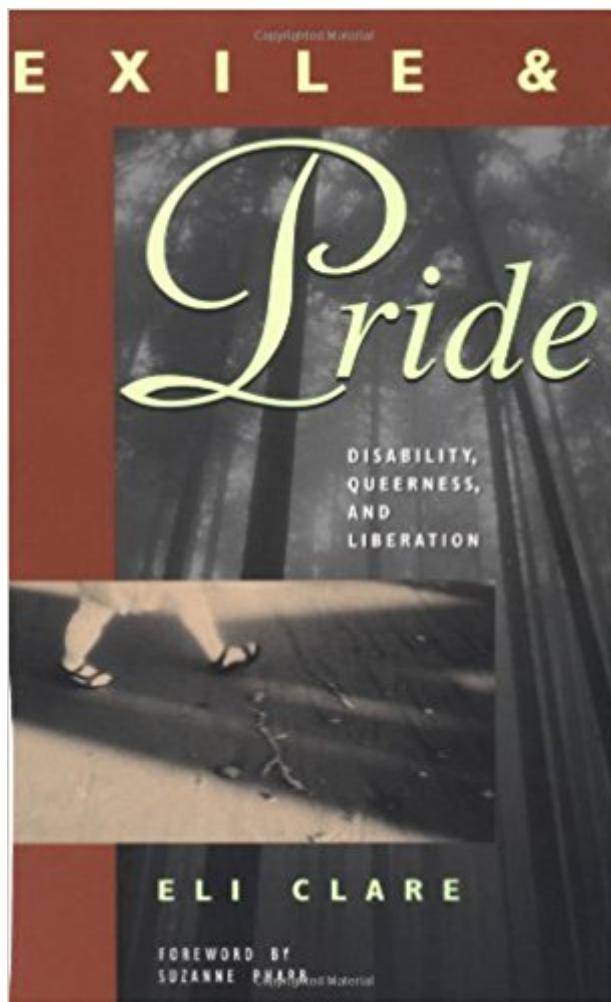


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# Exile And Pride: Disability, Queerness And Liberation



## Synopsis

Contents The Mountain 1. Place Clearcut: Explaining the Distance Losing Home Clearcut: Brutes and Bumper Stickers Clearcut: End of the Line Clearcut: Casino 2. Bodies Freaks and Queers Reading Across the Grain Stones in My Heart, Stones in My Pockets An Excerpt from Exile and Pride By Eli Clare Draft Version: Please do not quote THE MOUNTAIN! A Metaphor The mountain as metaphor looms large in the lives of marginalized people, people whose bones get crushed in the grind of capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy. How many of us have struggled up the mountain, measured ourselves against the mountain, failed on the mountain, lived in the shadow of the mountain, hit our heads on glass ceilings, tried to climb the class ladder, lost the fight against assimilation, struggled our way toward that phantom called normality? We hear from the summit that the world is the best from up there. Hear that we are lazy, stupid, weak, ugly, that we live at the bottom precisely because we are those things. We decide to climb that mountain, or make a pact that our children will climb it. The climbing turns out to be unimaginably difficult. We are afraid; every time we look ahead we can find nothing remotely familiar or comfortable. We lose the trail. Our wheelchairs get stuck. We speak the wrong languages with the wrong accents, wear the wrong clothes, carry our bodies the wrong ways, ask the wrong questions, love the wrong people. And it's goddamn lonely up there on the mountain. We decide to stop climbing and build a new house right where we are. Or we decide to climb back down to the people we love where the food, the clothes, the dirt, the sidewalk, the steaming asphalt under our feet, our crutches all feel right. Or we find the path again, decide to continue climbing only to have the very people who told us how wonderful life is at the summit booby trap the trail. They burn the bridge over the impassable canyon. They redraw our topo maps so that we end up walking in circles. They send their goons-those working-class and poor people they employ as their official brutes-to push us over the edge. Maybe we get to the summit but p

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

At long last, an essay on the politics and poetics of queer disability. Eli Clare, a poet with cerebral palsy, movingly describes her attempt to climb Mount Adams--not, she points out, as a "supercrip," like the boy without hands who bats .486 on his Little League team, but just as an impaired person who loves to hike: a story about ableism rather than disability. Avoiding easy answers and journalistic sunshine, she recounts the story of the fight for disabled access, touching on the history of the freak show. She tracks the origins of her own tenacity and self-knowledge to her rural Oregon upbringing and the conflicting personality of her father--who sexually abused her, but also taught her how to frame a house, how to use a chainsaw. "I think of the words crip, queer, freak, redneck," Clare remarks. "None of these are easy words. They mark the jagged edge between self-hatred and pride, the chasm between how the dominant culture views marginalized peoples and how we view ourselves, the razor between finding home, finding our bodies, and living in exile, living on the metaphoric mountain." --Regina Marler

"Eli Clare writes with the spirit of a poet and the toughness of a construction worker. The passion and skill of [his] writing will draw you inside a complex life and more deeply inside yourself." (Jewelle Gomez, author of *The Gilda Stories*) "Exile and Pride is a call to awareness, an exhortation for each of us to examine our connection to and alienation from our environment, our sexuality, and each other." (Kenny Fries, author of *Body, Remember: A Memoir*) "The books that move us most are the ones that help us make sense of our experience, that take pieces of what we already know and put it together with new insights, new analysis, enabling us to form a fresh vision of ourselves and our lives. For me, Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider* and Adrienne Rich's *On Lies, Secrets and Silence* were such books, and there were significant others along the way. And now there's Eli Clare's *Exile and Pride*." (Suzanne Pharr, author of *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*) "Eli Clare's *Exile and Pride* . . . challenge[s] us to think beyond identity politics. This set of nine interconnected essays defies categorization in its exploration not only of queerness and disability but also of class, race, urban-rural divides, gender identity, sexual abuse, environmental destruction, and the meaning of home. . . . Clare gives us a vision of a broad-based and

intersectional politics that can move us beyond the current divisions of single-issue movements."  
(Rachel Rosenbloom The Women's Review of Books) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Please read this book if you have ever felt sorry for someone or if you really believe some people just don't have what it takes. Then be willing to question what you think you know for sure and reality will appear.

Eli Clare's book is brilliant, poignant, controversial, pulls no punches, and will forcibly spread your mind open. I highly recommend it.

Clare weaves personal experiences with political ideologies--clarifying connecting issues and pointing out the similarities and challenges that we face in working through them. This book struck me at emotional and mental levels and has left me with a great deal to think about. One excellent aspect is how she explains that solutions may never be as simple as we want them to be, but taking the time to understand multiple stories and multiple levels of truth will help us to reach new heights of achievement and equality. I would also strongly recommend *Pushing the Limits*, ed by Shelley Tremain and *Restricted Access*, ed by Victoria Brownworth--both collections of works by a diverse group of queer women with disabilities.

Amazing read. Remarkable images, metaphors, and ways of thinking. This book changed me

I've only read parts of this book, but one author stood out to me. Eli Clare has a great sense of humor in writing about discourses of disability and sexuality. He was able to open my eyes to a sexual minority that's rarely talked about in dominant society/culture in a very humorous, yet serious way. I highly suggest this book to anyone who wants to learn more about disability and sexuality. It helped me view disabled individuals as autonomous people who are entitled to exercising sexual agency.

**Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation**  
Review of Eli Clare's Book by Julie Ann Racino  
Eli Clare's book represents one in a genre of literature in disability studies (e.g., Brown, 2014, autobiography), supported by the government, independent living, and university sectors on the life experiences and perspectives on community and world issues by "parents" (e.g., parent-professionals) and "people with disabilities" (e.g., now at the UN Convention on Persons with

Disabilities, 2006). However, the expectation was that these groups (e.g., university sector) would be able to "use" this information to better quality life in the community through the avenues cited in the book such as personal assistance services (PAS) or her life as professionally constructed or thought about as "overcoming childhood abuse" (e.g., Garbarino & Eckenrode, 1997). Eli Clare's writing is superb, and she entwines an engaging story of environment in the context of jobs, and a world now becoming known in the world of dykes and women's "pro sex" and "anti-violence" feminism (some thought this was the women's movement, see, Women's Hall of Fame), and the remarkable influence of the independent living movement and its leaders on the creativity and perseverance in her life. She shines through!! Though I've never enjoyed being called part of the "straight world", I'm delighted with a playful sexuality, the movement of identity (e.g., identity politics) and resilience (represented in the literature), and feelings of pride instead of shame and isolation (p. 98). For my own work in public administration and disability, I agree that I recommend payment for independent living (i.e., cerebral palsy), support entrepreneurship, education and writing, and am delighted at the grassroots efforts to reform old-fashioned health care systems such as Medicaid for the community (Olson, 2010; Racino, 2014). I'd like to explore more the school systems that allowed a 30-year, apparent coverup of childhood abuse in its teacher credentialled systems, similar to what I found in 2005 at assault by teachers, and somehow exited as "mainstreaming" (e.g., Dr. Carol Berrigan and inclusion who is inspirational in university teacher preparation) in progress. Eli Clare is congratulated for her academic work with her professors in examining views through a qualitative research stance, understanding and illuminating the concepts of gender with our feminist professors (e.g., Dr. Rannveig Traustadottir), bringing through studies by Dr. Robert Bogdan in freaks (now more commonly crips, to queers and other "highly charged" and "ugly names", p.93), and shedding light, understanding and analysis on transgender, transsexual, and lesbianism in a totality (now to same sex marriage equality laws), and the pink triangle of the Holocaust camps (from the 1940s; my own visit in 1991 to the former Czechoslovakia). She wonders why "we" were not clearly taught about "old growth forest" as being essential in the context of the Nation's logging industry (See, Woodsmen's Fair in Booneville, New York, 2015) and environmentalism (and the replacement with the rural prison industrial complex)! Eli Clare in 1999 had her pulse on the major issues still to come with the environment now at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations and global climate change and the environment as part of Sustainable, Inclusive and Equitable Cities and Communities! Thank you to the disability studies programs, including Steven J. Taylor, founder of the Syracuse University program, who authored .com's Acts of Conscience, World War II, Mental Institutions and Religious Objectors (Taylor, 2009) through Syracuse University Press.

I found this book really interesting. Her writing style is beautiful, and she has an almost poetical style in places. Eli is a disabled woman. She has cerebral palsy. She talks about the exclusion she experienced - the exile - in a rural town in Oregon. She also talks about being abused, and this deeply personal story is very powerful. Eli also feels in exile because she is an environmentalist - from a rural background. Among environmentalist, she feels an outsider, since most of them are city people. Eli is also a lesbian. She has felt excluded from that community too. Although I haven't done it justice by listing all the things she feels exile from, this is not a negative book. It is actually a very positive book - it talks about developing pride in who you are, accepting yourself, being a person with lots of layers to their personality, etc. Eli also talks about wider issues - like the social model of disability, pressure to be a "supercrip", disclosing rape and being rejected by your family when you do so, etc. When I finished the book, I decided to read it again, straight away so that I didn't forget what it said. (I have memory problems). I live in Australia, and this woman lives in Oregon. But after reading this book, I just wished I could meet her. And I think that's one of the best recommendations you can give a book!

A seriously amazing book. This opens your eyes to so many things in the past and present and Eli Clare writes wonderfully. Take the time to read this, it's worth it.

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