

Literary Representation of Tourette Syndrome in *Forget Me Not*: A Critical Study of Disability Literature

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Abstract

Human world entails different syndromes marked by different signs and symptoms which are often associated with certain disease or disorder. Tourette syndrome is a condition characterized by the presence of repeated motions or undesired noises (tics) that are difficult to manage. The study deals with the form of Ellie Terry's novel *Forget Me Not* (2017); it highlights the fictional techniques the novelist utilizes in order to reflect on Tourette syndrome. According to this context, the study adopts the framework of disabled literature that fosters the fictional and real experiences of "Othered" individuals. It argues that Terry's novel speaks about and for disabled individuals and thus utilizes certain fictional strategies in terms of narration, characterization, portrayal of characters, nature of conflict, and structure so as to achieve this aim. The study aims at introducing Tourette syndrome in relation to disabled literature, it further aims at answering the question of how the form of the novel goes hand in hand with its content. The study follows a structural approach that examines the text as a whole system constituted of different layers.

Keywords: Literary representation, Tourette syndrome, disabled literature, literary form, *Forget Me Not*.

التجسيد الادبي لمتلازمة توريت في رواية لا تنساني: دراسة نقدية في ادب الاعاقة

المستخلص

ينطوي العالم البشري على متلازمات مختلفة تتميز بعلامات وأعراض متنوعة والتي غالباً ما ترتبط بمرض أو اضطراب معين. متلازمة توريت هي حالة الاضطراب الذي تتميز بوجود حركات متكررة أو أصوات غير مرغوب فيها ناجمة عن تشنجات لإرادية يصعب التحكم فيها. تتناول الدراسة الشكل الادبي لرواية إيلي تيري لا تنساني (٢٠١٧)؛ إذ تسلط الضوء على التقنيات القصصية التي يستخدمها الروائي لتجسيد والتعريف بمتلازمة توريت. وفي هذا السياق فإن الدراسة تتبنى الإطار النظري لأدب الاعاقة والذي يسلط الضوء على التجارب الخيالية والحقيقية للأفراد المعاقين. ترى الدراسة أن رواية تيري تتحدث عن ومن أجل الأفراد المعاقين، وبالتالي تستخدم استراتيجيات قصصية متعلقة بالسرد، والتوصيف، وتصوير الشخصيات، وطبيعة الصراع، والبنية لتحقيق هذا الهدف. تهدف

الدراسة إلى التعريف بمتلازمة توريت في ضوء ادب الإعاقة، كما تهدف إلى الإجابة على السؤال المتعلق بمدى تناسب الشكل الروائي مع محتواها. تتبع الدراسة منهجًا بنويًا يدرس النص كنظام متكامل متكون من طبقات مختلفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التجسيد الادبي، متلازمة توريت، ادب الإعاقة، الشكل الادبي، لا تنساني

Introduction:

One may get a more comprehensive understanding of society, human experience, and the importance of human variety via the social, political, and cultural analyses that comprise disability studies. In relation to this context, literature contains an infinite amount of knowledge and truth. Therefore, there is a question that is usually asked about any literary work that is: what kind of knowledge\ truth does the work re-represent? Answering this question leads to another one that is : how does the writer represent this particular knowledge? Aristotle in his *The Poetics* explains that representations differ from one another in three ways: object, manner, and means. The “object” is the content of the literary work; the “manner” and the means are the forms by which the content is represented. (3) According to this context, this study highlights Tourette syndrome in *Forget Me not* and discusses the means of representing and presenting certain knowledge about this syndrome that officially categorized under the umbrella of disability literature.

Tourette syndrome is defined as

a neurological condition caused by malfunctioning of the brain and most scientific evidence suggests that this disorder has a genetic origin. The primary symptom of Tourette syndrome is the repeated display of tics. Motor tics are repeated involuntary movements of parts of the body, particularly the head, neck, face, or legs. Vocal tics (or phonic tics) are repeated involuntary noises, ranging from simple grunts and coughs to complex phrases and sentences. People with Tourette syndrome display both motor tics and vocal tics. (Olive, 2010, 2)

Even though Tourette syndrome has a long history, one of the earliest documented cases of this disorder was that of the Marquise de Dampierre, a French woman who lived from 1799 to 1884. The marquise frequently found herself taken aback and feeling self-conscious about her vocal tics. (Gaze& Kepley& Walkup, 2006, 657) Physician Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard, who documented her intriguing case in a medical journal, observed that this woman was deeply ashamed of her involuntary obscenities, which led to a heightened fear of expressing them. The constant preoccupation with these tics brought them to the forefront of her consciousness, ultimately resulting in her loss of control over them. (Kadesjo& Gillberg, 2000, 548) In 1885, Georges Gilles de la Tourette, a French neurologist, compiled eight more cases of individuals experiencing motor or vocal tics similar to the Marquise de Dampierre. He referred to this collection of symptoms as a "maladie (illness) of tics". Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot, who served as Gilles de la Tourette's mentor, bestowed the term "Gilles de la Tourette Syndrome" to the disorder. These days, people usually call it Tourette's syndrome or just Tourette. (Rickards, 2009, 74)

Symptoms of Tourette syndrome typically manifest during childhood, which is the most prevalent category of people affected. Anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, attention deficit disorder, and learning difficulties are among the emotional, behavioral, and developmental issues often experienced by children with Tourette syndrome. These resulted effects of Tourette syndrome led many children to be categorized as different, inferior, and Other. When it comes to social acceptance, low self-esteem, and making and keeping friends, many kids with Tourette syndrome struggle. Many people have heard stories of kids being harassed at school or having their parents or children made fun of by others in public while they were out and about with their tics. It seems that children with obvious tics are more likely to be teased or isolated from their friends throughout middle school. With Tourette syndrome There will be less chances to meet new people and build everlasting friendships. A vicious cycle of issues with peers may also develop if children's social skills prevent them from talking to others

about their tics. Many and different representations of children with disabilities have appeared in literature within the last decade. These representations varied between positive portrayal and negative stereotyping. For example, "Bakhtin's Dialogism: A Study of R.J. Palacio's *Wonder*" (2022) argues that:

Palacio's *Wonder* discusses the issue of disability through different perspectives, namely the deformed face, August, and other characters. The novel is a call and response between August whose deformed face places him in the position of inferior Otherness and other characters whose normality identifies them as the superior Self. (1)

The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Disability (2017) explains that

Disability is everywhere in literature. Whether in the bodies that populate countless narratives containing physical disability, or in the mental difference that informs so much detail about character and psychology, disability features in literary production as a constant presence. (I)

The many stories, perspectives, and voices presented in disability literature illuminate the complex lives of people with disabilities. Disability literature, which includes fiction, poetry, memoirs, and autobiographies, is an important forum for delving into the complexities of disability, challenging traditional thinking, and advocating for inclusion and equality. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (2000) discusses the means by which literary works utilize and depend on disability to motivate narrative process. The term prosthesis, the book explains, "is meant to indicate that disability has been used throughout history as a crutch upon which literary narratives lean for their representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insight. Bodies show up in stories as dynamic entities that resist or refuse the cultural scripts assigned upon them"(49) This process, as Mitchell and Snyder asserted, is a "perpetual discursive dependency," and thus "disability pervades literary narrative, first as a stock feature of characterization and, second, as an opportunistic metaphorical device."(47)

Stigmatization and marginalization of people with disabilities have deep historical roots due to a social constructional orientation and ascribed categories which focus on and highlight the perspectives of the surrounding observers rather than disabled individuals. According to this context, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's *Extraordinary Bodies* (1997) explains that disability is "not so much a property of bodies as a product of cultural rules about what bodies should be or do." (23) In literature, disability metaphors are prevalent. It is arguable that literary criticism, with its focus on "the grotesque," neglects the political and social dimensions of disability. In this respect, one may look at how attitudes toward people with disabilities changed throughout a certain historical period, such the USA and Europe in the 1800s and 1900s. Beliefs regarding disability that were prevalent before the nineteenth century are discussed in Long more (1987). Disabilities were thought to be caused by forces beyond human control. Some persons with impairments were believed to be cursed, some to be punished by God for their own or their parents' transgressions, and still others to be rewarded by God with extraordinary gifts. Overprotection and deification were among the behaviors that developed from these beliefs; others included punishment, seclusion, infanticide, and humiliation. The second option, although better in some respects, provided disabled persons with very little agency and opportunity. The idea that impairments were brought about by supernatural forces began to give way in the nineteenth century to a more biological explanation, which saw rehabilitation or therapy as the only reasonable reaction to impairments (357).

There has been a marked shift in how disability is portrayed in literature over the years. Literary depictions of disability take another pathway that goes hand in hand with the changed public attitudes. Simi Linton, Susan Mello and John O'Neill in their "Disability Studies: Expanding the Parameters of Diversity" (1995) confirm:

Disability studies challenges the idea that the social and economic status and assigned roles of people with disabilities are inevitable outcomes of their condition, an idea similar to the argument that women's roles and status are

biologically determined. But disability studies go beyond cataloguing discrimination and arguing for social change. (5)

The aim of sociological disability studies, for example, is to uncover the societal and institutional biases that lead to the marginalization and mistreatment of individuals with disabilities. Therefore, the orientation of literary and cultural criticisms is shaped by new social model that is manifested in feminist, queer, postcolonial, and critical race studies. There are many scholars who utilize alternative critical reading strategies aiming at offering new insights into well-known texts and thus introducing innovative frameworks for analyzing the portrayal of disability.

Thinking about disability literature by means of structural approach may lead one to a particular oppositional binary, namely normal body and the disabled one. Illustrating this, many studies applied tools of critical and cultural theory to examine disability representation, and in doing so, they introduced important critical concepts that influenced the alternative orientation of the field of disability studies. If disability is conceptualized as a condition characterized by negative distinctions, then the concept of normality may be seen as the primary framework from which it diverges. As such, the problem springs from the way that normalcy is constructed by societal norms.

Disability literature encompasses a diverse range of themes and perspectives, reflecting the multifaceted nature of disability experiences. From the challenges of navigating inaccessible environments to the joys of personal triumphs, these narratives offer readers insight into the lived realities of individuals with disabilities. One prevalent theme in disability literature is the theme of resilience. Many narratives explore the strength and resilience of individuals in the face of adversity, highlighting their ability to overcome obstacles and thrive despite societal barriers. Through these stories, readers gain a deeper appreciation for the resilience of the human spirit and the power of perseverance. Another important aspect of disability literature is representation.

Historically, individuals with disabilities were often portrayed as one-dimensional characters or objects of pity. However, contemporary disability literature seeks to challenge these stereotypes by presenting complex and nuanced portrayals of disability. By centering the voices and experiences of individuals with disabilities, these narratives offer a more authentic and inclusive representation of disability in literature. *Forget Me Not* is an example

Ellie Terry's *Forget Me Not* is a novel about Tourette Syndrome in which the main character struggles against the label society imposed upon it, namely disabled. Calliope June suffers from Tourette syndrome, resulting in occasional unintentional facial expressions or vocalizations. Upon their subsequent relocation, she tries to conceal her TS. However, it is not long before the students at her new school become aware of her difference. Calliope's neighbor, who also holds the esteemed position of student body president, perceives her authentically as an intriguing person and a close companion. However, does he possess the courage to publicly declare their friendship? as attending school, Calliope must confront her mother's new relationship and the possibility of their relocation, all as she begins to form friendships and ultimately embrace her individuality.

Ellie Terry is a poet and short story writer. Her poetry has won several state awards and has appeared in various magazines for children. Diagnosed with Tourette syndrome, her debuted novel can be considered a means by which Terry tries to voice herself as well as others who share her the same suffering of otherness and treated as different if not inferior. About her syndrome and about the aim of her novel Terry says:

Tourette syndrome is a very misunderstood disorder. But if I kept quiet about it, wouldn't that only contribute to it being misunderstood? So I decided to do something very scary. I shared my diagnosis with my family and friends, and even some strangers. And it felt wonderful. To let it all out. To feel a little more understood. Isn't that what every person wants? To feel a little more understood? And so, my hope with writing this book is that readers will understand better than they did before what Tourette syndrome is, understand what it feels like to

walk in the shoes of someone who does not have full control over some of the things they say and do, and understand that most people with Tourette syndrome have at least one other condition occurring alongside their tics that may or may not be obvious. (344)

As such, *Forget Me Not* is the means by which Terry rewrites and reimagines her true self. The primary area of her novel is in the examination of the interplay between voice and silence, the mechanisms of communication, and the multimodal nature of experience. This echoes the perspective of Critical disability theorists which have frequently suggested that disability sparks imagination and narration. Mitchell and Snyder confirm that disability's "very unknowability that consolidates the need to tell a story about it" (6). Davis further confirms "When one speaks of disability...[it] immediately becomes part of a Chronotope, a time-sequenced narrative, embedded in a story" (3-4) This is why *Forget Me Not* is structured according seasons metaphor: the four parts are titled after different seasons, beginning with Autumn and ending with Summer. Based on this pattern, it seems that Calliope , the major disabled character in the novel goes through different stages that contribute significantly to her personality's development. She progresses from the Autumn and Winter, stages of misrecognition, isolation, and confinement to the Spring and Summer , stages of self-expression, problem-solving, integration, and most importantly self-actualization.

The Representation of Disability Discourse in *Forget Me Not*

Engaging with the narrative might captivate the reader's interest in the narrator's introspective exploration of her ideas, motives, and external influences. The work, therefore, falls under the category of psychological realism due to its intimate

exploration of the Calliope's inner psyche. This is indicated from the very beginning of the novel when Calliope says:

I open my dresser drawers, find them

Empty

Empty

empty.

What the heck? Not again. I check the closet, the hamper, under my bed.

“Mom?” I yell so she can hear. “What did you do with my clothes?”

She doesn't answer me,

which means,

we're moving (7)

The word "empty" is highly symbolic in a sense that it indicates the emptiness of the character's life. It is empty of friends, goals, and most significantly free will because she "won't even get to say good-bye to [her] teachers" (8) and every time her mother "breaks up with one of her crazy boyfriends, ...[she] grab[s] the keys pack the car hit[s] the road [doesn't] look back." (12) Constant moving from one place into another in a very short period of time deprives Calliope the chance to have friends who may fill "the gaping hole inside [her] heart." (14)

Calliope reveals her personality through interior monologue that takes the form of short sentences. This technique has three functions according to the context of the novel:

One poet is interested above all in the delineation of characters; another, in the influence of social factors and life conflicts on characters; a third, in the connection between emotions and actions; a fourth, in an analysis of passions; but Count Tolstoy is interested primarily in the psychic process per se, in its forms and laws, in the dialectic of the mind-to give it a definite name. (Quoted in Struve, 1954, 1103)

The anatomical chart of Calliope is presented to the reader via the detailed quality of interior monologue. This particular technique seeks to convey ideas and accomplish the unmediated illusion via the Calliope's self-description and expression. Through her half-daydreaming, half-reflective dialectical meditation on her inner self, Calliope reveals a flaw in her character—her lack of motivation to act, take risks, and seize fresh opportunities. Introducing herself to the reader, her hair; however, is the only thing she ever likes about herself.

Calliope 's past and present are directly presented on her "conscious screen" by means of her imaginations, speculations, and memory. Thinking about her Tourette syndrome, Calliope remembers how she was worried about the initial symptoms of her syndrome which her mother compares to “quirks,” :

I'd chew my nails to bloody stumps,
eat my food in a certain order, and
worry
worry
worry
about everything. (25)

These feeling are manifested as real recognized syndrome when she reaches the second grade:

I started having tics—
twitching my nose
tensing my arms
humming quietly

.....
.....

Now my Tourette's

is harder to hide,

but I have to try if I want to make friends.

I have to try (25-6)

One of the primary issues of disability literature is resilience, as previously discussed. In the aforementioned speech, resilience is manifested as an inner force that wants to be seen and challenged in order to prevent Calliope from becoming marginalized and Othered. This echoes the concept of prosthesis that aims at introducing a disabled character who struggles against stereotypical misrecognition and misfit.

One of the novel's defining characteristics is its use of Cartesian duality. The protagonist's body acts in opposition to her rational thinking. Though the story is structured in a chronological manner, Calliope's crippled body defies socially created conventions and is therefore considered an anti-"docile body,"¹ in Foucauldian terms. Her mother asks her not to tell anyone of her syndrome:

Mom rolls down the window

of our Volkswagen Beetle,

aka the Bug.

"Oh, and don't tell anyone about—

"My Tourette's?"

Yeah, Mom. I know (32)

Her feelings of isolation are intensified when she is asked to conceal her physical condition from others. The snow, in this regard, functions as an objective correlative to

¹ Through Docile Bodies, Foucault conveys how it is imperative for bodies to be receptive so that the logic of arrangement might act upon and improve them. Docility can only be achieved through acts of discipline

her feelings of isolation and fear that coincided with moments her tics are about to show up:

Snow.

Snow.

Snow.

Snow.

Snow took

my daddy away,

now it mocks me every time

Reading this quote motivates the reader to analyze the way the word "snow" is written in the novel. The writer draws an implicit image of descending a staircase by means of writing and repeating the word "snow" line after another. This technique is utilized significantly to express the way Calliope is moving from her outer space where she tries to hide her tics towards her inner self where she locates and imprisons the trauma of her syndrome. In relation to this context, Alice Hall, in her *Literature and Disability*, discusses the importance of language in representing an experience of disability :

language matters not merely as a question of political correctness, but because it shapes expectations and it conveys models and conceptions of disability that are fundamental to how disabled identities and agency are experienced... language is necessary in order to critique, challenge and re-write the stories and structures through which disabilities have been traditionally understood. (8)

Both the spoken words and their arrangement on blank pages of the novel embrace the power of language. In another example, Ellie Terry leaves a space between each tic and part of the body it affects to depict the passage of time between one tic and another as it is shown below:

Wiggle my nose

pucker	my lips
roll	my eyes
clear	my throat
clap	my hands
tap	my feet. (36)

These tics cause Calliope to feel very vulnerable and have poor self-esteem. As a protective mechanism, she draws strength from her memories of her father, who provides her with the warmth she needs to face the ever-present snow inside her:

but I know we played, played in the yard just him and me on a warm summer's day and I know we ran, ran through the sprinklers again and again, laughing until we were soaked to the bone and we shared an orange Popsicle out on the deck, the juice dripping cold down our chins and our necks and he caught me a toad, a most handsome toad, set it on my dress so I could hold it, then he combed his fingers through my hair and told me that he loved me (40)

The preceding quotation, which is marked by a run-on sentence structure, shows how happy she becomes whenever she thinks of her father. By recalling these moments, she is freed from self-deprecating thoughts about her Othered identity. On the other hand, the present serves as an ever-present reminder of the external factors that contributed to her need to escape. This is indicated when she is asked to introduce herself in front of the class:

D. Kahn wants me

to tell the class about myself.

I knew he would.

Teachers always do.

And I hate it more each time.

“I—um, I just moved here from Salt Lake City.”

My voice is barely above a whisper,

but I can't help it.

I wish this ugly carpet would

swallow

me

whole. (42)

The poetics of disability literature in general and in this novel in particular foster aspects that seep into power relations. This may lead one to examine how normal people practice power upon the abnormal ones. No matter how marginalized they may feel, people with disabilities do not always have the "power within" to overcome their own limitations and to confront others around them. This is recognized when the main character is asked about her disability:

The girl named Hazel

sets down her milk.

“We heard you making a weird noise

this morning. It sounded like a frog.”

Oh no,

please don't ask me

about—

Croooooaaak. Croooooaaak.

Gwyneth points at me,

“It was you making that noise!”

The girls laugh.

They think I'm being funny. (49-50)

Power relations in *Forget Me Not* are not confined to Calliope and the outside community, they further include the character inner power and the syndrome itself. Sometimes Calliope describes her tics by means of certain imagery that indicates their destructive effect inflicted upon her:

I nod. "My tics."

As soon as I say the word,

e a

they l p

out of me

like grasshoppers in a brush fire. (172)

though she successfully tries many times to repress the tics , there are many other times in which she fails and thus Othered by the Self syndrome:

Sometimes my tics

are like gentle whispers,

asking me to do things,

to say things.

If I try real hard,

I can hold them off

for a while.

But other times they're like a

SHOUT!

Jumping out so loud

and strong

I could never hope to

stop them (51)

Though she tries to overcome her tics by means of medicine, all what medicine does is that it makes her sleep, worry, and the tics become worse.

The novel in certain occasions depict the idea that disabled people are inherently weak because they are "deviant" or "faulty" The inevitable consequence of this is that persons with disabilities are pushed into the location of social out casting and marginalization:

I want to cry,

but swallow the feeling down
with another bite of applesauce.

Tomorrow I'll sit by the garbage cans. (50)

Identity can be understood through two key dimensions: social identity and personal identity. Social identity pertains to the social category or categories that an individual is a part of. A social category refers to a collective of individuals who are identified by a specific label and are defined by certain rules that determine their membership and presumed characteristics or traits. An individual's "personal" identity, on

the other hand, relates to specific identifying attributes that the individual values highly or considers socially significant, even though they are relatively unchangeable. (Fearon, 1999). When it comes to individuals with disabilities, society tends to associate their social identity with their specific disability. This leads to categorization and labeling based on the nature of their disability and functional limitations, such as being labeled as "blind" or "deaf." These labels often overshadow other aspects of their social identity, such as gender, class, or caste. This is in contrast to an individual's "personal" identity, which is tied to their personality, talents, and roles within their family or occupation. In the case of *Forget Me Not*, the character is labeled by the students in the school as weird and goon. Checking the meaning of goon in the dictionary, she refuses being described as such but her refusal is a silent one:

a stupid person.

My throat tightens.

My chin trembles.

“I am not,” I whisper to

no one. (84)

After experiencing maltreatment, the majority of people with disability show negative symptoms. Because they are not recognized as trauma responses, these symptoms are often ignored. Mansell et al. described

the person with the disability is likely to demonstrate behavior symptoms. These symptoms are often not understood, nor treated effectively as abuse reactions. Rather, symptoms can be poorly managed through behavioral control and sedation and the reason for the symptoms may never be appropriately assessed or treated. (pp. 425-426)

Consequently, individuals with disability may exhibit distinct manifestations of trauma, which may result in its inadvertent neglect or misinterpretation. Communication may be expressed via a range of behaviors, such as increased hostility, avoidance of certain stimuli or places, uncontrollable sobbing, or heightened impulsivity and self-harming tendencies:

Mrs. Locke sets down her marker,
tells us to read page 109

.....
As soon as the door shuts,
my tics start up again.

Forwardbackup
forwardbackup
clap-clap tip-tap!

Eyes wander in my direction.
Calm down, Calliope!

I squeeze my body

Tight
Tight
Tight

but it's no use,
they just keep coming,
pelting me like hail in a storm
until I'm dented up.

I glance at page 109,
try to read,

but the words blur together
under drops of rain from my eyes (156-7)

Efficient communication via behavioral expression requires highly skilled personnel support and therapists who are proficient in identifying behavioral patterns associated with trauma. This is manifested in the novel by means of friendship. Calliope finds in friendship a kind of therapy that enables her to confront her syndrome and society as well. The therapeutic effect is reflected in the way narration is transformed from short running on sentence written in such a separated way into one block paragraphs that stand for the character's capability of coping with her syndrome:

Calli laughs. And the sound of it makes my stomach feel normal again. When we reach the doors to our apartments, I don't want to go inside. Calli's like a two-thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle that I want to put together. There are so many questions I want to ask. But my mother knocks on the window and waves for me to come inside. She probably needs help setting up for tonight.(93)

What is distinguished about Jinsong is that he accepts Calliope's disability and coexists with it—a matter that significantly enables Calliope to dream about their coming meeting. She starts to think how they can: "have picnics tell jokes share secrets pass notes have fun." (114) It is not only friendship that support her, there is the teacher as well who tries to normalize her tics in an attempt to save her from her powerlessness and stigmatization: "Calliope."

She says my name right!

"If a person needs to yawn,
they yawn.

If a person needs to sneeze or cough,
they do." (173)

Careful examination of the quotation above may lead one to think about how bodies are influenced by language, primarily via the structure of representation and the many social ideologies that rely on this structure. Disability exposes with great force the

constraints imposed on bodies by social codes and norms. This is confirmed by Tobin Siebers's *Disability Theory* (2011):

Obviously, in this sense, disability looks socially constructed. It is tempting, in fact, to see disability exclusively as the product of a bad match between social design and some human bodies, since this is so often the case. But disability may also trouble the theory of social construction. (57)

This is exactly what Calli decides to revolt against at the end of the novel. She decides that she will no more be a "freak show", quoting Rosemarie Garland-Thomson:

"I'm sick of trying to hide my tics.

I'm sick of moving around all the time.

I'm sick of you switching boyfriends.

I'm sick of you taking things away

my hair

my home

my friends

my life.

MY HAIR is MY HAIR (319)

Calliope is no more imprisoned in her inner self. The above quote clearly reflects her refusal to be a passive receiver to what society demands her to accept. She frankly admits that her Tourette syndrome is part of her identity and society has to accept her and normalize her disability instead of stigmatizing it:

"I have a neurological disorder called Tourette syndrome.

Maybe you've heard of it?

Sometimes I make faces or noises that I don't mean to make.

So ... if you happen to hear me croak like a frog,

just ignore me,

okay

Ignorance in the above quote does not entail passive connotations, but rather a positive one in a sense that it is a call for acceptability and normalizing what is unnormalized by society. Many social constructionists believe that it is very hard to look beyond the oppressive structures of contemporary society to any particular individual, and even in rare cases, they are able to do so. A body that is on the threshold of discovering new forms of pleasure, new applications for itself, and increased strength is often one that feels and looks wonderful.

Conclusion

Disability literature and its criticism imply interdisciplinary discourses in a sense that they gather under their umbrella aspects and concepts related to psychological realism, feminism, trauma, and power relations. This is recognized in *Forget Me Not's* nature of conflict, portrayal of the disabled character and the way it acts and reacts to social forces that label it according to stereotypical standards. As such, the novel is a deviation from the frame of implicit negative representation of disabled individuals as it gives voice to those who are treated as subalterns; those who can never be given the voice to speak about and for themselves. This speakability is manifested in an innovative style of narration that relied heavily upon the collaborative relationship between content and form so as to present a kind of rhetoric that is persuasive in all its details. The novel, furthermore, implies a dialogical language so as to feature a kind of character and a kind of experience that can never be one dimensional. The novel, therefore, aims at healing the wounds of disability and raising the collective consciousness about those who aim at achieving self actualization in life's journey. For this reason, the novel adopts the structure of seasons metaphor; it is this metaphor that highlights how one can resist life's obstacles and overcome them.

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