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Rosemarie garland thomson extraordinary bodies pdf

North American Literary Criticism is a field of study that has been shaped by the work of Rosemarie Garland Thomson. Her book "Extraordinary Bodies" is considered a cornerstone text in the field, which she established with its publication in 1997. The book reframes disability as a minority discourse rather than a medical one, adding depth to oppressive narratives and revealing new, liberatory ones. The book's approach has led to new ways of looking at texts and their depiction of the body. It has also considered pop culture artifacts like freak shows as reflections of community rites and fears. Additionally, Garland-Thomson elevated the status of African-American novels by Toni Morrison and Audre Lorde. How do I cancel my subscription? Simply head over to the account section in settings and click on “Cancel Subscription” - it’s as simple as that. After you cancel, your membership will stay active for the remainder of the time you’ve paid for. Learn more here. How can I download books? All mobile-responsive ePub books are available to download via the app. Most PDFs are also available to download and we're working on making the final remaining ones downloadable now. Learn more here. What is the difference between the pricing plans? Both plans give you full access to the library and all of Perlego’s features. The only differences are the price and subscription period: With the annual plan you’ll save around 30% compared to 12 months on the monthly plan. Despite often being overlooked, the concept of corporeal otherness, encompassing "monstrosity," "mutilation," "deformation," "crippledness," or "physical disability," is crucial to American self-creation. These extraordinary figures are as vital as those representing gendered, racial, ethnic, and sexual differences that underpin the norm. This text aims to broaden our understanding of bodily identity by reframing "disability" as a culture-bound difference akin to race, gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality. By introducing the "cripple," "invalid," and "freak" into discussions about deconstructing figures like the mulatto, primitive, queer, and lady, I seek to challenge cultural norms and interrogate representation conventions. Drawing from postmodernism's assertion that margins constitute centers, this analysis scrutinizes the disabled figure as a paradigm of deviance to expose assumptions supporting seemingly neutral norms. I explore how disability intersects with discourses of race, gender, and sexuality at sites like freak shows, sentimental fiction, and black women's novels, revealing how bodily diversity acquires cultural meanings influencing privilege, status, and power distribution. By challenging entrenched assumptions about "able-bodiedness" and "disability," this text seeks to defamiliarize identity categories by showing how the physically disabled are constructed through narratives of exclusion. Disability is not a fixed characteristic, but rather a social construct that depends on how bodies deviate from cultural norms. This understanding is evident in the Americans with Disabilities Act, which recognizes that disability is a matter of perception and subjective judgment. The definition relies on comparing individual bodies to unstated norms, which are culturally determined and influenced by expectations about human form and function. The differences between stairs and ramps for wheelchair users or printed information for blind persons illustrate how cultural standards can create "impairments" that impact daily life. Similarly, beauty, independence, fitness, competence, and normalcy serve as cultural gatekeepers that exclude and disable certain bodies while affirming others. Even though the law defines disability in terms of function, physical form and appearance impose limits on many people. Laws restricting visibly disabled individuals from public spaces, for instance, highlight how social relationships shape our understanding of disability. Ultimately, extraordinary bodies are not defined by inherent flaws but rather by social interactions that legitimize certain norms and impose inferiority on others. the way people with bodies that don't fit the norm are treated in American culture is deeply connected to how the "normal" person is represented. By looking at how disabled people are portrayed, we can also see what makes up the idealized image of the American self. The disabled figure is often seen as a stark contrast to the normal person, with their own set of rules and expectations. This book aims to explore how social identities, like being valued or devalued, shape our understanding of bodies that don't conform to norms. Conformity is usually rewarded, while deviance is punished. Cultural differences between those who are considered ordinary and those who are not create a strict hierarchy. Those who don't fit the norm become "spectacles" that highlight their difference, while those who do fit in get to live in a more neutral space. The disabled figure, like others who are labeled as outsiders, is given meaning beyond its physical appearance. They are often used to illustrate what it means to be "other", and this can lead to social exclusion. By examining the disabled figure, we also need to consider the concept of the normate - a person who represents themselves as the ultimate human being by embracing certain cultural norms and characteristics. However, if we try to define the normate by removing all the traits that make up its identity, we're left with a very narrow definition that only applies to a small group of people. The concept of the normate subject position is crucial to understanding social identities that are linked to physical differences. Goffman's sketch of a normative human being, however, overlooks femaleness as if it were irrelevant. This has significant implications for how we view and interact with others who do not fit this idealized mold. The idea of the normate subject position is particularly relevant in discussions around disability, where cultural visibility often serves to obscure and neutralize the normative figure that disabled individuals are seen to deviate from. Theorizing disability involves examining the social processes and discourses that produce both the normate and its companion figures, as well as the complex relationships between these entities. Part 2 of this book delves into how representations deploy disabled figures in intricate, often paradoxical ways, focusing on female figures due to their close ties with gender otherness and feminization. By analyzing sites like the freak show, sentimental fiction, and black women's liberatory novels, it becomes clear that disability functions as a multivalent trope, capable of being both oppressive and liberating. This analysis aims to reveal new possibilities for signification in how we read corporeal differences, moving beyond the simple dichotomy of deviance and highlighting the complex intersections between disability and other social identities. The representation of disabled characters in literature is often limited and stereotype-prone, perpetuating negative attitudes towards disability. In contrast, authors like Twain and Dickens have created sympathetic portrayals of disabled individuals, yet these are largely exceptions rather than the norm. Disability is frequently used as a plot device or symbolic metaphor, reducing complex experiences to simplistic tropes. The power of literature lies in its ability to shape perceptions, but when it comes to disability, this can be misused to perpetuate stigma and misconceptions. This article aims to explore how disability is represented in texts, highlighting the social dynamics at play and the ways in which these representations can both reflect and distort the experiences of real people living with disabilities. When depicting characters in social relations, literary works inevitably fall short of accurately reproducing the complexity of real-life interactions. Characters are often reduced to a few defining characteristics, creating an illusion of reality that is far from the intricate and nuanced context of actual human experiences. Textual descriptions can be overly influential, relying on what is explicitly stated while omitting or erasing other factors that might complicate or mitigate these characterizations. Disabilities, in particular, are often reduced to visual cues that signal specific meanings rather than being treated as multifaceted aspects of a person's identity. Literary texts thus tend to make disabled characters into caricatures or stereotypes by stripping them of normalizing contexts and emphasizing their disability as a singular, defining trait. This process is not merely a matter of inaccuracy but also relies on cultural assumptions that fill in the gaps of missing details. Representation in literature depends more on what people perceive as probable rather than what is actually real. The reliance on probability over reality can lead to caricatures and stereotypical portrayals that shape how we perceive and understand different groups, including those with disabilities.