



## The Body Silent: The Different World of the Disabled

By Robert F. Murphy



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**"The most powerful book of its kind I've ever read.... Extraordinary powers of observation, generalization, and depth."?**Oliver Sacks, author of *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat*

Winner of the Columbia University Lionel Trilling Award. Robert Murphy was in the prime of his career as an anthropologist when he felt the first symptom of a malady that would ultimately take him on an odyssey stranger than any field trip to the Amazon: a tumor of the spinal cord that progressed slowly and irreversibly into quadriplegia. In this gripping account, Murphy explores society's fears, myths, and misunderstandings about disability, and the damage they inflict. He reports how paralysis?like all disabilities?assaults people's identity, social standing, and ties with others, while at the same time making the love of life burn even more fiercely.



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**The Body Silent: The Different World of the Disabled** By Robert F. Murphy **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### From Library Journal

The author, a well-known cultural and field anthropologist at Columbia University, was diagnosed as having an incurable spinal cord tumor in 1976 at age 52. He is now essentially paralyzed from the neck down. Within this framework in which his physical self of locomotion and effect loses all function he relates his own odyssey into "selfhood and sentiment." Far more than a bittersweet first-person account of chronic illness, this is a masterfully written examination of the role of the disabled in society. The author draws upon the relevant literature, history, sociology, anthropology, and psychology as a basis for his views and his means of coping. This powerful and eye-opening commentary is highly recommended for social scientists, health care personnel, and informed and interested laypersons. Mark L. Dembert, M.D., Navy Environmental Health Ctr., Norfolk, Va.

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#### Review

The most powerful book of its kind I've ever read.... Extraordinary powers of observation, generalization, and depth. -- *Oliver Sacks, author of The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat*

Will keep the reader riveted.... Rigorous, haunting, and true. -- *Kirkus Reviews*

[Murphy's] contributions to the popular literature of the disabled will surely rank among the highest to date. - - *L. Daniel Myers, American Anthropologist*

#### About the Author

Robert F. Murphy (1924-1990) was professor of anthropology at Columbia University and the author of many articles and books.

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##### Dean Green:

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**James Anderson:**

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