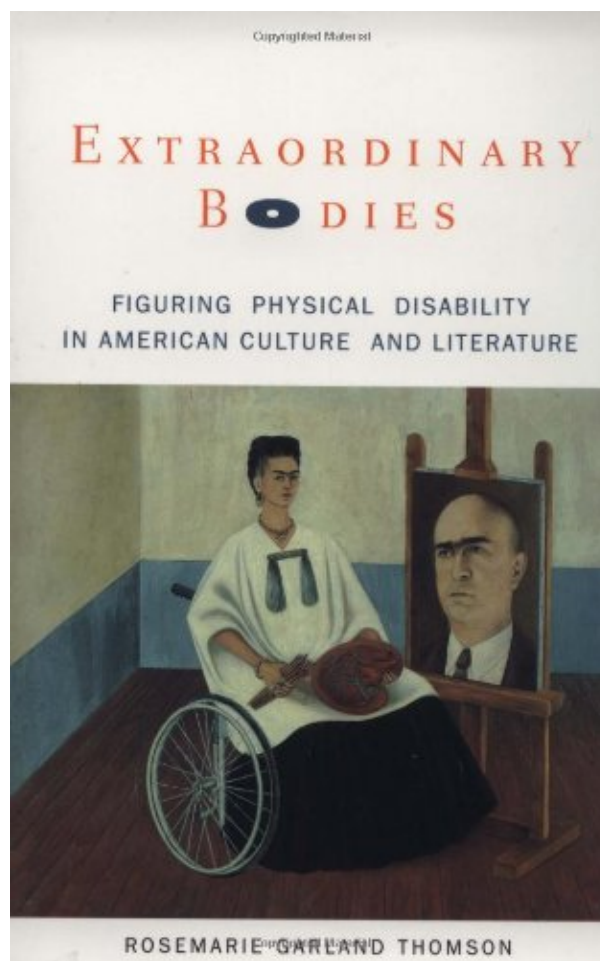


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PHYSICAL DISABILITY IN AMERICAN
CULTURE AND LITERATURE BY
ROSEMARIE GARLAND THOMSON**



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Review

A well-written and provocative beginning to a conversation about disability that is long overdue among scholars in literary and cultural studies.

Review

Provides complex answers to the puzzle of American images of disabilities from the nineteenth century to the present. This is a solid, useful book which all readers interested in the relationship between society and culture must read.

(Sander L. Gilman, University of Chicago)

From the Back Cover

As the first major critical study to examine literary and cultural representations of physical disability, *Extraordinary Bodies* situates disability as a social construction, shifting it from a property of bodies to a product of cultural rules about what bodies should be or do. Rosemarie Garland Thomson examines disabled figures in sentimental novels such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Rebecca Harding Davis's *Life in the Iron Mills*, African-American novels by Toni Morrison and Audre Lorde, and the popular cultural ritual of the freak show.

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Inaugurates a new field of disability studies by framing disability as a minority discourse rather than a medical one, revising oppressive narratives and revealing liberatory ones. The book examines disabled figures in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Rebecca Harding Davis's *Life in the Iron Mills*, in African-American novels by Toni Morrison and Audre Lorde, and in the popular cultural ritual of the freak show.

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By Mia Consalvo

Rosemarie Garland Thomson has written a book that is groundbreaking and essential reading for anyone interested in the fields of disability theory, disability studies, and literary criticism. She has skillfully examined how the figure of the disabled body has been used in literature in different periods as a marker or boundary line for defining what the "normal" body is or should be. The disabled figure operates to displace anxiety from more "normal" folks, and in the process shows how what we consider to be normal functioning changes across historical periods and cultures. Thomson also compares the disabled figure to the cyborg, as both are figures that are not seen as "natural," and both are places/signifiers where we can then interrogate what the natural is, has been thought to be, and what it could include. This is an excellent book, and should not be missed.

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Extraordinary book

By Amazon Customer

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