

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Disability as a Socio-cultural Construct

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in English**

By

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March, 2009

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Letter of Recommendation

Miss Pratima Sharma has completed her thesis entitled "Disability as a Socio-cultural Construct" under my supervision. She carried her research from June 2008 to March 2009. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Disability as a Socio-cultural Construct,” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Pratima Sharma, has been approved by the research committee.

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Acknowledgements

I am very much delighted to express my most heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Mr Saroj Ghimire for his scholarly guidance, genuine suggestions, warm responses and, of course, for his constant encouragement for bringing this thesis into its present form.

I am equally grateful to Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Head of the Department of the CDE, Tribhuvan University, for his kind cooperation, advice and encouragement to keep my work going. I would like to acknowledge my debt to Dr. Sanjeev Uprety for providing me scholarly suggestions and genuine guidance.

I am thankful to my teachers Mr Sharad Chandra Thakur, Mr Sadan Raj Adhikari and Mr. Pushpa Raj Acharya for their inspiration and helpful suggestions. I am very much thankful to my friend Pravat and others for their valuable suggestions and persistent encouragement to carry out the task.

Ultimately, I am most grateful and deeply indebted to all my family members for their deep inspiration, moral support and greater emotional encouragement throughout my academic years in the University.

Pratima Sharma

March, 2009

Abstract

This thesis talks about the existence of physical or mental disability in literary discourse constructed by so called “able” that contribute in devaluating, stigmatizing those who do not meet the criteria defined by the able. My argument is that, disability is not an inborn human weakness or a misfortune but a politico-cultural construct of the disability experience as such. Lucy Grealy in “Pony Party”, Nancy Mairs in “Carnal Act”, Barbara Rosenblum in “Living with an Unstable Body”, and Ved Mehta in “Bells” frankly recount their experiences of what it means for them to be disabled. These texts seek to argue that individuals with disabilities may experience an existential crisis that may be triggered by the stigma related to having a disability, as well as by conditions created by disability itself.

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