

Disability and the Media

Representations

1. Media images and representations may **mediate attitudes and beliefs** towards people with disabilities
2. Including those with mental health conditions as well as physical disabilities
3. Sometimes there is positive framing
4. But often there is **sensationalism or victimisation**

Disabilities

1. There are different ways of thinking about disabilities in the media
2. One way focuses on the **physical body** and the other way looks at **hidden disabilities**

Ideologies of disabilities

1. Stories of disability in the media often tend to see **disabilities as personal** problems that one must overcome
2. Viewers seldom see disabled characters as **multifaceted human beings** for whom physical or other limitations are facts of nature
3. Disability, still, tends not to be shown as **integrated** into a busy and full life
4. So it places those with disabilities into an **'otherness'**

The other

1. Cadwallader argues that disability challenges assumptions about being in the world

The media and images of disability

1. The BBC use **Frank Gardner**, badly injured from a gun attack in 2004, with cutaway shots to his wheelchair
2. There is **signing** on some TV programmes for deaf viewers
3. **Cerrie Burnell**, a CBeebies presenter, was born with one arm

The internet

1. New forms of technology have always had **power to circulate** hostile images of groups and individuals
2. Those targeted have often had far **less power** to circulate replies or position them prominently

Film

1. There have been films which, whilst problematic, have opened up and **challenged the boundaries** of **disabled/abled**
2. For example, the Australian film by Rolf de Heer – **Dance me to my Song** – is a film about the late **Heather Rose** who had **cerebral Palsy**
3. **Michael Noonan** (filmmaker) collaborated with three people with intellectual disabilities
4. To make a film called laughing with the disabled
5. Which has been criticised for **laughing at the disabled**, rather than laughing with them.
6. Especially as that was the film's original name

TV

1. James Partridge from the Changing Faces charity read the Five news lunchtime bulleting for a week
2. Soap operas **Hollyoaks and Emmerdale** have regular appearances for actors with disabilities
3. In 2014 **Call the Midwife** featured **Colin Young (cerebral palsy)** and **Sarah Gordy (Down's syndrome)**
4. They play a couple in a home of the disabled who are forced apart when she becomes pregnant.
5. Both actors say that while things have changed there is still a long way to go
6. Colin Young was told that no one would want to see disabled actors on screen.

Autism and representation

1. Focusing firstly on autism – it is defined as one of a **group of conditions** categorised as a type of developmental disability autism spectrum disorders
2. It includes impairments of social interaction, communication and restricted and repetitive behaviours
3. But it is a **heterogeneous condition** in terms of level and severity
4. There has been an increase in autism related research over the past decade
5. And a similar increase in the number of newspaper articles focusing on autism related topics
6. Often the newspaper and websites, such as the BBC focus **on causes**

Missing voices

1. Study: The **voices** of the individual with **autism is largely silenced** and the focus is on third person accounts of autism
2. News stories were from the **viewpoints of parents, health professionals, academics and journalists**, rather than individuals themselves
3. Adults with autism diagnosis were seldom referred to

4. Autism was presented as a condition **effecting children rather** than adults
5. And therefore appeared to be **infantilised**
6. For example, when Richard and Judy in 2005, recounted their interview **with 26 old Daniel Tammet** in *The Express*
7. He was referred to as a **boy with a rare gift of genius**.

Victims

1. Discourses about autism present it as an **affliction of suffering** and people referred to as **victims**
2. People with autism are referred to as being **vulnerable and dangerous**
3. The autism label is drawn upon to explain **vulnerability, instability** and the potential to be **exploited**
4. Such dehumanisation is also evident in other accounts which suggests that people with autism being to **'another world'**
5. The **othering** process which can include sensationalism

News and Olympics

1. Most media research on sport and elite disabled athletes have been concerned with **issues of representation**
2. Media coverage surrounding the Paralympic Games may be **patronising** and **charitable** in that coverage surrounding the game
3. Often helps to persuade the mythology that Paralympic sport is of **greater purity** than that in the mainstream
4. Access is an issues in media production – sports reporting on mainstream events highlight **both positive and negative elements** of sporting practice
5. Print coverage of Paralympics is almost **exclusively positive**

Cultural Context of Paralympic sport-

1. The **Paralympic movement** – has a complex classification system which categorises the bodies of Paralympic athletes on the basis of the limitation of functional abilities
2. **Explanation** of these systems is not reported in the media
3. The **elimination of any classification** within media reports means that readers are left with **little understanding on Paralympic sports**
4. The Paralympic movement is concerned with empowering athletes in the hope that their **performance will inspire** others to great achievements
5. Anything that negatively impacts on their successful achievements is likely to have a **detrimental influence** on Paralympic sport

Outcome

1. So the public gain **little knowledge** about the relationship of the impairment and practice of sport
2. Not highlighting the distinctiveness of the Paralympic sport in press coverage does not educate the public
3. There is tension in the way coverage of Paralympic movement is embedded in **charitable ethos**

Commercialisation

1. The paralympian movement is also moving towards **commercialisation**
2. Which requires an agenda of press released and news conferences
3. The internet **can challenge as well as reinforce these** mainstream stereotypes and magazines that challenge those magazines.

Discourse analysis.

1. Texts can be thought of as the product of **particular discourses**
2. Different kinds of discourse analysis exist
3. As well as analysing visual **discursive practices** such as the **photographs**
4. Discourse analysis refers to a set of analytical practices focusing on the study of **interpersonal communication** – usually the **spoken word** or **written word**.
5. It has been used to analyse such varied things as **rap lyrics** to **news programmes**
6. It has also been used to **analyse the power** and **ideological forces** at work in everyday communications, media and practices.

Subjects and objects –

1. Discourse **generates subjects** and **subject positions**

News programmes. –

1. One of the main ways **discourse analysis** has been used in media studies to analyse the construction of **(dominant) ideologies** through the **news media**
2. News reporting is one of the **most ideologically loaded** elements of the media
3. It uses **stereotypes and story construction** to make the messy reality of the world easily understood
4. So there is ideological input that is incorporated into the news
5. The position from which discourse is being made

Rap and discourse analysis.

1. Other studies have focused on **rap artists and rap battles**
2. For example, **Snoop Dogg** has been analysed through his rap and tv appearances in relation to his **attitude to fatherhood**

Discourse analysis

1. Discourse analysis can therefore be applied to a **range of media** and cultural phenomena
2. The initial **starting point** is to select the **text or object** to be examined
3. This may be determined by something you want to examine such as a particular issues
4. You need to **define the limits** of the text to be examined – what will be included and left out (and why)
5. You **need to immerse** yourself in the **object of analysis** and think about the **following questions**.

Questions to think about in relation to discourse includes –

1. Who are the speakers (interlocutors) need to be identified
2. **Who is speaking**
3. With what authority do they speak
4. How does the **discourse frame the subject**
5. What is the attitude towards the subject
6. What **different kinds of voices** are shown and **how are these set** within broader frames
7. Who is the **assumed audience**
8. Who is **being addressed**
9. What kinds of **power relations** help identify **ideological positions**

How to analyse the text – specifically

1. You can analyse the **words that are used** – do some dominate
2. Are some words assumed (e.g. bus driver may be assumed to be male)
3. What **words are used** and **not used**
4. For example, how **people are named** in a text or a speech can influence how they are viewed

Stages of discourse analysis

1. After thinking about these questions you need to think about how these things relate back to **theories or theory**
2. Particularly in relation to dominant discourses