

Rampe? Reicht! Season 2, Episode 3: Media I: The big wheelchair race

tier: ramp?

SR: enough!

tier: a 20 minute podcast about

SR: disability in the media part one!

tier: i'm simo_tier and i'm currently working on a still secret book project

SR: on a secret book project !! I'm SchwarzRund and I'm currently working on my master's thesis.

tier: how did it come about that we wanted to do this topic and what are we doing today?

SR: the subject is a bit obvious. I think everyone who talks about disabilities will at some point deal with the question of media. we have thought a little what could be our point of view in order to bring in something new. and yes, our point of view is that we have structured it a bit, it means there will be 3 episodes on the topic. [this season there are only two] we throw series and films together and today we are first talking about the question of script and disability. I would say that the tension between them. and for this we have picked out three examples and if you find it annoying to listen to people laughing a lot

tier: (laughs)

SR: then now is your chance to switch off! (laughs)

tier: today it actually gets a bit silly. not everything always has to be so serious.

SR: So much for that, today there is no recommendation of the day because today we can, to a limited extent, recommend all three a little

tier: yes!

SR: with lots of criticism, but yes

tier: first of all we would like to talk about the series "never have I ever". this is a relatively new series, i think..

SR: released in 2020!

tier: by the great scriptwriter Mindy Kaling, a series with an indian protagonist, but it's the american series. and there is a supporting character

SR: a very minor supporting character

tier: a young actress, or she is played by a young actress named Lily D Moore, she has trisomy 21 and plays a character with trisomy 21.

SR: exactly. there is a lot to criticize in this series, for instance hindunationalism both: anti-fat-hate!

SR: and at the same time there are somehow nice elements in the series, but if you just can't cope with hearing fat- hostility,

tier: then maybe don't! one nice thing is that the character played by Lily is one of the few white characters in the whole series!

SR: that's right, exactly, it's otherwise almost a complete BPOC cast! yes, even today we won't say so much about if it's just good or bad, but rather our thoughts on the series and I will briefly describe the situation for those who have not seen it. as far as I remember, because the series isn't that terribly memorable (both laugh)

tier: it's entertaining

SR: which is not bad! there is a main character and she has a crush on a guy, or is friends with him at the time, i don't remember exactly. he's there, he's existing, and that's almost everything ..

tier: he looks good.

SR: he just looks good.

tier: normative.

SR: exactly. in the series he is supposed to be the handsome one. But then all of a sudden there is the character of Lily D Moore and she has it all!

tier: exactly, she is the sister of this crush

SR: of this crush, exactly, and she somehow has a relationship to this, not a relationship, but a relationship to this brother, which is very approachable and then she has immediately a dynamic with the main character

tier: Exactly, they get along immediately and that's kind of like that ..

SR: and have interesting conversations. then she works with fashion

tier: and is such a cool person

SR: exactly, she's like the fashion adviser,

tier: and she also works

SR: and she is already working. it's absurd after this series you can't really say anything about any of the characters, you don't really know where they come from, so i mean the people are almost only culture and almost only what they need to be right now for the plot, one doesn't think about how any of them would, what do I know, also like to paint houses, they just have the characteristics that are needed to tell the story! (laughs) except for this person!

tier: she has everything!

SR: and that is ..

tier: she knows about relationships and people

SR: true! it is actually so much. if we were to look at it with this classic discourse now, and we say .. so maybe we can also explain it this way: there is this idea that when two women talk to each other in a film and not about men

tier: then there are points, that is the bechdel test!

SR: the bechdel test, then there is the DuVerney test, you can look it up, it deals with being black in the film and then there is something like that relating to the representation of african people. and there is also something related to disability. this was summarized in German by the theorist Renggli and she conceived four images of disability. you haven't read the text yet, so i can tell you this now, hihi!

tier: yes please!

SR: and she says there are a four pictures, I'll explain them to you you briefly, they are: extraordinary, sentimental, exotic and close to everyday life. For example, what we always see in commercials at the Paralympics is extraordinary: these are not just athletes who just do sport and then earn sport medals

tier: no, they are great heroes

SR: because the leg is not there! (irony)

tier: yes! Both: unbelievable ..

tier: .. achievements!

SR: swimming in the water despite ..

tier: despite their deafness (irony) (both laugh)

SR: so this idea that it's extraordinary when people do what others in their category do too. It's already extraordinary to be an Olympic, but that's not going to be any more extraordinary because you're disabled. so that's the extraordinary representation. then there is the sentimental presentation. that's almost everything we see, this oh

tier: the poor person!

SR: exactly, mostly in the secondary character, or the main character to advance the plot. "oh, everything's bad" but later .. so the famous scene that we can all hopefully hate together: when the person in the wheelchair gets up and walks! It's just very, very sentimental and it is very often based on the social model of disability, i.e. that the disability could actually be fixed if not everyone would be so mean! we can already see the problem with the social model. Disability is not, should not only be seen as something that would have to be "fixed", neither by society nor by the disabled person, although the social model of course also has many advantages. Maybe we'll talk about that in the third season. Then the exotic model

tier: "the other"

SR: the other, the exciting, the very sexualized. when we look at how deafness is represented in us series, we notice that almost all deaf roles are the girlfriend of the hottest character in the family, that's one of those patterns. some great actresses, who are still fantastic to this day! there is this episode on "seventh heaven" which is a terrible series

tier: oh god, yes!

SR: the episodes with the deaf girlfriend are great! but when we then look at the whole, it's weird that it's always attractive women who are dateable and hot and sexy and that is such an exoticization that is often done with deafness, for example. and then there is the close to everyday life-model. and in this model is a bit of what is "the good". the way we want it.

tier: realistic

SR: realistic! someone who lives in reality. and yes, how would you rate this character? is she extraordinary because of her disability?

tier: she's pretty extraordinary!

SR: but she's extraordinary as a person, isn't she?

tier: that's true.

SR: It is not said that she is a great designer because she has a trisomy view of fashion

tier: no, she is presented as a holistic person, who has everything under control.

SR: exactly. and is it sentimental?

tier: no

SR: no, he even tries to protect her and then everyone is so "dude!"

tier: "what's wrong with you?" she is super cool!

SR: yes, exactly is it exotic? it's just one person!

tier: yes!

SR: it's a bit exotic.

tier: yes, why is she like that, has everything under control?

SR: or has a character! and i think this is where the exotic and the everyday intersect a little

tier: definitely!

SR: if everyone else is under-scripted, as too little, the character is not represented enough. so no one has characteristics (laughs)

tier: exactly and she has like twelve!

SR: with her we're doing it right! (irony) (laughs)

tier: and somehow I think it's close to everyday life to portray a person with trisomy 21 as a person who works and studies, that's important to show that, but why is only she like that and all the others characters are not? and then is she the only disabled person?

SR: Exactly, I had the feeling was a bit fear?

tier: like "oh, we definitely want to get it right with the disabled person, so that's why we make sure that we tell about them so much in such a short time!" Also I think it's important to say that this role, this character always appears very, very briefly, really, maybe there are three or four scenes!

SR: Exactly, and we know

tier: suddenly a lot about her!

SR: Exactly, I don't even know anything about the other characters anymore ... (laughs)

tier: it's a lot of fun to watch, apart from the very blatant fat hate, but it's interesting! really, the character gets stuck with you. Of course, because I also watch it with glasses like: "Oh, a disabled character, how is that done?"

SR: but yes, it's weird and I think that's where we notice that we have to have a script level in our head. because what Renggli meant was really like that: we look at one person and see how it is represented. and i think i would wish, so what i would say is: there are folks upset on twitter about why the character's not occupied by a disabled person, that is level one. that is basic shit. level two would be to ask: "ok, but how is it presented now?" and actually I would like to have a level 3, in the sense of: "but what does that do in the context of the whole thing ?" and what i was left with after the scenes with her was:

tier: why does she exist?

SR: why isn't she the main character ?!

tier: that's right! (both laugh)

SR: I want to follow her plot line! if we imagine we would be like invisible ghosts in the scene, there is this moment in front of the house where the guy is there and then the main character and she and the three of them leave separately?

tier: yes

SR: at that moment i just wanted to

tier: stay with her! I was like: "more scenes please!"

SR: because she is somehow on the way to the interview for her fashion school?

tier: something like that! I was also like "this is super interesting!" (both laugh)

tier: the actress is super good!

SR: she's amazingly good!

tier: and that was easy (laughs) i want to watch it! so great performance from her!

SR: yes totally! but yes, the script doesn't work because if a disabled person is a very minor character, then she should be handeld as a minor character.

tier: exactly!

SR: and not to ..

tier: to be emphasized like this.

SR: exactly!

tier: yes, that's probably it

SR: yes, exactly! so that's the first thing we wanted to look at with you and

tier: the second is then maybe as the opposite when we talk about script. it's the excellent series

Raising Dion

SR: based on a cartoon

tier: highly recommended, extremely cute!

SR: swoon!

tier: it's just so heart heart heart

SR: that's what you need right now!

tier: yes! so highly recommended! just .. just .. so it's about a little black boy who suddenly develops interesting powers and

SR: Exactly, and he also has a black mom who was newly cast after the trailer, unfortunately with a light skin person.

tier: ah, I didn't even know that! a pity!

SR: it was a dark-skinned mother at first!

tier: very typical example of

SR: mothers have to be replaced (laughs)!

tier: "oh, a dark-skinned mother, no!" (sarcasm) not the first time this has happened!

SR: mhm!

tier: yes, and Dion is .. he is really very small! they're like of six or seven

SR: I think he's ten

tier: ten? I find them so incredibly young! i can't tell children's ages, but simply adorable!

SR: awww

tier: then he goes to school and there is a girl at school who absolutely wants to be friends with him, but she is not like: "oh, i would like to be your friend" she is like: "now we are best friends! " so she pulls it off! (both laugh) and this girl, Esperanza, is played by an actress named Sammi Haney and she is amazing !!

SR: unbelievable, to be so intense in at that age!

tier: i know! she's incredibly funny, incredibly good, so i guess, i don't even know if they say that in the series, but i think she has Osteogenesis imperfecta

SR: I also think so, she uses a wheelchair!

tier: yes! and the nice thing is that the actress is that too and uses a wheelchair and it just works because they're just children and they do things together, it's also about how can Esperanza be taken along or participate in things and people are like: "i hold the door open!" and she says "no, no, I can do that!" or they want to go to a birthday party and Dion's mother says "yes, I can drive you there" then Esperanza says to her: "that is not possible because you can't get my wheelchair in your car"

SR: yes !! (both laugh)

tier: and then they are a bit like "oh, how do we do it then?" and then Esperanza says: "yes okay

then I'll talk to my dad, he can drive us and then you don't have to do anything"

SR: and that's just a small thing, but it's so commonplce! how do we get from a to b?

tier: that is how everyday life is shown!

SR: that's so great!

tier: and then that everyone is a bit incapable but the disabled person themselves is like "here, there, that's how we do it!"

SR: Exactly and Dion's mom doesn't react in a strange way or anything, it's just like

tier: "oh, I didn't think of that!"

SR: this and that

tier: so exactly! and then we do it like that!

SR: it's so great!

tier: it's so great! (laughs)

SR: and I like it that Dion is not immediatly like "yeah, we are friends now because you are disabled and you need friends," but he is just very ..

tier: "you're pushy!" (both laugh) "why do you want to be friends with me all the time? okay now we're friends!"

SR: and it's also about Dion, it's not that he says "you get pushy because you are disabled," he was at another school before and

tier: has a little difficulties with making new friends and that's why she does it a bit for him! (laughs)

SR: it's so great! the two of them together!

tier: yes unbelievably good! again: very good casting!

SR: yes!

tier: but here the script makes sense!

SR: exactly, she's a very strong character, but we talk a lot about her now because we're concentrating on this topic now, we could talk just as much about the father figure, we could talk about the mother, we could talk about everything, because everything has the same weight in the script. and the part of the script that's Esperanza's is somehow appropriate to the role she plays in the film [series].

tier: exactly, she is a supporting character and is treated as a supporting character, it's not about what did Esperanza eat yesterday and what is she drawing?

SR: exactly!

tier: but, she is simply in contact with Dion, that's the character and that's how the character is treated too!

SR: Exactly! I think Raising Dion is what makes the heart warm! (laughs) very, very nice! So if we look at the four modes of representation here: it's a series with superhero stuff, therefore not very close to everyday life, because non-everyday things happen, but her character is totally close to everyday life! she is not sentimental, she is not extraordinary, it's also not said "wow, how she gets from a to b!"

tier: she's just a child.

SR: she is just a child! that was Raising Dion and now we want to watch a little scene with you, we put the link in the show notes, so if you want you can pause briefly, watch the scene and then come back again. or you watch with us!

tier: are we saying something about it beforehand? oh, here we go! (laughs loudly)SR: It's about the movie Mac and Me (laughs) the famous wheelchair scene. there are several scenes with wheelchair users, but this scene is..

tier: it has become quite internet famous I think

SR: yes and there is an alien, a lake and a mountain! just watch it, I'll try to describe while simo will probably laugh itself to pieces

tier: (laughs) (music and whistling)

tier: (laughs)

SR: ok, the boy is now rolling down the hill in the wheelchair, a girl is running after him (dramatic

orchestral music) and the brake on the wheelchair has broken off! (even more dramatic music and screaming)

tier: of course!

SR: and now he falls into the lake (both laugh) several times because it is so badly cut and then we see an alien! (laughs)

tier: and it is very obvious when the wheelchair falls down into the lake that there is a doll in it! (slightly quieter orchestral music and screaming)

SR: and now the child is kicking around in the water and the other child doesn't help at all with all the screaming (screaming in the video) and this is exactly where the alien will try to save the child (very dramatic orchestral music) (laughs)

tier: I think that's enough, so it's mainly about how absurd this scene is with the wheelchair (laughs)

SR: it's cut very strange!

tier: maybe a few words about this film

SR: yes, the film was shot in 1988, tell me who financed the film?

tier: yes, the film was financed by mcdonald's and coca cola (laughs)

SR: and skittles!

tier: ah, and skittles!

SR: (laughs)

tier: interesting! These companies thought, this was peak capitalism, these companies were like: "We want to sell our products even more to children even though there is advertising on TV all the time" and back then at the beginning of the 80s [the film] ET was a huge cinema success and they thought: "okay, it would be totally make sense to make a film where our products are highlighted but that is also like E.T."

SR: and the result is the masterpiece Mac and Me!

tier: yes! For what felt like thre hours! very very very silly, very badly done

SR: and the most absurd thing is that this film is on several lists as the worst film of all time, I only warn you that there is a dance off in macdonald's (laughs)

tier: like a flash mob!

SR: there are multiple ends! you always think it's over and it never is!

tier: the real end is when the aliens get U.S. citizenship! Yey, you heard right: they are naturalized as U.S. citizens!

SR: and they are really aliens as you imagine, such gray, thin creatures! And then they get dressed in such terrible clothes, I think she has a hat on?

tier: yes yes because they usually run around naked all the time, that's not possible!

SR: they must be gendered!

tier: yes exactly!

SR: and then they stand there with all the others who are naturalized and

tier: yes, but there you see: as an alien, it's easy! like ...

SR: (laughs) yes and cola is what saves them, that is the one thing they can drink, because they had that also on their planet (laugh)

tier: they got it from the earth. (both laugh) they drink with a straw from the earth, then somehow a drink comes out of the earth and that is

SR: apparently similar to coca cola. I think there is this joke with people asking what's the plot of Cats. I think the new joke could be

tier: what's the plot of Mac and Me?

SR: it's really hard to reconstruct!

tier: really! so the reason why we talk about this film and why we are relatively obsessed with ist

SR: a bit

tier: well i can't talk about it without laughing (laughs)

SR: yes what about Mac and me and disability?

tier: yes the interesting thing is that the main character, the little boy, is a wheelchair user. I don't think it was originally like that in the script?

SR: no, it wasn't!

tier: it wasn't, they got this boy, this actor named

SR: Jade Calegory

tier: they actually cast him extra because he was so good at being fast in a wheelchair!

SR: exactly! they cast him and then it came out that he did that and he had already won several medals back then, twelve or something like that: yes, yes! and they were like: "yey, that's great, we can fully incorporate that into our story here!" There are very, very many scenes where Jade is very, very, very fast with the wheelchair, with or without an alien ..

SR: Who is he following? the FBI?

tier: yes, some strange men. this scene that we watched now was a scene, just free fall, free driving down the hill! but then also through department stores, in car traffic, so really intense scenes

SR: that look really cool!

tier: (laughs) yes they look cool! and sometimes with alien on his lap!

SR: sometimes with an alien

tier: who is disguised as a teddy bear

SR: yes, a teddy is gutted .. (both start talking and laughing)

SR: it's not entirely understandable, you have to believe us that even, well if you watch the film it doesn't make any sense!

tier: no, but this film really does exist!

SR: we didn't make it up! by the way, we'll put it completely into the show notes

tier: because you can watch the complete movie on youtube!

SR: exactly! yes, but this is Mac and Me and we have practically nothing at all from these representational practices. So yes, the mother is sometimes a bit sentimental with him, but that's part of everyday reality.

tier: yes, and that's so close to everyday life, because everything this boy does, it's just the story that this boy is a bit lonely and then suddenly this alien comes along and then he has to help the alien and the wheelchair somehow doesn't play a role and he can do everything with it!

SR: oh, and he's not lonely because he's disabled, just to make that clear! so he had a lot of friends where he lived before and then moved!

tier: the film starts with him moving, so that's why

SR: and he's the new child, into the new school year ..

tier: and school hasn't started yet, so that's why he sits alone in his room

SR: and then a vacuum cleaner comes along, but it doesn't matter (both laugh) so the thing that is so cool about it is basically everything that concerns him is great

tier: and very close to everyday life!

SR: very close to everyday life, as close to everyday life as a film with an alien who drinks cola can be. that's also how they catch him, but it doesn't matter.. and then they have dance off in macdonald's.

tier: yes exactly

SR: that is the moral that i have learned!

tier: and the aliens have a hand signal with which they

SR: (whistles)

tier: yes, and they can only whistle! but then they have a hand sign with which they greet each other! and we highly recommend you if you are able to make this hand sign, as an inside joke

SR: do it!

tier: do it if you see us (both laugh)

tier: we would be very happy!

SR: we would be very happy! (both laugh)

SR: Exactly, that was our third example for today to show that you can cast someone with a disability and thus improve the script!

tier: exactly!

SR: because the only thing that is good about this film is how he drives his wheelchair through this

highway situation

tier: I know!!

SR: and holds on to the car

tier: right that was totally rad!

SR: oh my god, he is even lifted into the car like that and argh! god it's so cool! tier: the stunts are really awesome and he does the stunts himself, except when he falls, that's a doll

SR: those were our three things for today, all three with a small note from us and yes we'll say goodbye real fast:

tier: as always you can support us via patreon,

SR: via IBAN, which you can find below or on our website

tier: or via paypal, which is our email address rampereicht@gmail.com

SR: you can also send us questions and requests for topics

tier: the next episode, where we will continue to talk about media , will be available in two weeks, you can find out about that on youtube or via social media, for example our instagram account, which is also called rampereicht.

SR: I am SchwarzRund and you find me everywhere as [@SchwarzRund](#)

tier: and I'm simo_tier and you can find me everywhere as [@simo_tier](#)

SR: we are crazy

tier: wheelchair user

SR: fans of Mac and me (both laugh and whistle)

SR: and this podcast

tier: is it as well! (both laugh and whistle)