Chapter II

"Disability as Monstrosity": The Fifth Child and Ben in the World

Thus the wondrous monsters of antiquity, who became the fascinating freaks of the nineteenth century, transformed into the disabled people of the later twentieth century

- Rosemarie Garland Thomson

The word ‘monster’ is derived from Latin, *monstrum* which means ‘that which reveals’, ‘that which warns’. (*Monster Theory*, p.4) Margrit Shildrick shows the Latin root of the word ‘monster’, *monstrare* - to show, and *monere* - to warn. Rosemarie Garland Thomson in her book *Extraordinary Bodies* says that the Latin word *monstra* ('monster') also means “sign” and she says it’s the root of *demonstrate* ("to show"). Shildrick’s *Embodying Monster* also introduces us to Cicero’s lists of synonyms of the word, ‘monster’ - *monstra, ostenta, portenta, prodigia* from the book *De Divinatio*.

Who are the monsters? According to James C. Wilson & Cynthia Lewiecki Wilson the socially excluded disabled people are called monsters. Rosemarie Garland Thomson explains that the present disabled body was a freak in nineteenth century, and in the past it was monster. Bill Hughes says contemporary sociology recognize the bodily difference of people through various tropes as “‘wounded’ (vulnerable), ‘monstrous’ and ‘abject.’” Further he says, against the male body as benchmark, “women and disabled people as vulnerable/monstrous other.” Along with it, Barnes says, “fictional programmes on television often portray disabled people as criminals or monsters.”(7) Shilpaa Anand defines monsters as any deviation from the scientific norm of human body. Stiker gives Ambroise parie’s distinction of monsters, “‘Monsters are beings that
surpass Nature, prodigies are thing that occur in opposition to Nature, the maimed are blind, one-eyed, hunch-backed, lame, or have six digits on the hand or foot, or fewer than five, or have them joined together.” (91).

Historical evidences make one understand the origin and evolution of ‘monsters’ and the fact that ‘monsters’ are not new rather they have been with us ever since the beginning of the human race. Stone Age cave drawings reveal the presence of ‘monsters’ in the primitive age (Rosemarie Garland Thomson; 1997). Ancient Greek mythologies picture the birth of the ‘monsters’ more clearly (Margrit Shildrick; 2002). Every age, every culture has its own ‘monsters’ in it. Fred Botting says, “Monsters, Indeed, formless figured, figures disfigured misshapen shapes that lurk on the outer reaches of system of classification and representation, shadowy forms for what is yet unformed, without name and place.” (346)

There are different beliefs regarding the presence of ‘monsters’. In the pre-Christian era ‘monsters’ were considered as nature’s abundant or marvelous prodigies that means ‘monsters’ are to decorate the world. Following it, the Christians saw the birth of ‘monsters’ as the superstitious signifiers of the forthcoming evil or natural calamity. There was also another strong notion that through the monstrous births God proclaims His power to those who are ignorant of it, and also seen as a punishment for the wickedness. In the Middle age, belief was that the monstrous birth is the result of the sin committed in the past. Then during Renaissance, along with other stigmas, a mother’s imagination during her pregnancy was considered as the cause of monstrous births. In the age of Enlightenment with the advancement of science such births came to be known as defective, and they became deviant bodies that reached finally the laboratory of our modern scientists as specimens (Marie-Helene Huet, 1993: Shildrick, 2002: Thomson, 1997: Cohen, 1997).
All the representations of 'monsters,' whether it be in the form of books or films, from the beginning are based on the belief of its society. These representations are very far from the reality. Aristotle was the pioneer to say that all those who fail to resemble his/her father are deviant. He considers only the male body as normal and rejects even the female body as deviant (Thomson, 1997: Shildick, 2002: Huet, 1993: Wilson & Wilson). Following Aristotle, whoever it was, Cicero, Albertus Magnus, Ambroise Pare, John Bulwar, Edward Fenton, and so many other writers have simply echoed their age. At the end of Shildrick’s survey on monstrous representation from ancient Greek period to twentieth century in her book *Embodying Monsters* says; what matters in these highly similar texts is that they speak both to pedagogic intent and to a human curiosity about what lies outside the bounds of the known. According to Cohen, every ‘monster’ is a double narrative, a living story: one describes how the ‘monster’ came to be and another about the cultural use of ‘monsters.’

The famous ‘monsters,’ Beowulf and Frankenstein are very much the voices of their culture. The literary representations of deviant/monstrous bodies are always given negative roles. We rarely see the representations of deviant/monstrous bodies in main roles. (bring passage about representation) Most of the time, they are presented with negative characters. Deviant bodies function as metaphors. If the representation of the deviant body is a male, it is always a villain, if female, related role is always a witch (David T. Mitchel, Sharon L. Synder, Thomson, Lennard Davis). Davis even says novels with the representation of ‘normal’ ‘abnormal’ characters creates a strong notion about how a body should be, and how one should not be because people believe in novels, and whatever is there in is believed to be the truth. The age old, recurring theme of the representation is ‘normal’ hero with ‘abnormal’ villain.
Since the second half of the twentieth century, from the 1970s onwards, a new awareness has burst out everywhere. Writers, scholars, and activists have started challenging the so called authority who are behind the construction of monsters. The purpose of the new research is to make one understand the social, political, and economical agenda behind such constructions. Theorists like Shildrick, Thomson, Huet, Thomson, Tom Shakespeare and several others are trying or making the activist and scholars to work on it.

In this chapter I would like to focus on how the protagonist, Ben is a ‘monster,’ and what is made to evolve as a ‘monster’ in the Novels The Fifth Child and Ben in the World. While the first book revolves around the birth of the ‘abnormal’ child who shatters his parents’ dream of a happy family, the second novel deals with what happens after he leaves his home, leading to his death by suicide. The novel, The Fifth Child begins with both David Lovett and Harriet planning to have at least half dozen children which is unusual during that time, looks strange to everyone. Emily Clark while talking about Harriet’s peculiarity, says, ‘She refuses the social and class conventions that dictate small families, as well as refusing medical technologies and interventions during conception and at birth:’ After four ‘normal’ children Harriet Lovett becomes pregnant again rather unexpectedly to both husband and wife because they took decision to have break of three years after the birth of fourth baby. About Harriet’s fifth pregnancy, we read that:

She was frantic, exhausted ...she was peevish; she lost her temper; she burst into tears ...David saw her sitting at the kitchen table, head in her hands, muttering that this new foetus was poisoning her. (41)
The very introduction sounds curious. Barnes C says creating curiosity among the readers is one of the characteristic features of non-disabled people's representation of disability. The description of the 'abnormal' foetus makes the readers sympathise with Harriet. This is again the non-disabled people's attitude which pictures the non-disabled character as genuine whereas the disabled character as inhuman, criminal, and cruel which itself is a discriminative attitude. The arrival of the 'abnormal' fifth child was not welcoming as how it was with the earlier four 'normal' children. Harriet's experience as a pregnant woman with her fifth child is something abnormal which always brings fear and fascination as its intended response of the normative society against disability. This is the initial purpose of the narrative representation. Here the narrative is performed to inform as well as warns the readers. It stimulates the interest through the new experience, and invites to know further but with a certain sense of fear. As Cohen rightly says monster incorporates fear, desire, anxiety and fantasy. The narrative here functions as an agent between the 'norm' and 'abnormal'.

Harriet leads David to feel her stomach when she is three months' pregnant. The narrative goes like this:

But she said, 'Feel this' and guided his hand to her stomach. She was nearly three months pregnant. This new baby had not yet shown signs of independent life, but now David felt a jolt under his hand, quite a hard movement... Once more he felt the thrust, and could not believe it. (45)

David and Harriet experience a feeling of scare which leads them to predict something unusual about the foetus. Harriet draws attention to the foetus through David's feelings to evoke mixed feelings from the readers. Barnes calls this attitude as diabolism. Writing about a three months
old foetus that is different from the ‘normal’ three months old foetus the narrative seeks to assert the notion that being an ‘abnormal’ foetus is painful, intolerable. It warns against such a birth, and it forecasts certain calamities not only in the family, but also in their social set up. This is the recurring negative description of disability in representation which is highly visible in this novel. As Shildrick points out this kind of recurrent representation where the deviant body is considered as a forewarning of a disaster to the family or to the society where the birth takes place.

The role of medicine in the life of disabled people is the prime concern in media. The traditional way of looking into disability as an individual tragedy echoes everywhere in the representations. This novels are not exceptional. Here it begins with Harriet’s visit to the doctor, Mr. Brett. She goes to the doctor to get an ‘explanation’. The advancement of medical science with life of the deviant bodies has been very remarkable since the eighteenth century. Simon Brisenden chides the medical model of disability, eugenics, euthanasia, aborting the ‘abnormal’ foetus after ultrasound scanning, prostheses, and other modern medical discoveries are not to assist the disabled rather to reiterate normalcy. Thomson expresses the same view about modern eugenics and reproductive technology. Regarding the Construction of Normalcy, Lennard Davis in his book *Enforcing Normalcy* says:

> In this matter, the State must assert itself as the trustee of a millennial future.... In order to fulfil this duty in a practical manner, the State will have to avail itself of modern medical discoveries. It must proclaim as unfit for procreation all those who are afflicted with some visible hereditary disease or are the carriers of it; and practical measures must be adopted to have such people rendered sterile. (cited in Blacker 1952, 144). (38)
Harriet visits Dr. Brett thrice during her pregnancy, once in her third month, then fifth month, then finally in her eighth month. First, it was to get an ‘explanation’, then during her second visit the doctor prescribes a ‘sedative’ to quieten the baby being under Harriet’s pressure for it, then during her third visit, she asks the doctor to induce the baby because it is ‘different’ which goes shocks the doctor who had known Harriet to be too conventional to think of such a extreme:

She went to Dr Brett at eight months and asked him to induce the baby. He looked critically at her and said, ‘I thought you didn’t believe in it.’ ‘I don’t. But this is different.’ ‘Not that I can see.’ ‘It’s because you don’t want to. It’s not you who is carrying this --’ She cut off monster, afraid of antagonizing him. (58)

Clark says often the ‘threat’ posed by the foetuses is considered as maternal misbehaviour. But in the case of defect, the foetuses are considered threatening. The mother is left to protect herself, family, and the society. (185) Dr. Brett, as an elderly person in the novel stands as a representative of modern medical science, though not completely because Harriet herself refers to him as ‘old fashioned Dr Brett’. He never entertains what Harriet expects him to do. The ideas of both Harriet and Dr. Brett contradict each other. In every meeting Harriet expects the doctor to acknowledge the foetus as ‘different’ but Dr. Brett does not agree with her and tries to convince her all the time that the foetus is ‘normal’. Barnes calls this as a new development. He says in few areas media represents the disabled character as ‘ordinary’ or ‘normal.’ Though it has its own limitation, he welcomes this approach because it signals integration, removes discrimination.

Both Harriet and Dr. Brett are agents of the normative society, though Dr. Brett appears outwardly supportive of the disabled community. Harriet wants to eliminate the foetus based on
its ‘difference’ where as Dr. Brett is not willing to accept the ‘difference’, reiterates the foetus is ‘normal’ due to his anxiety. The anxiety is the feelings which the non-disabled people get when they encounter the disabled. According the disability theorists the realization of the frail, vulnerable body brings the anxiety which results in the exclusion of defective bodies. Shakespeare says, “But it is not disability, but our impairment which frightens people. And it is not us, it is non-disabled people’s embodiment which is the issue: disabled people remind non-disabled people of their own vulnerability.” (297) Dr. Bret hides the anxiety from her what he exactly feels which infuriates Harriet.

As Henri- Jacques Stiker says “people cannot stand difference, otherness: one likes only one’s like.” According to Shildrick the use of difference everywhere is to draw out moral lessons. Dr. Brett’s fear to proclaim the difference of the foetus is obvious. This anxiety of difference as Cohen feels that it threatens the ‘normal’ of its vulnerability. Shildrick puts it more clearly here;

As postmodernist theory makes clear, the normative construct of the self’s clean and proper body is under constant threat, on the one hand from the potential of internal leakage and loss of form, and on the other, from the circulation of all those dangerous bodies – of women, of racial others, of the sick, of the monstrous – who both occupy the place of the other and serve to define by difference the self’s own parameters. (71)

Again, there is the birth of the fifth child. Harriet’s delivery happens one month in advance, in her ninth month. The baby is eleven pounds at birth, ‘muscular, yellowish and long’. There is a vivid description of the new born:
He was not a pretty baby. He did not look like a baby at all. He had a heavy –
shouldered hunched look, as if he were crouching there as he lay. His forehead
sloped from his eyes to his crown. His hair grew in an unusual pattern from the
double crown where started a wedge or triangle that came low on the forehead, the
hair lying forward in a thick yellowish stubble, while the side and back hair grew
downwards. His hands were thick and heavy, with pads of muscle in the palms. He
opened his eyes [...]. They were focused greeny – yellow eyes, like lumps of
soapstone (60)

The description is intended to show the difference between the ‘normal’ and the ‘abnormal.’
This attitude is very famous in the American freak shows where Thomson shows how the show
owners put the photos of a freak and a beauty side by side so that the public get attracted towards
the show out of curiosity as well as to get assured of their ‘normal’ body. Actually, the intension
of the representation of the monstrous body is to evoke fear. It has to create aversion in the
minds of the people around. It should not be desirable but it should make them aware enough to
distance from him. Exhibiting the extraordinary bodies in the public place has been a custom
ever since ancient times and later it continued in the Victorian age and then from the nineteenth
century the journey of exhibiting the extraordinary continued in the form of ‘freak shows’.
Though the mode of exhibition varies from time to time, the purpose was the same everywhere:

The freak show is a spectacle, a cultural performance that gives primacy to visual
apprehension in creating symbolic codes and institutionalizes the relationship
between the spectacle and spectators. In freak shows, the exhibited body became a
text written in boldface to be deciphered according to the needs and desires of the
onlookers. (60)
by looking at the baby, Dr. Brett calls it, 'A real little wrestler', and Harriet addresses him as a 'troll or a goblin or something'. Through Harriet’s thoughts one can understand how she distances herself from the baby, “Harriet found herself thinking, “I wonder what the mother would look like, the one who would welcome this – alien.” (62) Through this distancing the non disabled people discriminates the disabled community. Following the birth of the fifth child, Ben, the novel accounts all his activities more detailly. Harriet’s breast feeding makes the onlookers empathise with her. Harriet says that he emptied the breast within a minute, and when the breast is empty ‘he ground his gums together’. It sends the message that breast feeding to an ‘alien,’ ‘monster,’ a disabled child as a painful experience. According to Barnes this is “to depict another character’s goodness and sensitivity.” David after watching it says, ‘He’s extraordinary,’ [...] ‘Yes, he is, he’s absolutely not ordinary.’[...] said Harriet,’ (63) Harriet stops breast feeding when Ben is just a two months old baby. This representation again speaks the minds of the non disabled through the message that anything about the deviant body is scary, and at the same time warns not to entertain with the births of monstrous babies.

Through the negative imagery of the extraordinary bodies, the literary and historical representations assert normativity. Therefore David says in his Embodied Rhetorics all literary forms especially, the novel form function as a tool of normative society in emphasising the stereotypical image of the disabled/deviant bodies. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Synder in their book, Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse talk about the lack of positive portrayal of disabled characters in literary and historical texts.

In the book, Staring: How we Look Thomson tells us about staring. She says, “Staring offers an occasion to rethink of the status quo. Who we are can shift into focus by staring at who we think we are not.” Shakespeare calls this ‘objectification.’ He says the gaze makes the disabled person
into object. Ben's is not an exception. He becomes a victim of staring by his family members and others. Claudia Malacrida in her article tells us about the Time-Out Rooms of nineteenth-century institutions where the gaze as a disciplinary means is exercised by those who are in power. She further brings Michael Foucault's theories, and tells how they help to understand the institutions of nineteenth century and the embodied practices of social control. By making the extraordinary body a spectacle, the normative society warns the spectators, sends message against the disabled community. Harriet even observes her visitors' attention to Ben: "When Harriet thought of those holidays, what she remembered was how they all looked at Ben. There would be a long thoughtful stare, puzzled, even anxious; but then came fear. Though everyone tried to conceal it." (70) Fred Botting says monsters give form of fear, desires and anxieties, allowing the channelling and expulsion of emotional energies (341)

In literary and historical representation of extraordinary bodies, the stereotypical image of a male is a villain, and a woman is a witch. Bares says showing the disabled person as sinister and evil is the one of the most persistent stereotypes and major obstacle to disabled people's successful integration into the community. Except a few, we can see them all appearing in negative roles with the attached stigma. It has been continuing from Beowulf to Frankenstein till now. Mitchell and Snyder mention the three characters, Shakespeare's Richard III, Melville's Captain Ahab, and Dickens's Tiny Tim from early canonical texts for the negative representation. According to Paul K. Longmore representations reinforces the cultural prejudices against disabled people. Thomson tells anomaly is often presented as one with danger and evil, and such a symbolic use of anomaly is best portrayed in literature and film. According to Pointon and Davis the representation of disabled characters is very much negative.
The same stereotypical portrayal of Ben as a criminal is found here in the novel *The Fifth Child*. Leaving no trace behind, a dog dies. Following it, ‘Mr. McGregor, the old grey cat’ dies in the same way. As the criminal remains secret, Ben being a ‘deviant’, they connect it with Ben. Harriet doubts Ben to be the murderer;

One morning when Harriet came down to start breakfast for the children, the don was lying dead on the kitchen floor. It had had heart attack? Suddenly sick with suspicion, she rushed up to see if Ben was in his room: he was squatting on his bed, and when she came in [...] He had opened his door, gone quietly past his sleeping parents, down the stairs, found the dog, killed it, and gone back up again, quietly, in to his room, and shut the door... all that, by himself! (76)

It further distances him from his family members, and it automatically sends a warning to the ‘normal’ family. To the ‘normal’ family, Ben becomes threat, and appears as a criminal to their eyes. His presence disturbs them. As a result, it is Dorothy, Harriet’s mother proposes the idea of sending Ben to an institution. Everybody except Harriet agrees to it. When Dr Brett refuses to give them the medical certificate stating that Ben was an extraordinary and must be taken to an institution, it is David’s ‘educated’ parents who get it from another doctor. Medical science becomes a tool to the normative society in maintaining the stigma of the ancient times by labelling and sterilizing them into institutions to improve the quality of the human race of Europe based on Darwin’s cousin Francis Galton’s research in eugenics (Colin Barnes, 1997, Davis, 1995. Paul K. Langmore, 2003). Finally they send him to an institution ‘in the North of England’. This normative attitude is seen widely in the representations. The very early example is Oedipus of Greek who is exposed by his parents from his country because of his disability, his club foot. Though we see it in the early ages, exclusion of the extraordinary bodies has become popular
since the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century (Thomson, Davis, C. Malacrida, Susan Schweik, Mark C. Weber). This assert the idea that the disabled people are burden, dependent, and object of medical care.

Soon after sending Ben to the institution, Harriet, one day, though ‘not out of love or affection,’ but due to her ‘guilt and horror that kept her awake through the nights,’ goes to visit Ben from the institution against the words of all her family members. The institution is situated in the outskirts of the city. It is situated in a deserted area where there are no people around. The workers of the institution express surprise of Harriet’s visit. The workers do not allow anyone inside the institution. The smell of excrement in and around the institution tells about the poor maintenance. This mapping of the institution helps us understand the condition of the institution, treatment, it’s staff.

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).

Harriet after witnessing the pathetic condition of Ben decides to bring him back home. This
institution stands very much to represent the institution of late twentieth century. Barnes says
the theories of Charles Darwin and Eugenics movement brought violence against disabled people
during the nineteenth century. Following Charles Darwin’s ‘survival of the fittest,’ theory, Sir
Francis Galton Karl Pearson, and A.R. Fisher were the key figures of the eugenics movement.
Regarding the prevention of the reproduction of ‘defectives’ by sterilization and segregation,
Barnes critiques they acted as if they are “the safeguards of human future.” Davis explains,
‘eugenics became obsessed with the elimination of ‘defectives,’ a category which included, the
‘feebleminded,’ the deaf, the blind, the physically defective, and so on.” (31)

The condition of the institution and it’s treatment of the in patients’ are presented vividly. The
exclusion of the extraordinary bodies into the institution is not to reintegrate them into the main
stream rather to discriminate them. The link among medical science, institutionalization, and
eugenic science is acknowledged by Thomson, Claudia Malacrida, Davis, and Stiker. According
to them all the function of the main stream society is to discriminate the deviant bodies with the
fear of contamination. The ugly law of Americans announced in the year 1881 banned disabled
people from appearing in the public places (Thomson, Mark C. Weber, Susan Schweik). I quote
the exact lines from Schweik here, “No person who is diseased, maimed, mutilated or in any way
deformed so as to be unsightly or disgusting object or improper person to be allowed in or on the
public ways or other public places in the city, or shall therein on thereon expose himself to public view(2)

According to Colin Barnes the policy of segregating severely disabled people in the institution was at its peak in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Eugenicists’ aim was to improve the British race by preventing the reproduction of ‘defectives’ by means of sterilization and segregation. The ‘defectives’ used to describe the sick, the insane, the defectives and the aged and the infirm. By separating and segregating the extraordinary bodies into institutions from its public life, medical science indirectly came to help the normative society. The normative people wanted to create a world without difference, a world of sameness. They worried that the growth of ‘difference’ might outnumber one day. Medical science indirectly helped the normative society by labelling and sterilizing the ‘difference’ in the institutions which scientifically known as eugenisation. Eugenics came to eliminate the ‘defectives’ a category which included “‘feebleminded,’ the deaf, the blind, the physical defective, and so on.” (83)

After bringing Ben from the institution back home the entire family treats Harriet as a criminal. They consider Ben as an alien and not one among them. Ben’s siblings hate Ben because of his difference. Harriet appoints her gardener named John to take care of Ben during the day until he reaches the age to go school. Ben’s attachment with his servant John is again a normative construct. The narrative shows Ben as a dependent on the normal person, no more independent. The narrative shows everywhere Ben’s uneasiness with ‘normal’ people especially the mutual hatred between Ben and Paul, Ben’s brother. Citing the description of Ben’s difference and Paul as an example of ‘normal’ child is simply the normative way. This goes closer to the freak shows of America where they put a freak and a beauty side by side to create a response which is intended by the power against the deviant bodies (Thomson). (Bringing the photo here). In
majority of the literary representations, the depiction of disabled characters used to be either villainous or evil. According to Thomson most of the disabled characters are enveloped by the otherness that their disability signals in the text.

Another child, Amy, Sarah’s daughter is a disabled child in the novel. Amy is with Down’s Syndrome. The description about the child is ‘poor Amy,’ ‘pathetic bundle,’ ‘defective child,’ ‘afflicted infant.’ The narrative pictures her as shame and burden initially but later we can see a comparison between Amy and Ben where Amy becomes favourable to everybody where as Ben stands alone as a monster, “Ben’s eyes were never off her, this other afflicted one, adored by everyone in the house. But did he know himself afflicted? Was he, in fact? What was he?” (81)

Ben is presented with John and his friends. They are older to Ben but Ben likes their company. They are unemployed youths. They use to call Ben ‘Dopey, Dwarfey, Alien Two, Hobbit, and Gremlin.’ They never call him Ben, rather call him with different tropes. The narrative pictures Ben with the gang which is worth for nothing. Ben passes his time with these youths. Ben’s family members neglect Ben even after his return from the institution. As Ben is different, they simply not want to include with them. He is treated as ‘an oddball’

Ben goes to school. Harriet expects to hear complaints from the school all the time. Like her family doctor, the school headmistress also refuses to certify Ben as an extraordinary. It surprises Harriet. But at the end of the second term the headmistress informs her about Ben’s attack on a senior girl which leads way for her to go to a ‘specialist’ when Dr Brett label him as a ‘normal’ but ‘hyperactive’. All the time we see the ‘normal’ Harriet than the mother of Ben. She always looks for an opportunity to tear her off from Ben. Here Ben becomes criminal. As Thomson says freak shows gives opportunity to formulate the self in terms of what it was not, Harriet’s fear of
becoming a deviant makes her a prey and Ben acknowledged as a deviant. Harriet goes to Dr Gilly to get Ben labelled as an extraordinary. The doctor examines Ben but she does not certify against him. Harriet insists the doctor; Harriet insisted, ‘I want it said. I want it recognized. I just can’t stand it never being said.’ When the doctor asks whether she wants a letter to the zoo, “Put this child in a cage”? Or hand him over to science?’ (127) Harriet with a ‘No’ leaves the clinic in silence.

Here the mother acts as an agent of normative people. She wants to maintain the difference. She is very much eager to proclaim to the world Ben’s difference. It echoes the attitude of the normative mind towards difference. As all the representations voice the presentation of the normative society, Harriet’s desire for sameness by excluding Ben as a deviant again emphasises the stigma. The novel goes on as it is desired by the normative world. John leaves for Manchester for a job. Ben is left without his companions. At the age of eleven Ben goes to the ‘big school’. Soon after his entry into the school, Ben gets into a group of ‘truants and drop-outs’ which is known as ‘Ben Lovatt’s gang.’ When Ben leaves the house for one or two days with his gang of boys, Harriet’s thought connects them with petty crimes of whatever the newspaper and television brings. She wants to get rid off them completely, “Now, whenever she heard of a break-in, or a mugging, or a rape anywhere, she blamed them [...] Meanwhile, she was longing for them to leave. She was a ferment of need to start a new life. (153) This again reiterate the idea that disabled people are dependent, criminal and burden to the family and society.

The stereotypical representation of deviant bodies as villains, criminals, or witches is what continues from ancient time to the present. Davis says that the novel form is an effective normative tool which is abusive of deviant bodies. Barnes also talks about the continuing negative view of disabled people in literature and art. He says, “This essentially distorted and
inhernently negative view of disabled people is evident in a great deal of literature and art, both
classical and popular, and continues to be produced today.” (21)

Paul K. Longmore says representation along with criminal characterization depicts the horror
stories of the disabled people as monsters. Being a deviant, Ben is presented as a criminal with
criminals which maintains the stigma. Ben has hatred towards the normative people and his links
are with criminals or his desire to have people of his own kind are the prejudiced notions in the
representations against the non normative community. This kind of negativization of the
extraordinary people keeps the normative person away from the deviant bodies which leads to
their exclusion from the society. Longmore says:

    Giving disabilities to villainies characters reflects and reinforces, albeit in
    exaggerated fashion, three common prejudices against the handicapped people:
    disability is a punishment for evil; disabled people are embittered by their “fate”;
    disabled people resent the nondisabled and would, if they could, destroy them.
(134)

Ben leaves home permanently. He leaves ‘normal’ family. They feel happy about his absence.
As Harriet expected, Ben leaves home along with his gang. She feels happy and free with her
‘normal’ children after Ben’s departure. Harriet’s fear and guilt vanish with Ben. The entire
family felt insecure and threatened with Ben’s presence with them. Ben’s difference does not
allow them to consider Ben as one of them. He is always an ‘alien’, ‘throwback’, an outcast to
them.. They are against difference. They appreciate ‘normal,’ hate ‘deviant’ bodies. They are
keen on to excluding the difference at any cost. They think Ben as a ‘destroyer’ of their peace.
Harriet is not sure what Ben will become after leaving home. She thinks of several possibilities of Ben becoming:

But suppose one day someone who was an amateur of the human condition, perhaps an anthropologist of an unusual kind, actually saw Ben, let's say standing on a street with his mates, or in a police court, and admitted the truth. 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?

If this did not happen [...] the gang would continue to support themselves by theft, and sooner or later would be caught. Ben, too. In police hands he would fight, and roar and stamp about and bellow, out of control with rage, and they would drug him, because they had to, and before very long he would be as he had been when she found him dying [...] 

Perhaps quite soon, in the new house she would be living in (alone) with David, she would be looking at the box, and there, in a shot on the News of Berlin, Madrid, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, she would see Ben, standing rather apart from the crowd, staring at the camera with his goblin eyes, or searching the faces in the crowd for another of his kind. (158-159)

In the second novel, *Ben in the World* Ben is eighteen years old adult but appears to be forty year old. Here Ben is in the company of an old lady, Mrs Ellen Biggs. This time the narrative links Ben with the aged Lady. Poor are the category stands one with the disabled people. Showing disabled person comfortably with the old people is also one the themes of representation of
disability. We have already the blind old man and Frankenstein’s monster as example. More than this, Barnes says the American Poor Law included ‘aged and infirm’ with defective’ as one among the four categories. She treats him as a pet. Her usual comparison of Ben is with a dog:

Under her hands was a strong broad back, with fringes of brown hair on either side of the backbone, and on the shoulders a mat of wet fur: it felt like that, as if she were washing a dog. [...] She enjoyed hearing him laugh: it was like a bark, Long ago she had a dog who barked like that’ Ben is happy with old lady. (9)

This is also a common prejudice. The normative world’s representation of disabled people is to strengthen the social prejudice. The categorization of aged people as ‘defectives’ includes them into the list of people who are supposed to be sterilized (Barnes). Ben is presented with the old lady with all comfort. Ben is obedient to her and he even helps the old lady when she is sick. He appears responsible with the old lady. He goes to work, earns money, and brings things for both of them. Ben does not appear as a threat to the old lady rather she thinks of him as ‘not one of us’.

Even with the old lady we can see the attitude of the normative society through the hierarchy. Though narrative shows difference between the old lady and Ben, they do not show hatred towards each other as how Ben felt with his family members. Through this presentation the normative people make stronger the prejudice against the extraordinary bodies. Just as Marry Shelly presents Frankenstein’s monster with the blind old man, here Ben is presented with the old lady. Representation of extraordinary bodies in art and literature makes the prejudice stronger against them.
Again after the death of the old lady, Mrs Ellen Biggs we see Ben with a prostitute, Rita. Ben is again dependent on a normal person. She shows kindness towards Ben as the old lady, Mrs Ellen Biggs, and in turn Ben is fond of her. She likes to have sex with Ben. She had met different kinds but nothing like Ben. And she concludes that Ben is not a human. While sharing her sexual experience with Johnston, she says it was like being with an animal, a dog. She says, it hadn’t been like being with a man, more like an animal. You know, like dogs. (39). According to Barnes representation present disabled person as sexually abnormal. Representation present them either asexual or over sexual. He says, “a variation on this theme is the depiction of the disabled person as sex starved or sexually degenerate. Ben falls under the first category here. When she saw him naked for the first time, she thought, Wow! That’s not human. (42) Ben is not a human to Rita. It shows the hierarchy in the relationship between Rita, a prostitute and Ben a deviant. Like man- woman, black-white, east- west, able- disabled, there is the hierarchy among the marginalized which is still can be seen everywhere.

Monstrous body is known for normative exploitation. Monsters are presented one with criminals. Exploitation of extraordinary bodies has been a feature in real life as well as in representation. Johnston, Rita’s friend is a criminal. He neither likes Ben, nor his relation with Rita. But Johnston pretends to be faithful to Ben. He prepares a fake passport for Ben stating him as an actor. And then he sends Ben with cocaine to a city called Nice in France. Rita opposes at first but she fails against Johnston’s force. Johnston wants to become rich in life and for that he makes use of Ben. He does care about Ben. Johnston makes use of Ben as a tool to achieve a social status. Once after the work Johnston leaves Ben. Here Johnston represents the normative society. He forsakes Ben, and foresees his death;
Johnston’s normative interest of excluding the extraordinary bodies is clearly pictured here. Though on the outset, criminals, deviant, women are put together as one, we see the inner politics among them. The representation recreates the stigma against the disabled community.

Monstrous body is the attraction in the film world. Another feature of the novel with Ben, the deviant is its focus on filmic world. Longmore says film and television reinforces the cultural prejudices against disabled people. The New York filmmaker Alex Beyle decides to take a movie with Ben the moment his eyes fell on Ben’s different body. Ben is a yeti to Alex. The story Alex thinks for the movie is against inclusion and rather excludes the ‘deviant’:

Sometimes Alex and Paulo would lift their gaze from a worried inspection of their notes, scribbled over sheets of paper, their by now many drafts outlines, developments, and, not knowing they were doing it, stare deeply at Ben, frowning, but not seeing him.

Well, how they were going to go on? Perhaps into this on the whole pleasant scene would come a tribe of more advanced people, and what? The two races would mate and make a new one? The newcomers could kill out Ben’s people and Ben with
them, who would die a hero defending them? Perhaps better if Ben's people killed all the new comers, postponing an inevitable fate, for everywhere over this land were spreading the new people. (97)

He decides to make a movie with Ben. Just as Johnston exploits Ben Alex also does the same. They force Ben to do the things which they intend him do. His interest is never taken into account. Alex takes Ben to Rio to make a movie which is about a yeti's life in the forest. Alex writes the story with Ben as a yeti with his fellow people in a cave. The narrative aims is not to show him as a normal person but the 'deviant'. Alex creates a community like Ben which shows the aim of the normative world to keep the extraordinary bodies away from them. The life of the extraordinary bodies are presented as their lives are just taken for granted, without out considering their own interest of their life. Alex brings Ben to Rio when he is very much interested to make movie with him but the same person leaves, does not care when he is with another plan for the movie. The life of the deviant bodies is not their own. It is the normative society which decides the life for them.

When Alex goes in search of the shooting location with his friend, Teresa Alves, Alex's friend takes care of Ben. He becomes dependent. Again the relationship between Ben and Teresa is worth some attention. Ben's relation with Teresa is as good as his relation with Rita. Teresa is also a prostitute but a good human being. We see here the repeated marginalization of the others. The narration never goes away from the stereotypical portrayal of the 'deviant' Ben. This narration does not go beyond the usual depiction of the bias among the marginalised groups. The criminals, prostitutes who are seen closely associated with the life of Ben. Even here one could see the upper hand of Teresa over Ben. She is the care taker of Ben while he is under Alex.
Teresa's friends Inez, who works for a biologist, her parents' friend visits Teresa. Inez's eyes notice the difference of Ben. She reports to her boss, the biologist Luiz Machado, on Ben, "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 a look at him.'" (121)

Thomson says:

Commerce—the precursor of capitalism—and curiosity—the precursor of science—brought the prodigious body into secular life, enriching the exclusively religious interpretations. By the eighteenth century the monster's power to inspire terror, awe, wonder, and divination was being eroded by science (57)

According to Wilson, the deviant body is a text or an object in the scientific discourse. Science is curious about monstrous body. Science's view of monstrous body says they are specimens to be studied by the scientists in the laboratory. Scientists act as the agents of the normative world. It keeps the monster at a distance, in the laboratories. Davis says ever since the advent of industrialization science came to play its predominant role along with modern medicine to normalize the entire world through eugenics. The upper hand of science with the monstrous body is seen here. One could see the brutal attitude of scientists with Ben.

The scientists see Ben as a 'unique' creature, decide to study him in the laboratory. Luiz Machado's friend Professor Stephen Gaumlach from States considers Ben as very 'important,' and doing research with Ben he says, 'this is probably the most important discovery of my entire life.' His interest lies in announcing to the world about what he is, his people, their difference, and achieving reputation through their research with the monstrous body. They think Ben is a
monster who does not have any right to live, only to get removed from the society. Science does not take interest to include the monsters rather excludes them. For the scientists monstrous body is a text to rewrite the prejudices more strongly than ever before for the future generations. Inez's boss and his friend take Ben to the dissection table of the laboratory. When Teresa refuses to send Ben with them by realising their intention, Luiz Machado rebukes at Teresa, “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)

Thomson acknowledges the importance of science and its interest with freaks. She says science is curious to know about the 'link'. She also says science's proclamation of freak bodies as the primitive species of humans. She says it is again asserting the white supremacy and its exploitation over the extraordinary bodies. As a scientist Professor Stephen thinks of himself as an authority. The treatment of the monstrous body as a specimen which meant to be on the dissection table is what the repeated report of scientific discourse is brought through the narrative here. The scientist thinks Ben does not have any right to live as the 'normal' beings. Science along with the normative society tries to eliminate the monsters.

During Teresa's absence, they kidnap Ben and bring him to the institute. Ben's difference is important to the scientist. They are not concerned about his family or his feelings. The treatment of the monstrous body in the scientific laboratory is clearly presented through the eyes of Teresa and Alfredo in his endeavour to save Ben from the scientist. Alfredo, an assistant from the same institute hates to go to the place which is the heart of the institute where the scientists experiment with these extraordinary bodies.
Teresa and Alfredo, an assistant from the institute go to the 'the bad place.' of the institute to bring back Ben:

They padded quickly along a path their feet seemed to know was there, passed the main buildings of the institute, leaving them behind, and then, ahead, a few hundred yards, lights burned on a separate group of buildings. From them came yelps, calls, cries. This was a bad place: Teresa knew it, and Alfredo whispered, 'I don't like coming here.' (145)

Inside the institute Ben lies along with animals. The grouping or showing the link between monstrous bodies and the animals is another normative construction. Ben is caged among the animals. By placing Ben among the animals the narrative asserts the difference between the 'normal' and 'abnormal' and it strengthens the category further. This projection states clearly the cruelty of science towards 'deviants'

[...] in the tiers of cages monkeys, small and large [...] 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 back side clogged with excrement[...] Teresa saw nothing of all this. She was looking at Ben, kneeling on the floor of his cage, bang-banging his head on the wire. He had not been drugged: Professor Stephan wanted him uncontaminated. He was unclothed, this creature who had been clothe since he was born. In the corner of his cage was a pile of dung (146)
Even after the rescue of Ben from the institute, the scientist Professor Stephen claims his right over Ben. He says, 'This specimen could answer questions, important questions, important for science – world science. He could change what we know of the human story.' But despite of all Teresa and Alfredo escape from Rio to Jujuy with Ben.

Ben escapes from his death in the hands of science with the help of Teresa and Alfredo. Ben, after his escape from the institute comes with Alfredo and Teresa with the hope to meet 'his people.' But Alfredo and Teresa also being the agents of the normative world outside. Alfredo cheats Ben saying he knows 'Ben's people.' This in a way tells how they treat Ben as different from them. This takes Ben to another normative game. Alfredo tells a lie that he knows 'his people' to Ben to get his consent to come with him to the institute for some tests. Alfredo says, 'They want to find out about your people.' Alfredo takes Ben to Jujuy where in the mine he worked before coming to the institute.

They build faith in Ben about 'his people.' This keeps Ben at a distance because he is different from 'normal'. Though they rescue Ben from science, they do under the same mask, they distance eliminate Ben from them and turn out to be the same as the scientist who wanted to study Ben for his difference.

Further, one could see Ben speaking about his difference. It is used as another normative weapon against 'abnormal.' When Alfredo tells Ben for the first time about 'his people,' the following lines describes how Ben's difference entered into his mind. Ben says, "I don't have any people. I'm not like my family – at home. They are all different from me. I have never seen anyone like me.' I've seen people like you, said Alfredo." (126)
This narrative maintains the 'normal' 'abnormal' category very well. By showing Ben's interest in meeting 'his people,' the narrative draws a line between Ben and his 'normal' friends. It shows Ben is so happy when he hear about 'his People,' and not with the 'normal' friends. Ben's difference is nowhere accepted. To all the 'normal' people from Ben's parents to Rita, Johnston, Alex, Teresa, Professor Stephen to Alfredo Ben is an alien, monster, yeti, 'throwback' 'not one of us,' and exclude Ben from them due to his difference. As the 'normal' exclude him as the 'abnormal,' they bring a solution by show Ben 'his people.'

Ben’s happiness is described:

Ben was leaning forward, his eyes all gratitude, tears were rolling down into his beard, and he was pressing those great fists together: he seemed to have been lit from within by fires of joy.

[...] ‘People like me,’ Ben was chatting, ‘like me, people like Ben.’ And he interrupted his dance to ask, ‘Just like me?’

Yes, just like you.’

‘Will you take me to them?’

[...] ‘Will take me tomorrow?’(126-127)

Alfredo cheats Ben by making him believe about the presence of 'his people.' Alfredo talks about the pictures of the primitive people in rock as 'Ben’s people'. Alfredo also like the scientist Professor Stephen considers Ben as a primitive, a 'throwback.' He makes clear to Teresa when she asks Alfredo about it:

Did you really see people like Ben?
‘Pictures,’ said Alfredo. ‘I found them in the mountains when I was working in the mines. Pictures on the rock – ancient people did them. You know, like the pictures on the rocks at home. Only much better than at home. Not all cracked and broken.’ (128)

Ben believes it blindly, and shows great interest to meet them.

They take Ben in the morning to where the picture of the primitive people is. Ben’s eagerness and interest is at its peak. The picture only comes to sight when there is Sun light. Alfredo and Teresa are determined to show the pictures to Ben as ‘his people.’

Alfredo takes Ben to the mine at Jujuy to show him the pictures. He looks at them:

[...] No, not here, yes, it’s here,[...] a shaft of light came weakly over a peak, but immediately, and reached the rock face at its edge.

At once a figure stood out from the block shining depth of the rock, where, deeply immersed in the shine, were other figures, that needed the sunlight to bring them forth. The shaft of light became a flood and there they all were, gallery of pictures, Ben’s people. (174-175)

Following the description of ‘Ben’s people,’ Ben’s longing for a female companion is elucidated here. One could see Ben’s disappointment and his sorrow. He mourns in pain which expresses his grief, “And now one after another the people disappeared. Soon, only a few were left, on the very edge, and Ben stood touching, stroking, the female creature. Then the left and they heard his howl, as he flung himself against the rock and crouched there (176). The attitude of showing the ‘normal’ against the abnormal is another technique of representation.
Logmore says there are two stereotypical ends of any representation of deviant bodies. One is showing them as “super-crip,” and the other is death out of discrimination and disappointment. He says the end of any representation of ‘deviant’ bodies as monsters is always death. Ben is a monster so he is left to face his death out of disappointment. He decides to commit suicide due to the exploitation of ‘normal’ world. His death also betrays his hatred towards the normative world. This narrative the ‘normal’ people are not faithful, they cheat the monsters so out of depression and disappointment the monster accepts his death, death by suicide.

He stumbled along beside her on the long walk back to the hut. On the path that had the precipice below it he did stop a moment and look down, but went on at a touch from Teresa. [...] Then – and it was so sudden they at first could not move – he left them and went bounding back along the path they had just come from. A silence. [...] They heard a cry, and a slide of small stones, and silence.

They slowly got up, slowly followed him. They made their way to where the precipice fell away from the path. There was Ben, far below, a pile of coloured clothing His yellow hair was like a tuft of mountain grass (176-177)

Representation shows disabled person as incapable for community life. It rarely picture them as the productive members of the society. This makes them inferior to human beings. This notion leads to the segregation of disabled people.

After Ben’s death, Alfredo convinces Teresa by telling that Ben has to die. His accepts Ben suicide as Ben’s wisdom idea. Ben should die because he is a monster.

The generalising of the death of Ben as:
Jose said, ‘Teresa, you are silly to cry Is a good thing, what Ben did.’

Alfredo said, But Teresa Knows that.’

‘Yes,’ said Teresa. And added, And I know we are pleased that he is
dead and we don’t have to think about him.’(p 178)

Ben’s difference eliminated him from the family. After leaving home Ben is showed in relation
with aged and criminal people. Even among the aged and criminals Ben is inferior, and he is
discriminated and exploited. Science’s interest on Ben’s difference finally has thrown him to
decide his death.

The representation of monstrous body in the novels is more stereotypical. It shows the character
negatively with its attached stigma. The defective/monster/ disabled character of the novels *The
Fifth Child* and *Ben in the World* have all the features of ‘disablism.’ The recurrent image of the
disabled person are as burden, dependent, sexually abnormal, pathetic and pitiable, object of
curiosity, object of medical treatment, evil and harmful, and the idea that disabled hate
nondisabled people.
Work Cited


