedite recovery. [...]. Rehabilitation, according to the second school of thought propounded by social scientists, policy makers, and social workers, is viewed as the restoration of the disabled to the fullest physical, mental, social, and vocational as well as economic usefulness of which he or she is capable. (161-162)

Stiker himself says rehabilitation focuses on disability as a lack to be overcome.

Eugenics and Institutions

One could trace the emergence of eugenic movement from the advent of industrialization (Barnes and Mercer, Davis, Oliver). Eugenics is considered as a scientific act of sterilizing the deviants from the society for 'pure' race. Barnes and Mercer discuss how Galton, Pearson, and Fisher promoted the eugenic applications of statistics for 'improving the human race.' They say the developments of biotechnology and genetic medicine also joined with the eugenic thinking. Thomson says medicalization legitimated such notions as white supremacy and such political practices as colonialism, eugenic legislation, and compulsory institutionalization or sterilization. The Romans, the Jews, and disabled were the victims of this scientific movement.

Sinder and Mitchell acknowledge eugenics as:

In our view eugenics, as the science of racial purification and elimination of human 'defects' is pivotal to apprehending this deadly in a collective Western history. Eugenics became the site where beliefs about racial and biological inferiority
dovetailed for a period of approximately one hundred years in the cultural location that Paul Gilroy (1995) has named the “Black Atlantic.” (100-101)

Barnes pictures the growth of institution and its meaning and purpose;

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the policy of segregating severely disabled people into institutional settings slowly increased and was subsequently extended to other disadvantaged groups. Although the term ‘institution’ can be used to refer a variety of social organizations ranging from a family to a university, it refers here to ‘any long term provision of a highly organized kind on a residential basis with the expressed aims of “care” “treatment” or custody’” (207)

Barnes and Mercer say the eugenicists are behind the birth of institutions. According to C. Malacrida ‘eugenic concerns played an important role in establishing and sustaining the institution.’ Their voice for the segregation of the social deviants is resulted in many types of sterilization and abortion. There are evidences for the sterilizations that happened in Germany and in America between 1930s and 1940s (Barnes and Mercer). Institutional abuses have been reported for more than 200 years without addressing the issues and controversies. But one could see the further worsening the situation from 1950s onwards as institutions were severely criticized by disabled activists and their organization, academics, and politicians (Michael Oliver, 1996, Barnes, 2003).

Disabled child as object of scientific gaze
The modern day deviants/defectives have changed into objects of science in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The scientific discourses look at the deviant body as a specimen or text to be studied in the laboratory;

The spectacles of medicine (such as the “hysterical” female patients Freud observed in Paris), the freak shows of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Thomson), or the disabled patients today being visually and verbally dissected by doctors on the rounds (see Couser) all exemplify the embodied rhetoric that is this legacy—the “scientific” discourses in which the deviant body is object and text. (16)

After Ben leaving home, first, it is Dorothy, Harriet’s mother who proposes the idea of sending Ben to an institution. Through her we understand the mentality of the people of the particular age. She influences the mind of Ben’s parents. When Ben is ‘different’ from his ‘normal’ family members, Dorothy thinks they should send him an institution. The idea of sending the ‘deviant’ to an institution is a normative attitude. It asserts the bifurcation, the ‘norm’ and the ‘abnormal.’ It echoes the minds of the normative society that institutions are for the families which want to get rid off with their ‘deviant’ family members. Dorothy’s words ‘at any case Harriet and David have to face it one day or the other shows the normative thinking of regarding ‘deviant’ bodies enrolment into institutions as the only left out fate for them.

‘You are going to have to face it. Ben has got to go into an institution.’

[...] ‘He may be normal for what he is. But he is not normal for what we are.’

‘What kind of institution would take him?’
There must be something, said Dorothy (79)

In the family meet, Fredrick and Molly, David’s ‘educated’ parents talk about the necessity of sending Ben to the institution. Their thinking is based on the normative view of the ‘deviant’ body as a disturbance to the ‘normal’ family. The ‘educated’ Fredrick and Molly think of Ben as a threat to the entire family, even to them. They represent the normative society, and we can trace the influence of eugenic science of eliminating the deviant through them. They try to help the couple to remove him from the family by sending him into an institution. One could see through all their ventures the normative society’s strong desire to achieve their goal of a society with sameness, with only ‘normal’ people.

The dominant hand of medical science works with the normative society. To institutionalize Ben, they have to produce a certificate stating his condition. Harriet’s family doctor, Mr. Brett does not see Ben as an ‘abnormal’ child but only ‘hyperactive.’ Harriet informs her family members about the impossibility of getting the certificate from Dr. Brett to send Ben to an Institution. Here Fredrick and Molly show the other way of getting a certificate from a different doctor.

[...] it was Fredrick who said, ‘Now look here, Harriet, you’ve got to face it, he’s got to go to an institution.’

‘Then we have to find a doctor who says he’s abnormal,’ said Harriet. ‘Dr Brett certainly won’t.’

‘Get another doctor’ said Molly. ‘These things can be arranged.’ The two large haystacky people, with their red well-fed faces, were united in determination, nothing vogue about them now they had decided there was a crisis, and one that – even indirectly – threatened them. (87)
Here we see the medical labeling as the necessity to segregate the deviant. Therefore Barnes and Mercer show the link among eugenics, medical science, and institution in a normative society against the defective people. According to S. Brisenden medical labeling excludes the deviant bodies, and leads the other people to treat them as the creatures from other planet.

The following lines make evident about their decision to institutionalize Ben. J. Branson, D. Miller and K. Branson argue that medical model misled the disabled community, and it does not serve for those who are in need but for the power in the society. They just want to eliminate Ben, and it does not matter what the institution is for, it only matters if they admit Ben in it. Harriet asks, ‘What are we going to say to the people who run this institution?’ ‘It depends on the institution,’ said Molly. Here one can see the blatant practices of the institution and medical labeling, and the strong intention of the normative mind in segregating the ‘deviant’ from them at any cost. Medical science and the institution work for those who are in power. It makes clear the created prejudices against the disabled bodies. With the aid of normative support the family expresses its strong interest in sending Ben into an institution.

When Harriet is hesitant, all her family members her mother, husband, and in-laws are convince Harriet to agree with them in sending Ben to an institution. They argue that the other ‘normal’ children are important, and to save them they say Ben should be sent to institution. It speaks about the mind of the normative society that removing the abnormal to improve/secure the pure human race. Ben even misses the parental love. As we could see sometimes at home parental love as a support to the disabled person coming (Veena Das Renu Addlakha), not seen any love here between Ben and his parents.

Molly says:

63
[...] ‘Yes, if there is no other place. But one thing is obvious: if something isn’t done, then it’s going to be catastrophic.’

‘It is catastrophic,’ said Dorothy, firmly taking her position. ‘The other children ... they’re suffering. You’re so involved with it, girl, that you don’t see it.’

‘Look,’ said David, impatient and angry because he could not stand this, fires tangled with Harriet, with his parents, being tugged and torn. ‘Look, I agree. And some time Harriet is going to agree. And as far as I am concerned, that time is now. I don’t think I can stick it any longer.’ And now he did look at his wife, and it was a pleading, suffering look. Please, he was saying to Harriet. Please. (88-89)

When Harriet says Ben is their child to send to institution, David goes to the extreme of confessing that Ben is not his son, Ben. David stands united with his parents, Fredrick and Molly in sending Ben to an institution. He is concerned about his ‘normal’ children. He thinks he is the father of four ‘normal’ children, not Ben’s. He hates Ben because he is different, and disturbs the family’s peace so that he jointly works with his parents against Ben. He expects Harriet to agree with them to send him into institution. He gets angry when Harriet is indecisive.

As per S. Brisenden, words Ben being different, David treats him as if he is from a different planet, Mars. David does not stop with it he predicts Ben’s departure from earth to Mars. This tells David’s wish as well as the face of institution. His words foretell David’s opinion as the general opinion of his time that Ben will not return from the institute, and the deviants are not expected to return home from the institution as a ‘normal’ people. C. Malacrida in her article talks about the involuntary sterilization in the institution which confirms this aspect.

64
David’s attitude betrays his the normative mind of him. The following passage portrays the hatred of Ben’s ‘normal’ father, David:

It’s either him or us,’ said David to Harriet. He added, his voice full of cold dislike for Ben, ‘He’s probably just dropped in from Mars. He’s going back to report on what he’s found down here.’ He laughed cruelly, it seemed to Harriet, who was silently taking in the fact – which of course she had half known already – that Ben was not expected to live in this institution, whatever it was.

He is a little child,’ she said, ‘He’s our child.’

‘No, he’s not,’ said David, finally. ‘Well, He certainly isn’t mine.’ (90)

The entire ‘normal’ family works together against Ben. They send Ben to an institution. It conveys the message soundly that the ‘deviant’ bodies are only to be kept in the institution, not at home. David’s words to his wife here, very clearly states the fact that institution is the place for the ‘deviant’ body. The elimination of the ‘deviant’ family member, Ben brings relief to the entire family. Harriet indecisive and unwilling for some time to send Ben to institution, finally joins with her family in the celebration of Ben’s absence from her ‘normal’ family. She expresses her gratitude to her husband for his deed. It looks, what Harriet wanted to do inwardly is done by David for her happiness and relief.

Ben’s siblings are like their parents in welcoming the segregation of Ben:

Next morning the car came, which was a small black van, came for Ben. […].

[… Then, his face set hard, so that Harriet hardly knew him, he picked Ben up from where he sat on the floor in the living-room, carried him to the van, and put
him in. Then he came fast to Harriet, with the same hard set face, and put his arm around her, turned her away from the sight of the van, which was already was on its way (she could hear yells and shouts coming from inside it), and took her to the sofa, where still holding her tight – he said, over and over again, ‘We have to do it, Harriet. We have to.’ She was weeping with the shock of it, and with relief, and with gratitude to him, who was taking all the responsibility.

When the children came home, they were told Ben had gone to stay with someone.

With Granny?’ asked Helen, anxious.

No.’

Four pairs of suspicious, apprehensive eyes became suddenly full of relief.

Hysterical relief. The children danced about, unable to help themselves, and then pretended it was a game they thought up then and there. (92)

The whole family rejoices after Ben’s leaving home.

Harriet keeps on thinking about Ben after sending him to the institution. She worries that something bad might happen to Ben in the institution. It hints at the prevailing general opinion regarding the institution during the late twentieth century. It is out of guilt and horror that she is unable to get rid off with Ben from her mind. Against the wish of all her other family members wish, she decides to go to see Ben in the Institution. Here through Harriet visit to the institution one can see clearly the function of institution with the ‘deviant’ bodies. Everything about the institution gives a negative picture about it. The description of the location where the institution is situated itself gives discomfort. Harriet brings before us the complete picture of the location:
It was early afternoon when she approached a large solid building of dark stone, in a valley high among moors she could hardly see for grey drifting rain. The place stood square and upright among dismal dripping ever greens, and its regular windows, three rows of them were barred. (95)

The place is quiet. There are no people around. It is located in the outskirts of the city and it is away from outside contact. As Snyder and Mitchel say institutional dependency results from a lack of contact with one's peers, relatives, and society in general. Further Harriet reaches there in the evening. All this hints at the ominous, eerie quality that pervade and negative impression about the institution. Harriet reaches the entrance of the institution, and rings the bell to attendees but she does not get any response for her call for a long time. There is no attendee in the entrance to answer the visitors.

The atmosphere seems to be scary and threatening before Harriet enters into the building:

She entered a small entrance lobby that had hand written card tacked on the inner door: 'Ring for Attendance.' She rang, and waited, and nothing happened. Her heart was beating. She still surges with the adrenalin that had given her the impetus to come, but the long drive had subdued her, and this oppressive building was telling her nerves, if not her intelligence – for, after all, she had no facts to go on – that what she had feared was true. Yet she did not know exactly what that was. She rang again, The building was silent: she could hear the shrill of a bell a long way off in its interior. Again, nothing, and she was about to go around to the back when the door abruptly opened to show a slatternly girl wearing jerseys, cardigans, and a thick scarf. […] She seemed tired. (95)
The description informs the place is unfriendly, kept away from regular visitors. Once the family sends the 'deviant' body into the institution, they never take any interest to visit them again. The lives of the 'different' bodies are at the mercy of the authorities of the institution. As Malacrida says the residents of the institution never allowed think about their discharge, most of the residents' lives end inside the institution. The staff of the institution shows irritation and impatience over Harriet's request to see for Ben. They inform Harriet they do not entertain visitors. When they find Harriet inside the institution unexpectedly, they get angry. It goes with the description of Barnes and Mercer, "Life within the institutions is strictly regimented and geared towards organizational goals. A strict demarcation line is drawn between the inmates and the staffs, with mutually hostile and negative stereotypes characterizing their relations."

Harriet understands through the staffs' expression visiting is unusual here;

'Yes?' she asked

Harriet saw, understanding what this meant, that people simply did not come here.

She said, already stubborn, 'I'm Mrs Lovatt and I've come to see my son.'

It was evident that these were words this institution, whatever it was, did not expect to meet.

The staffs' behavior is rude towards their visitors. First the staff refuses to allow Harriet into the institution saying the concerned authority is out of station. The following lines express the staff's rude attitude, Harriet's emphasis, and it also creates fear in one about the institution;

'Someone must be deputizing for him,' said Harriet decisively.
The girl fell back before Harriet’s manner, smiling uncertainly, and very worried. She muttered, ‘Wait here, then,’ and went inside. Harriet followed her before the big door was shut to exclude her. The girl did glance around, as if she planned to say, You must wait outside, but instead she said, ‘I’ll fetch someone,’ and went on into the dark caverns of a corridor that had small ceiling lights all along it, hardly disturbing the gloom. There was a smell of disinfectant. Absolute silence. No, after a time Harriet became aware of a high thin screaming that began, and stopped, and went on again, coming from the back of the building.(96-97)

The irritated staffs in the institution informs Harriet about the convention of the institution. In the big institutions there only two members take care of the residents throwing light one plight of the residents inside. There is poor management, poor hygiene and no more to question the institution about the same. The institution is a dreadful place, not for any good, and gives no assurance for the life of its residents. One could understand it is a place for sterilization or abortion of deviants and not a place to promote the life of its residents:

Two figures appeared, a long way off under the pinpoints of the ceiling lights, and came towards her. A young man, in a white coat that was not clean, was followed by the girl, [...]. Both looked and tired and uncertain.

He was an ordinary young man, though worn down in a general way; taken bit by bit, hands, face, eyes, he was unremarkable, but there was something desperate about him, as if he contained anger, or hopelessness.(97)

The staffs are not friendly rather rude. They do not understand Harriet. They are tired to respond to anybody. Their face tells the burden of the work they do inside the institution. They do not see
any reason in Harriet’s visit to the institution. They do not take any care to understand Harriet. When Harriet is strong on her stand, they helplessly permit her to visit Ben. But they express anger, impatience, and irritation towards Harriet because she is doing what is undesirable to them or against their convention of the institution.

‘You can’t be here,’ he said, in a flurried indecisive way. ‘We don’t have visiting days here.’

Even after this Harriet insists visiting her son

Listen,’ said Harriet. ‘I don’t think you understand. I’m not just going away, you know. I’ve come to see my son, that is what I am going to do.’(99)

The Institutions see to it that is for the ‘deviant’ bodies. They are completely terminated from the so called ‘normal’ world. it cut off their links with the ‘normal’ society. Institution addresses its residents through their label. As Elizabeth Depoy and Stephen French Gilson say residents of the institutions are isolated from their community, Ben and other residents in the institution are also separated from their community. Once they come to the institution, their life ends up inside the institution. This institution works along with the normative society with its eugenics concerns and search in segregating the extraordinary bodies:

He knew he meant it. He slowly nodded, as if saying, yes but that isn’t the point. He was looking hard at her. She was being given a warning, and from someone who was taking the responsibility for it. He might be a rather pitiable young man, and certainly an overtired and inadequately fed one, doing this job because he could get another, but the weight of his position – the unhappy weight of it – was
speaking through him, and his expression and his reddened, smoke-tired eyes were severe, authoritative, to be taken seriously.

‘When people dump their kids here, they don’t come and see them after,’ he said.

The citation makes clear the attitude of the ‘normal’ family members towards its ‘deviant’ family member. They send their ‘abnormal’ family member into the institutions only to forget them and then the authority of the institution decides the life of its residents. This sterilization is based on the normative principle. The staffs warns her to stand outside but Harriet enters the ward. Snyder and Mitchel explain the importance of discipline or punishment sits in the institution. Though Harriet is warned not to enter the ward she goes into the building, and there she watches all kinds of its patients:

She was in the end of the long ward, which had any number of cots and beds along the walls. In the cots were—Monsters. While she strode rapidly through the ward to the door at the other end, she was able to see that every bed or cot held an infant or a small child in whom the human template had been wrenched out of pattern, sometimes horribly, sometimes slightly. A baby like a comma, great lolling head on a stalk of a body [...] then something like a stick insect, enormous bulging eyes among stiff fragilities that were limbs [...] a small girl all blurred, her flesh guttering and melting [...] a doll with chalky swollen limps, its eyes wide and black, like blue ponds, and its mouth open, showing a swollen little tongue. A lanky boy was skewed, one half of his body sliding from the other. A child seemed at first glance normal, but then Harriet saw there was no back to its head; it was all
face, which seemed to scream at her. Rows of freaks, nearly all asleep, and all silent. Well, nearly asleep: there was a dreary sobbing from a cot that had its sides shielded with blankets. The high intermittent screaming, nearer now, still assaulted her nerves. They were literally drugged out of their minds. A smell of excrement, stronger than the disinfectant.(98-99)

It describes the large number of ‘different’ patients of the institution. Each one is different from other. This institution has a heap of its residents in it. There is no staff around to take care of them. According to Barnes the purpose of the institution is to provide ‘care’ to the residents. But there is no evidence of it inside the institution when we look at it through the eyes of Harriet. Insufficient staffs to take care of the patients. They are left unattended, deserted, and eliminated entirely from the ‘normal’ society. The staffs’ impatience and irritation, and their strict rule regarding visitors echoes the normative mind which works according to the stereotypical image of the inmates.

The condition of Ben inside the institution makes Harriet to derive at a decision to bring Ben back home. Harriet understands the situation of the institution. What she feared before coming in what she see in front of her:

On the floor, on a green foam-rubber mattress, lay Ben. He was unconscious. He was naked, inside strait-jacket. His pale yellow tongue protruded from his mouth. His flesh was dead white, greenish. Everything – walls, the floor, and Ben – was smeared with excrement. A pool of dark yellow urine oozed from the pallet which was soaked.(99)
This describes the treatment of its patients inside the institution. Snyder and Mitchel talk about different punishments, corporeal model of punishment in the middle ages to modern surveillance. Michel Foucault talks about modern punishment, the panopticon gaze as the disciplining arm of those who are in power. The institution stands for its inhuman treatment of its residents. Ben is kept unconscious. He is naked. Even when he is unconscious he is with the strait-jacket as a dangerous criminal. The surroundings of Ben’s bed are unhygienic. One could understand the condition of the institutions in England even in the late twenties.

Barnes and Mercer explain the condition inside the institution in the following lines:

Standards of residential care were very basic, ‘There are staff who bully those who can’t complain, who dictate what clothes people should wear, who switch the television in the middle of a programme, and will take away “privileges” (like getting up for the day) when the choose’ (154)

Harriet looks at the pathetic condition of Ben. It moves her heart. She decides to take him back home.

Harriet says, ‘I think I will take him home’, and while leaving, the man handovers Harriet a pocket:

The young man took out of his overall pocket, a plastic package containing a syringe, a couple of needles, and some ampoules.

‘You better take these,’ he said.

[...]

‘You can give him up to four shots a day, no more,’ said the young man. (102-103)
Medical science works along with the normative society in segregating the 'deviant' bodies. S. Brisenden argues that frequent hospitalization and medical treatment is one of the main disabling factors.

The staffs advise Harriet to use drugs to control him. The attitude of institution with the deviant bodies is evident through the following lines:

[...] Tell me, how long do you think he would have lasted?

[...] the girls voice came: None of them last long. But this one...he's very strong. He's the strongest any of us have seen.'

'Which means he would have lasted longer?'

'No,' he said. 'No, that's not it at all. Because he's so strong, he fights all the time, and so he has to have bigger shots. It kills them.'(103)

We could see the truth through the staffs' words and deeds. The institution drugs its residents to control them. They treat Ben by giving continuous drugs to keep him off from trouble, and under control. Ben being strong, stronger than other inmates, the staffs say that they give more drugs to Ben. And it is also obvious that by giving frequent drug, they deduce the longevity/ life span of Ben. Here we can see the true meaning of institutionalization. By giving continuous drug to control them, finally the sterilization takes place as intended by eugenics.

Back at home, all the family members treats Harriet as a criminal. When Harriet gives reason to David as to why she brought back Ben from the institution puts clearly the feature of institution, "[...] All right, I am a criminal. But they were killing him."[...] She said, 'he would have dead in

74
few months. Weeks, probably.' She said, I couldn’t stand it.'[...] She cried out, ‘Yes, but you didn’t see it, you didn’t see - !’ (105)

The reply of David tells us about the attitude of the ‘normal’ people in sending the ‘deviant’ bodies into institution. He knows the result what will happen to Ben even before sending him to the institution. David and other members of his family send Ben to the institution to meet his end/ death. It describes the real functional purpose of the institution, ‘I was careful not to see,’ he said. ‘What did you suppose was going to happen? That they were going to turn him into some well-adjusted member of society and then everything would be lovely?” (105-106)

In the later references one can see that the very mention of the institution scares in Ben. Harriet uses it as a tool to control him.

Science plays an important role in the lives of the extraordinary bodies. Thomson says:

The ancient mind translated the extraordinary body’s hybridity and excess into the supernatural, often sacred, pantheon of cyclopess, satyrs, centaurs, minotaurs, and hydras. But the modern mind officially retranslated those qualities into science in 1822, when Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hyraire coined the term teratology to mean the study of monsters.(75)

Wilson and Wilson say that the body has become a genetic body-text, and scientists have begun rewriting the genetic body-text through the manipulation of genes. It shows interest upon the deviant bodies interest them as an objects, specimens, not human being. The deviant bodies are texts or specimens to the nineteenth century scientists to study them on their dissection tables (Thomson, Wilson and Wilson). After Ben’s leaving home, his mother thinks of what will
happen to him. First it is through the mind of Harriet we see the possibility of science making some inroads into the reason behind Ben’s difference.

And what would happen to Ben now? [...].

[...] Admitted curiosity ... what then? Could Ben, even now, end up sacrificed to science? What would they do with him? Carve him up? Examine those cudgel-like bones of his, those eyes, and find out why his speech was so thick and awkward?

(157-158)

Later in the novel Ben in the world, Ben’s friends Rita and Johnston in their conversation bring up the subject of science. It is Johnston who tells Rita the possibility of Ben into the hands of scientists, “Don’t you see, Reet, he’ll end up behind bars anyway’ He meant prison, but Rita heard something else, which in fact Johnston had mentioned during a discussion about Ben: one day the scientists would get their hands on Ben.(45)

As Harriet, Johnston also predicts Ben’s fate in the hands of science, he falls into their trap. The general truth is deviants are to be eliminated either by institutionalization or on the tables as objects dissecting him as a object in the laboratory. During Ben’s stay in Rio, Teresa’s friend Inez, an assistant to a biologist visits Teresa where she happens to meet Ben. After her visit she goes to the biologist and reports about Ben:

Now there was a turn of events that would not have surprised Johnston and Rita. Inez worked for a biologist, a friend of her parents, who ran a department of the laboratory. She told him about Ben, describing him as a yeti. ‘Something like that, at any rate,’ but no one could say what he was. ‘He’s a throwback,’ she said. ‘At least, that’s what I think. You ought to have look at him.’ (121)
Thomson brings:

Barnum’s advertising poster challenged onlookers to make distinction: “Is it a lower order on MAN? Or is it a higher order of MONKEY? None can tell! Perhaps it is a combination of both.” Billed as “missing links,” the “What Is it?” figures complemented after midcentury a growing interest in Darwinian distinction between humans and gorillas. (69)

Inez expresses her boss’ interest to meet Ben with Teresa.

Inez told Teresa that her boss — [...] would be interested to meet Ben. [...] Teresa asked what this scientist was going to do with Ben, and Inez replied, ‘Just take a look at him.’ Inez knew she was being deceitful, but her education had taught her that truth, scientific truth, was more important than anything else: you could say her education had as much religion in it as Teresa’s. She had a pretty good idea that ‘having a look’ at Ben would not be the end of it, but she felt powerful and useful, introducing this creature who was absolutely a kind of enigma, to someone who could solve it. (121-122)

Luiz Machado, the biologist, Inez’s boss meets Ben. He is very much impressed by Ben. Luiz investigates rainforest plants but his institute has a department known as ‘the bad place’ which is not under the control of Luiz. But Luis, the scientist thinks Ben to be a prize to the other person who is in charge of ‘the bad place’.

Ben does not like Luiz, and Teresa as well. It tells the relationship between scientists/science and deviant/defective bodies. After his meeting with Ben, through Inez, Luiz invites Ben to his institute to conduct all kinds of tests on his body for research. Ben refuses to go to the institute.
The curious scientists do all kinds of things to get Ben. Inez convinces Teresa to bring Ben to the institute along with her. Teresa tries to convince Ben. Here we can see the normative exploitation. The 'normal' group works together to eliminate the 'deviant' body.

One Alfredo, an assistant from the institute comes to meet Ben. The choice of sending the assistant to convince Teresa and Ben is another plan of the 'educated mind as Alfredo comes from Favela, same as Teresa. It works well to bring Ben to the institute with Teresa. When Ben refuses, they manipulate him through a lie that they will take Ben to 'his people' after the tests. Alfredo tells that the tests are to find out Ben's people. Ben refuses to believe it at first but then Alfredo makes him get convinces him to come to the tests.

The arrangement in the institute is Teresa has to undergo all the tests in front of Ben so that Ben would also sit for the tests. Here all the 'normal' people work against Ben. The Scientists treat Ben as an object of study. The tests of all body parts of Ben are taken in the institute; blood pressure, blood, eye, ears, urine, bone x-rays;

Teresa permits herself to be x-rayed – for the first time in her life. It was a long process. Legs, arms, feet, pelvis, spine, shoulders, neck.

Have you ever beenx-rayed? Asked Inez.

Yes said Ben. 'I broke my leg once.'

[...] 'Then you won’t mind doing it for us, will you?'

He went through it patiently, Teresa beside him, and Inez on guard.(133)
Then they proceed to the next tests, the workings of his digestive system, his circulation, his breathing, above all the brain function which they think as most important but Ben refuses to undergo. They do not give up instead the let him go back to continue other tests later

They postpone it for the next day, thinking they can convince Ben but Ben never accepts. The scientistas never care about Ben’s feelings. Meanwhile Professor Stephen Gaumlach from the US comes to visit Ben with Luiz. He studies Ben, and repeatedly says Ben is very important for his research;

A brief silence, then Professor Stephen Gaunlach leaned forward, and said, ‘This is very important, very important indeed.’ His lips mouthed the words, moulding each one as it came out, rolling them towards her like cold marbles. His eyes were cold, fanatic, obsessed. [...]. ‘You must see that, Teresa –‘

[...] went on: Miss Alves, this is probably the most important discovery of my entire life. You’ve simply got to understand this. This is a unique opportunity This Ben, is unique.’(136)

The Scientists attitude is the same view is similar everywhere with the extraordinary bodies. How Professor Stephen with Ben, Thomson shows the attitude of scientific discourse;

Emerging scientific discourse identified the Hottentots as the most primitive species of humans, the “missing link” in the chain of being that science was reforging and later manifested in Darwinian thought, Science’s obsession with measurement and classification served white supremacism and legitimated colonial exploitation, its powerful evaluative lens locating the Hottentots on the very edge of humanity and bestial.(72)
Luiz tells almost similar things to Teresa on behalf of professor Stephen Gaumlach:

[...] for his colleague’s benefit, he said, ‘He must be made to understand the situation.’ Back to Teresa, in Portuguese, ‘You do not understand how very important this is. This is Professor Gaumlach’s area of research. He is a world authority. This is important for the whole world.’ (137)

Teresa disagrees to take Ben to the institute; But when during Teresa is absent they kidnap Ben. Meanwhile Teresa and Alfredo decide to save Ben from Science. The following lines describe where the scientists put Ben, “What was happening was that the unease, the shame, most felt about what went on in the ‘other’ buildings, was being crystallised around this Ben – they soon all knew – had been kidnapped.”(41)

Ben is kept in the building which is known as ‘the bad place’. Alfredo, Teresa and along with their friend Antonio plan to rescue Ben from ‘the bad place. When Teresa asks Alfredo about the significance behind the scientists’ claim for Ben, He explains, Is it important?’ she asked Alfredo. Is it important know what Ben is?’ They say he must be a throwback to – a long time ago. A long time. Thousands of years. They can find out from him what those old people were like.” (143-144)

Alfredo and Teresa’s visit to ‘the bad place’ of institute to rescue Ben bring the cruel sight of Ben inside along with other creatures. The institute is situated inside the forest. Everybody who works in the institute knows what is going on inside ‘the bad place’, and nobody likes it. It is away from the immediate contact of people. Even the staffs is scared to go to ‘the bad place’ the heart of the institute where the study of the all kinds of species take place. The institute is with tight security for no people could enter there without making every one aware. This search tells
the mind of the scientists who always want to find out the truth about with the freak body to announce to the world.

Alfredo and Teresa choose to go there in the night to rescue Ben. The building is with full security. The alarm set up around the building is to avoid any strangers’ entry into it. Alfredo and Teresa skilfully enters into the building

They see inside the room where Ben is:

In tiers of cages were monkeys, small and large, arranged so that the excrement from the top cages must fall down on the animals below. A bank of rabbits, immobilised at the neck, had chemicals dripping into their eyes. A big mongrel dog, which had been carved open from the shoulder to the hip bone and then clumsily sewn up again, was lying moaning on dirty straw, its backside clogged with excrement.(146)

They find Ben over there along with other creatures inside;

She was looking at Ben, Kneeling on floor of his cage, bang-banging his head on the wire. He had not drugged: Professor Stephen wanted him uncontaminated. He was unclothed, this creature who had been clothed since he was born. In the corner of his cage was a pile dung.(146)

Ben escapes from the clutches of science with the help of Alfredo and Teresa

There Teresa asks, ‘Why are they allowed to do that?’ she asked Alfredo. And his reply is, ‘It’s science.’
The scientists are not ready to leave Ben especially Professor Stephen Gaumlach. Once again Luiz with the Professor come to visit Ben. The purpose of their visit is to get back Ben for their study. They are angry because they missed Ben. They try to convince Teresa. The following lines expresses their anger and disappointment, and it shows their rigidness in their demand for Ben;

Now Stephen Gaumlack spoke, as if he had heard nothing of their argument. ‘you can’t keep him. You don’t understand, do you?

[...]

He leaned across the table to her, fists clenched, his face dark with rage. ‘This specimen could answer questions, important questions, important for science – world science. He could change what we know of the human story.’(153)

After the suicide of Ben the critiquing of science by his friends, and their discussion picture the cruel face of science. The scientists are interested in the freak bodies, they have been around the freak bodies while he/she being alive, and even after this death as well (Thomson). In the same way Alfredo thinks he has to inform the Professor about Ben’s death. here Alfredo and his friend predict that Professor Stephen might go to the place where Ben committed suicide to collect sample to study him. Alfredo says they have to inform the suicide to Professor Stephen. His friend Jose says that scientists will be able to know about the whole person from ‘a little bit of a finger bone.’
Works Cited


