

HONORS CAPSTONE PRESENTATION SCRIPT

INTELLECTUAL AND PHYSICAL DISABILITY: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS ON MEDIA REPRESENTATION

ASHTYN HARMSSEN & GRACE VIGNERI

INTRODUCTION:

Good afternoon/morning, we are Ashtyn Harmsen and Grace Vigneri. We are both students minoring in Disability Studies here at the University of Wyoming and will be presenting our Honors Capstone Project on disability representation in the media. By the end of our presentation, we hope that you all will be able to think critically and reflect on what you thought you knew about disability in the media.

SLIDE 1: Proposing our Research

Our research question looked at how the media and film industry has promoted stereotypes and prejudices about individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities, and have these stereotypes changed throughout history?

Our conjoined research on depictions of physical and intellectual disability in film will explore the evolution of the depiction of disability and disabled individuals in film and media in the United States.

Slide 2:

Intellectual vs. Physical disability

Grace: Intellectual disabilities can be defined as, "a condition characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior that originates before the age of 22" (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities).

Ashtyn: Physical disabilities can be defined as, "A substantial and long-term condition affecting a part of a person's body that impairs and limits their physical functioning, mobility, stamina, or dexterity" ("Types of Physical Disabilities")

Slide 3:

DISABILITY THEORY TERMS TO KNOW

- Ableism: Discrimination and social prejudice against disabled individuals. Ableism defines individuals by their disabilities and considers disabled individuals inferior to those who are able-bodied and/or able-minded.
- Inspiration Porn: Coined by the disability activist Stella Young, this term refers to the portrayal of disabled individuals as being inspirational to able-bodied people, on the basis of their disability.

- Intersectionality: An analytical framework introduced by Black feminist Kimberle Crenshaw that describes how a person's various marginalized identities work together to impact a person.
- Moral Model of Disability: A belief that a person is morally responsible for their own disability or the disability of their own child. Disability is seen as retribution for sins or a manifestation of evil
- Medical Model of Disability: A belief that people are disabled because of their impairments or differences and that these impairments should be 'fixed' or changed medically or with other treatments
- Social Model of Disability: A belief that disability is caused by the way society is organized, rather than an impairment or difference. It looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled individuals.

Slide 4:

Ableism

Can look like...

- **Inaccessibility**
 - Buildings with stairs and no ramps/ elevators
 - Technology services with no text enlargement features or closed captioning
- Asking someone what is '**wrong**' with them.
- Using ableist language such as '**dumb,**' '**lame,**' or '**retarded.**'
- Trying to find a '**cure**' for disability rather than accepting it.
- Thinking that people with disabilities are **less capable.**

(Two images of ableism provided)

Slide 5:

Inspiration Porn

Inspiration porn, as we previously mentioned in the list of terms, is a popular theme that is seen in media depicting individuals with disabilities. While it seems harmless and even supportive of individuals with disabilities at a glance, inspiration porn actually objectifies disability, and offers pity from able-bodied individuals. Able-bodied people look at pictures or instances like this to feel better about themselves rather than actually advocating for individuals with disabilities.

Examples of inspiration porn in film and television may look like able-bodied people idolizing or admiring people with disabilities.

(Three images of 'inspiration porn' are provided)

Slide 6:

COMMON THEMES IN THE MEDIA REGARDING DISABILITY

Regardless of the type of disability, common themes that can be seen across types of media throughout history are:

- Pitiable and pathetic
- Sinister, evil, or criminal

- Better-off dead
- Maladjusted (unable to cope with the demands of a normal social environment)
- The character's own worst enemy
- A burden
- Unable to live a successful life
- 'Supercrip' - possessing the strength to overcome disability
- Child-like & innocent

Slide 7:

Statistics on Disability Representation in Film & Television

- According to the Neilson database, 90,000 films and TV shows premiered over the last century, only 3,000 were tagged as having significant disability themes or content.
- 64% (1,800) of the depictions of disabled characters were in feature films, 16% (448) were in regular series. (Remaining depictions were in other categories like short films, limited series, TV movies or specials.)
- The Neilson database found an increase in the number of productions with disability themes from 41 in 2000 to 150 in 2020.
- The Ruderman recently reported that the percentage of disabled characters in TV who are played by disabled actors grew from 5% in 2016 to 22% for network and 20% for streaming in 2020.
- Only 2 disabled actors have won Oscars for portraying disabled characters: Harold Russel in *The Best Years of Our lives (1946)* and Marlee Matlin in *Children of a Lesser God (1988)*.

(Image of Statistics of Persons with Disabilities is provided)

Slide 8:

Disabilities & The Media: 1950 – 2000

The 1950's in the United States began to see an initial shift regarding disability. Almost all media before this time period portrayed individuals with disabilities as monstrous and non-human. Even with this shift, newer ableist stereotypes during this time period left people with disabilities isolated from society.

In American Film:

- American films with disability themes rose from 16.7% in the 1970's to 43% in the 1990's.
- Psychiatric disabilities were the most frequent disability portrayed over any other type of disability.
- Typical depictions of characters with disabilities were often dependent males, victimized, demonstrating abnormal personalities, unemployed, middle-class, and middle-aged.
- Characters with disabilities were beginning to be depicted as having a major character status, living in the community, considered a member of a family, and were socially related to others.

FILM EXAMPLES - PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

- *Tell Me That You Love Me, Junie Moon (1970)*
- *The Other Side of the Mountain (1965)*
- *My Left Foot – The Story of Christie Brown (1989)*
- *The Waterdance (1992)*

Slide 9:

A Child is Waiting (1963)

A Child is Waiting, starring Judy Garland was one of the first films to depict intellectual disabilities. This film reflects the ways in which mental disabilities were handled and perceived at the time. During this period in disability history, it was common for individuals with intellectual disabilities to be sent to mental hospitals or state institutions where they would live out the rest of their lives. Although this film depicts a very serious and real point in disability history, disabled individuals in the film were not given autonomous and personalized roles. They are used as sources of pity and sadness in order to push an emotional narrative to a largely able-bodied and able-minded audience.

(image of *A Child is Waiting* movie poster is provided)

Slide 10:

Rain Man (1988)

- This was one of the first films to portray autism in a "fascinating way" Although Raymond was shown to be a difficult person to deal with, he was also shown to be charming as well as intellectually and morally superior to his neurotypical brother
- The fact that Raymond had remarkable abilities alongside his disability was a revelation to audiences in 1988
- 34 years later, however, the world has a more concrete idea of what autism truly is, and it is clear that *Rain Man* only showed one small aspect of the wide spectrum
- While this portrayal was positive and "funny", this does not appear to be a significant improvement from "tragic"
- In fact, 'Rain Man' is now a nickname for anyone displaying stereotypical autistic qualities
- Ultimately, this film is a poor representation of autism and pushes a stereotype

(image of *Rain Man* movie poster is provided)

Slide 11:

Intellectual Disabilities and Hollywood: 1980-2010

- *Children of a Lesser God, Rain Man, Born of the Fourth of July, Forrest Gump, The Theory of Everything*. These are just a few examples of the most prominent and critically acclaimed films released between the late 1980s through the mid 2000s with lead disability characters and powerful disability themes.
- During this time, writing or playing a disabled character would almost guarantee nominations for Oscars and other rewards as well as positive popular and critical regard.
- According to Chivers (2016), "In 2015, one-third of the "Best Actor" Oscar awards since 1988 were awarded to actors playing a character with an intellectual or physical disability" (p. 11)

The problem with this: Why is able-bodied & able-minded individuals portraying disabled characters rather than hiring a disabled actor?

Slide 12:

SEVERAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO THE POPULARITY OF DISABILITY MOVIES DURING THIS "BOOM PERIOD" (1980-2010)...

- Novelty: Audiences, including individuals with disabilities, were amazed to see disabled characters appearing in major movies in any way, much less in lead roles
- Big Emotions: In most popular film tropes, disability is viewed as a hardship and tragic, while any sort of success with a disability is seen as a heroic triumph. Therefore, films about sympathetic disabled characters overcoming physical and mental hardships draw big emotions out of the audience
- Social Enlightenment: Watching and appreciating these "classic" disability films leaves viewers with a sense of having learned something by becoming more aware of an unfamiliar experience.

Slide 13:

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES & THE MEDIA: 2010 – PRESENT DAY

- ❖ The most common stereotype during this time period is **maladjusted**, with the two least common stereotypes being **pitiable/pathetic** and **criminal/evil**.
- ❖ In the top 100-grossing movies of 2016, only 2.7% of characters were depicted with a disability.
- ❖ 25% of media should depict individuals with disabilities in the media to equate for 1 in 4 Americans who have a disability.
- ❖ Slow progress has been made with more accurately portraying and including individuals with disabilities in film and television, but there is much more to be done.

Film Examples:

- Soul Surfer* (2011)
- The Intouchables* (2011)
- Me Before You* (2016)
- Wonder* (2017)
- The Other Side* (2017)
- Hearts of Glass* (2019)

Slide 14:

***Me Before You* (2016)**

Synopsis: Young and quirky Louisa "Lou" Clark (Emilia Clarke) moves from one job to the next to help her family make ends meet. Her cheerful attitude is put to the test when she becomes a caregiver for Will Traynor (Sam Claflin), a wealthy young banker left paralyzed from an accident two years earlier. Will's cynical outlook starts to change when Louisa shows him that life is worth living. As their bond deepens, their lives and hearts change in ways neither one could have imagined ("Me Before You".)

(image of *Me Before You* movie poster is provided)

Issues with the film:

- The main character who is paralyzed (Will Traynor) supports the stereotype that he is better-off dead as a quadriplegic.
- Will Traynor is portrayed as depressed, hateful, views himself as pathetic, and is his own worst enemy.
- Will Traynor is portrayed by an actor who is not paralyzed or has a form of a disability.
- Even when he finds happiness, the main character still chooses to end his life over living as a disabled individual.

Slide 15:

***Wonder* (2017)**

SYNOPSIS: Born with facial differences that, up until now, have prevented him from going to a mainstream school, Auggie Pullman becomes the most unlikely of heroes when he enters the local fifth grade. As his family, his new classmates, and the larger community all struggle to discover their compassion and acceptance, Auggie's extraordinary journey will unite them and prove you can't blend in when you were born to stand out ("Wonder").

Issues with the film:

- The actor cast for the main role does not have Treacher Collins Syndrome.

- The movie can be seen as an example of ‘inspiration porn.

What the film did right:

- The main character is an individual with a disability and highlights many challenges that children with disabilities face.
- The film shows the importance of advocating for normal and equal treatment of individuals with disabilities.

(image of *Wonder* movie poster is provided)

Slide 16:

A STUDY ON PHYSICAL DISABILITY IN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

- "Children's television programming warrants special investigation because children's attitudes toward disability play a major role in the successful progression and integration of individuals with disabilities into society" (Dyson, [2005](#)).
- In children's programming, 0.4% of characters possessed a physical disability, meaning that disability is nearly invisible in children's programming.
- Children as young as four distinguish physical disabilities as different and perceive disability as prohibiting one's life.
- Children's attitudes towards individuals with disabilities are viewed less favorably than able-bodied peers.
- These findings suggest that television and media can be a mechanism through which positive or negative attitudes towards disabilities are formed.

(Images of children's film examples are provided)

Slide 16:

REPRESENTATION VS. AUTHENTICITY

- When looking at these eras of disability films, the academy gives actors acclamation for portraying experiences that are perceived as being far outside the norm of humanity
- Disability should not be viewed as "abnormal" or "novel", they are ordinary people with passions, families, talents; they are far more than their disability
- Just because a disability or disabled individuals are featured in television and film does not mean that this representation is **authentic**.

Slide 17:

FILM & TELEVISION: AUTHENTIC CASTING

PEANUT BUTTER FALCON:

After running away from a residential nursing home to pursue his dream of becoming a pro wrestler, a man who has Down syndrome befriends an outlaw who becomes his coach and ally. Starring Zack Gottsagen, an actor with Down Syndrome, these films authentic casting made history as Zack became the first person with Down Syndrome to be a presenter at the Academy Awards.

PEANUT BUTTER FALCON:

Actress Jamie Brewer is a major recurring character in this American anthology horror television series. Not only is Brewer an actress with down syndrome, but her disability is also never even acknowledged in the series, she is simply there for her tremendous acting ability. She has played a wide variety of characters and became the first woman with down syndrome to walk the red carpet at New York Fashion Week.

A QUIET PLACE:

Although this movie is not specifically about disabilities, American Sign Language (ASL) is central in this film and is the primary mode of communication among the characters. This film stars deaf actress Millicent Simmons who plays the part of Regan, the congenitally deaf daughter in the Abbott family. The other cast members learned ASL to ensure the authenticity of this film.

(Images of *Peanut Butter Falcon*, *American Horror Story*, and *A Quiet Place* are provided)

Slide 18:

FILM & TELEVISION: AUTHENTIC CASTING

Actor RJ Mitte, known for his character Walter White on the popular television show *Breaking Bad* has cerebral palsy both on screen and in real life.

Kiera Allen uses a wheelchair both in her own life and as her character Chloe in the 2020 thriller *Run*. In an interview, Allen shared that the film does an excellent job portraying disability, and challenges that individuals face such as inaccessibility. Allen is only the second wheelchair user to star as a lead character in a suspense movie.

(Images of *Breaking Bad*, actor RJ Mitte, and Kierra Allen are provided)

Slid 19:

Compare and Contrast

It is evident that both intellectual and physical disabilities are not only underrepresented in the media & Hollywood, but they are inaccurately represented as well.

- In the late 1900's, intellectual disabilities were more commonly portrayed than physical disabilities.
- 2.3% of all speaking characters from a 2020 study had disabilities.
- 65% of those depicted had physical disabilities.
- 29% had cognitive disabilities.
- 28% had communication disabilities.
- More than two-thirds of the characters with disabilities on screen were male and white.
- Negative stereotypes regarding disability can be seen when depicting both intellectual and physical disabilities.
- Disabilities are often lumped together as “all the same,” and all individuals are stigmatized in one category rather than appreciating individual disabilities.

The lack of intersectionality representation for both physical & intellectual disabilities is **staggering**.

Slide 20:

How Non-Disabled Individuals Can Support Disability in the Media

- The film & television industry must strive for featuring multiple disabled characters who are different races / ethnicities, genders / gender identities, and sexual orientations. Authenticity and intersectional diversity can and should go together, and they mark out the path to higher quality and more genuinely progressive disability films.
- As consumers, we can encourage news outlets, journalists, and Hollywood to use people-first language and to allow people with disabilities to define themselves as individuals first and foremost.
- Viewers can support more television shows and movies that correctly portray and advocate for individuals with disabilities and use authentic casting.
- Education on disability rights and advocacy.

- Support closed-captioning and video descriptions as a standard throughout media production.

- Promote disability as a ‘normal’ quality to possess.

Slide 21:

QUESTIONS?

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Child is Waiting. Directed by Abby Mann. 1963

This 1963 film stars Judy Garland as a music teacher who works at a state mental institution. The film depicts many children with intellectual disabilities who were orphaned because of their disability. It also reflects how disabilities were handled and perceived at this point in history. This film was important to our research because the characters with intellectual disabilities are used as sources of pity and sadness in order to push an emotional narrative to a largely able-bodied and able-minded audience.

Almeida, Susan (2014). *Intellectual Disabilities in the Movies: Reflections about Inclusion. Embracing Inclusive Approach for Children and Youth Special Needs*.

By analyzing cinema through a disability lens, this article discusses how films contribute to and promote stereotypes and prejudices surrounding intellectual disabilities. The stigmas promoted by such films then impact societal attitudes and treatment towards those with intellectual disabilities. This resource will be beneficial to my analysis of the portrayal of intellectual disabilities in cinema as well as Hollywood.

Black, Rhonda S., and Lori Pretes. "Victims and Victors: Representation of Physical Disability on the Silver Screen." *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, vol. 32, no. 1, Mar. 2007, pp. 66–83, doi:10.2511/rpsd.32.1.66.

This article by Rhonda Black and Lori Pretes examines society's overall perception of disability in regards to the portrayal of individuals with physical disabilities in the media. This study analyzed films from 1975 to 2004 that had a main character with a disability

and how these characters were portrayed. This source is useful to our research because it provides multiple film examples within the time period that we are looking at, and provides information on how individuals with disabilities were perceived during that time in the media.

Bond, Bradley J. (2021, July 28). *Study shows more disability stories onscreen, but few disabled actors*. The New York Times. Bond, Bradley J. (2013) Physical Disability on Children's Television Programming: A Content Analysis, *Early Education and Development*, 24:3, 408-418, DOI: [10.1080/10409289.2012.670871](https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2012.670871)

This article by Bradley Bond researches children's perceptions of disability based on television programming. This content analysis provides statistical research on the limited number of children's television shows that portray characters with disabilities. The article summarizes the data taken and examines how the small percentage of disabilities seen in media negatively overall influences children's beliefs and stereotypes regarding disability. This is useful in our research because it provides a correlation with how stereotypes can develop from misrepresentation in media and contribute to ableist ideas even at a young age.

Dahl, Marilyn. "The Role of the Media in Promoting Images of Disability: Disability as Metaphor, the Evil Crip." *Canadian Journal of Communication*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1993, pp. 75- 80. *ProQuest*, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.22230/cjc.1993v18n1a718>.

Marilyn Dahl examines different types of media and how characters with disabilities are portrayed as evil villains. Mass media, as Dahl explains, is one of the most important and effective tools that can persuade individuals when it comes to the topic of disability. This

article begins with analyzing the negative roles characters with disabilities play, then transitioning into an explanation of how there is still much ground to be covered when normalizing disability in the media. This source is useful in our research as it highlights the negative characters that people with disabilities were portrayed as, and how this influenced stereotypes.

Hehir, T. (2007). *Confronting Ableism. Educational Leadership*, 64(5), 8-14.

Hehir's article defines and discusses the term 'ableism' and how these attitudes can harm students. Hehir recommends that educators base special education decisions on the following definition of the purpose of special education: minimizing the impact of disability and maximizing the opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in schooling as well as the community. This resource is beneficial by giving accurate definitions and examples of ableism in the school system and society in general. The topic of ableism is a key term in our research project, so substantial knowledge of this area is essential, which this article provides

Heumann, Judith E, et al. "Road Map for Inclusion: Changing the Face of Disability in Media."

Ford Foundation, <https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/learning/research-reports/road-map-for-inclusion-changing-the-face-of-disability-in-media/>.

In this article, Judith Heumann and colleagues analyze the lack of authentic representation of disability in the media. Examples of intersectionality between different minority groups and the disabled community are provided. Steps for inclusion and promoting change are offered at the end of this article, along with recommendations provided.

Khaleeli, Homa. "RJ Mitte: 'Nothing I Do Will Ever Compare with Breaking Bad'." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 7 Jan. 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2015/jan/07/rj-mitte-walt-jr-nothing-compare-to-breaking-bad-cerebral-palsy>.

Khaleeli from *The Guardian* provides an interview from RJ Mitte discussing his disability in relation to his role on the television show *Breaking Bad*. In his interview, Mitte discusses how his role on the show reflects on his personal life of growing up with cerebral palsy. Mitte also highlights how he is one of the first people he has seen with cerebral palsy or any sort of disability star as a key role in a television program. This article is useful for our research because it provides a firsthand account of an individual with a disability who has a role in media, and how stereotypes regarding disability have influenced him and his career.

Leiderman, Deborah. "Kiera Allen of 'Run' on Upending Disability Stereotypes." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 20 Nov. 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/20/movies/run-kiera-allen-interview.html>.

This *New York Times* article written by Deborah Leiderman interviews Kiera Allen, a lead actress who uses a wheelchair both in real life and in the film *Run*. In this interview, Leiderman provides information on the uncommon theme of having a disabled actor play a lead role in a suspense film. The interview also provides many quotes from Allen on how the film correctly portrays what it is actually like living with a physical disability. This source is useful because it provides a firsthand account of an individual with a physical disability and their experience as an actress in a predominantly ableist film industry.

Lightner, Lisa. (2020). *Ableist Tropes and Characters in American Movies. A Day in Our Shoes*, 14(2),2-6.

Lightner offers numerous examples of ableist tropes found in popular American cinema. These depictions of disabled individuals have subconsciously wired viewers' brains to apply these same tropes to people with disabilities in everyday life. This article sheds light on the way media representations of those with disabilities has resulted in long term damage of accurate representation. Discussing the way ableist media has contributed to offensive and inaccurate representations of individuals with disabilities is a focal point in our research project and this article provides substantial information on the topic.

“Me Before You.” *Rotten Tomatoes*, https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/me_before_you.

This 2016 film is centered around a man who is injured in an accident and becomes paralyzed from the neck down. After acquiring this disability, the character's life is shown to be pitiable, pathetic, and not worth living. This film is useful in our research because it supports numerous negative stereotypes regarding disability in film. While the character falls in love and learns to be happy again, he ultimately decides that his disabled body is still too difficult to bear and ends his own life, supporting the ableist stereotype that lives with disabilities are not worth living.

Norden, Martin F. *The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies:*

[*Front Matter*]. Rutgers University Press, 1994. *Alexander Street*,

https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cdocument%7C3221568.

In this article, Martin Norden examines physical disabilities in film historically in the United States, beginning at the early nineteenth century to the present day. Norden provides a range of stereotypes that are seen in films regarding disability, and how this has influenced ableism in viewers. This source is extremely resourceful because of the range of stereotypes that Norden provides, and how these have influenced the overall representation of disability in the United States.

Pulrang, A. (2020, February 14). *Disability Movies Aren't What They Used to Be. That's Good!* Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewpulrang/2020/02/13/disability-movies-arent-what-they-used-to-be-thats-good/?sh=1b84664e5efa>

In this article, Pulrang Analyzes the popularity of disability films in Hollywood beginning in 1980 and compares these depictions of disabled individuals to modern disability films. Pulrang provides interviews with several prominent individuals in the disability community as well as the film industry. In addition, he offers ideas on how films can improve their representations of disabled individuals and explains what viewers should be aware of when consuming these films.

Rain Man. Directed by Barry Levinson. 1988

This 1988 film is about Charlie Babbit and his relationship with his brother Raymond, a man who has savant syndrome & autism. Although a lighthearted film, *Rain Man* only showed one small aspect of the wide Autism Spectrum. Raymond's character is an exaggerated stereotype. 'Rain Man' is a common nickname for anyone displaying stereotypic Autistic qualities. This film is important to our research by providing an example of a film in disability that was inaccurately represented.

Renwick, Rebecca. (2016). *Rarely Seen, Seldom Heard: People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Mass Media*, 61-75.

Stigmatizing messages and underrepresentation of people with intellectual disabilities within mass media are communicated to vast audiences and have considerable potential to detrimentally affect these individuals. Renwick explores the nature of these representations as well as how they can influence an audience's thinking, emotions, and behaviors. This article will be a considerable asset to my research pertaining to media representation of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Safran, Stephen P. "The First Century of Disability Portrayal in Film: An Analysis of the Literature." *The Journal of Special Education*, vol. 31, no. 4, Jan. 1998, pp. 467–479, doi:[10.1177/002246699803100404](https://doi.org/10.1177/002246699803100404).

In his analysis of literature written by Dr. Stephen Safran, Safran examines media throughout history and how stereotypic depictions have influenced the role of disability in media now. Throughout the journal, Safran examines the portrayal of different disabilities as well as the disability rights perspective on how disability is constructed. This source is beneficial as it examines media dating back to the nineteen fifties, and also provides insight to how individuals supporting disability rights view the media. Stereotypes about disabilities are still currently seen in different types of media today, therefore this source provides an insight to how these stereotypes have changed or stayed the same since these films were released.

Scior, Katrina (2016). *Intellectual Disability and Stigma: Stepping Out from the Margins*.

This book highlights how those with disabilities and their families are affected by stigma and provides a framework on how to tackle intellectual disability stigma across a variety of environments. Scior emphasizes the centrality of self-advocacy in fighting against the stigma of intellectual disabilities. Using frameworks and examples from this book, stigmas surrounding intellectual disabilities can be properly highlighted and analyzed in the context of media representations.

“Wonder.” *Rotten Tomatoes*, <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/wonder>.

This film, produced in 2017, is both a comedic and heartfelt story about a boy with Teacher Collins Syndrome attending public school for the first time. The storyline shows the character evolving from being ashamed of his disability to being proud of himself and being viewed as a hero by his teachers and peers. This film is useful in our research because it provides a recent example of a film regarding disability that is portrayed both positively and negatively. While the storyline is heartfelt and brings awareness to issues such as ableism and bullying, the main character is cast by an individual who does not have a disability and is portrayed as a hero in the storyline for overcoming his fear of having a disability.