

How Jewish Women with Disabilities Resist: A Rhetorical Cluster Critical Analysis of *Golem Girl: A Memoir*

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Abstract:

Background on *Golem Girl: A Memoir*

Golem Girl: A Memoir documents the life of Riva Lehrer, a Jewish woman born with spina bifida. She is an artist who is famous for pieces that highlight "the socially challenged body," including "representations of people whose physical embodiment, sexuality, or gender identity have long been stigmatized" (Lehrer). While the memoir received many positive reviews and was widely popular, a cluster critical analysis of its rhetorical features has yet to be conducted.

According to Kirkus Reviews (2020), Lehrer's "evolving self-awareness as an artist, a disabled person, and a woman with a complicated sexuality are well-explored, and her prose ranges from light and entertaining to intellectually and emotionally serious and always memorable." In another review, Liz Grauel (2023) wrote, "There is a deeply intimate quality to Lehrer's writing; she expertly mingles her history and geography with the hard facts and social realities of disability in America: medical malfeasance, exploitation, sexual abuse, workplace discrimination, educational inequity, street harassment, and exclusion of myriad varieties" (p. 2). I add to this praise by conducting a cluster critical analysis of Lehrer's worldview on disability. I begin with a literature review of the existing scholarship on rhetoric and disability memoirs.

Then, I perform a cluster critical analysis of four keywords, explain the keywords' contributions to rhetorical theory, discuss the practical applications of my findings, and finally provide a conclusion.