



Cinema Of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies

Martin F. Norden

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"Offers an historically detailed examination of how Hollywood has depicted the physically disabled experience . . . thoughtfully argued and well documented. . . . Anyone interested in how mainstream movies have shaped our images of the world ought to carefully read this fine book." --Douglas Gomery, author of *The Hollywood Studio System* "I enjoyed this book from its terrific title to its skillful interweaving of movie history with disability history. . . . It makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of where America gets its myths and stereotypes of disability." --Joseph Shapiro, author of *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* Filmmakers have often encouraged us to regard people with physical disabilities in terms of pity, awe, humor, or fear--as "Others" who somehow deserve to be isolated from the rest of society. In this first history of the portrayal of physical disability in the movies, Martin Norden examines hundreds of Hollywood films (and notable international ones), finds their place within mainstream society, and uncovers the movie industry's practices for maintaining the status quo--keeping people with disabilities dependent and "in their place." Norden offers a dazzling array of physically disabled characters who embody or break out of these stereotypes that have both influenced and been symptomatic of society's fluctuating relationship with its physically disabled minority. He shows us "sweet innocents" like Tiny Tim, "obsessive avengers" like Quasimodo, variations on the disabled veteran, and many others. He observes the arrival of a new set of stereotypes tied to the growth of science and technology in the 1970s and 1980s, and underscores movies like *My Left Foot* and *The Waterdance* that display a newfound sensitivity. Norden's in-depth knowledge of disability history makes for a particularly intelligent and sensitive approach to this long-overlooked issue in media studies. Martin F. Norden teaches film as a professor of communication at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He has co-authored *Movies: A Language in Light* and has written many articles on moving-image media.

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