



# **The Fantasy of Disability: Images of Loss in Popular Culture (Interdisciplinary Disability Studies)**

*Jeffrey Preston*

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What are the unconscious fantasies circulating in representations of disability? What role do these fantasies play in defining the condition of disability? What can these fantasies teach us about human vulnerability writ large?

*The Fantasy of Disability* explores how popular culture texts, such as *Degrassi: The Next Generation* and *Glee*, fantasize about what life with a physical disability must be like, while at the same time exerting tremendous pressure on disabled individuals to conform their identity and behaviour to fit within the margins of these societally perpetuated archetypes. Rather than merely engaging with how disability is represented, though, this text investigates how representations of disability reveal their nondisabled producers to be perpetually anxious subjects, doomed to fear not just the disabled subject but the very reality of disability lurking within.

Situated at the nexus of disability studies, media studies and psychology, this text presents an innovative way of analyzing representations of disability in popular culture, inverting the psychoanalytic gaze back upon the nondisabled to investigate how disability can become a lens through which to interrogate the normative subject.

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