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Fictions of Disability
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Disability Lexicon

- 1. Innocent** – If they are disabled then they have to be innocent, just like a child. They have to let others take advantage of them. An example of this is when Slim’s eyes fallowed Lennie out of the door and he said, “Jesus,” “He's jes' like a kid, ain't he” to what George responded, “Sure, he's jes like a kid. There ain't no more harm in him than a kid neither, except he's so strong” (44-45). They both treated Lennie as a kid; even though, he looked nothing like a child. All due to Lennie behavior and intellectual impairment.
- 2. Loneliness** – People with disabilities are expected to feel lonely or to be lonely in life. An example of this is Merrick and the way that Treves talked about him “...he possessed an acute sensibility and worse than all a romantic imagination that I realized the overwhelming tragedy of his life” (185). Treves saw the fact that Merrick was sensible and romantic as a tragedy because he thought that Merrick would always be alone due to his disfigured face.
- 3. Violent** – If you are disable and you are violent, you must be possessed. But because you are disable you must be violent. This reminded me of the story “No Face” by Junot Diaz where a motor driver yells, “What the hell are you doing? You haven’t started eating cats, have you?” while another joined in, “He’ll be eating kids next” (2). Just because Ysrael was disable people saw him as a violent individual, in fact they saw him as a monster.
- 4. Human** – People with disabilities are not considered human being. They are viewed as animal, monster or objects. An example of this is when Treves said, “Here was a man in the heyday of youth who was so vilely deformed that everyone he met confronted him

with a look of horror and disgust” (185). Practically, he explained how people who met Merrick saw him as a horrifying monster and for this reason he wasn’t considerate a human.

5. **Barriers** – They are expected to overcome their barriers in order to succeed in life. This reminded me of a quote from Paul K. Longmore in his theoretical text where he said, “both fictional and nonfictional stories convey the message that success or failure in living with a disability results almost solely from the emotional choices, courage, and character of the individual” (139). In other words, if you are disabled you have to have the determination to overcome any barriers and if you don’t then you are not going to get anywhere.
6. **Stupid** – People with disability are not expected to be smart. They are supposed to be unintelligent or slow. An example of this is when Treves mentioned, “It was not until I came to know that Merrick was highly intelligent...” (185). He wasn’t expecting Merrick to be intelligent at all due to his physical disability.
7. **Curiosity** – People with disabilities make “normal” people curious about their disabilities, and because of that they have to let them see. This reminded of the story “Ysrael” by Junot Diaz where Rafa said, “I wonder how much of Ysrael’s face is gone” (9). Rafa was so curious about looking at Ysrael’s face, just because Ysrael wore a mask to cover his disfigured face.
8. **Monstrosity** – It is not always used to describe the behavior of a person with disability, but to describe their appearance. An example of this is Merrick/The elephant man who was “taken about the country to be exhibited as a monstrosity and an object of loathing” (185).

9. Inspirational – People with disabilities are used as a tool to make us feel good about ourselves. An example of this is when I watched the Reel Shorts films, I found all the films inspirational and makes me think about how fortunate I am. Moreover, that was exactly the purpose of them.

10. Objectification – Because they are disabled, they must be degraded to a simple object. To something that you can gain or take something out of. Once again, a good example of this is Merrick who is “taken about the country to be exhibited as a monstrosity and an object of loathing” (185). Merrick had an owner who made money out of exhibiting him.