

Rampe? Reicht! Season 2, Episode 5: Media II – Bad representations

SR: ramp

tier: is enough

SR: a 20 minute podcast about

tier: today we continue with media

SR: disability and media! how are you today with the topics we have selected?

tier: yes, i'm excited, we're talking about a film i haven't seen and watching the trailer. then we talk about one of my all-time favorite series and then about bad representation of autism! also a favorite topic (laughs)

SR: yes! and we have picked out three things again. this time a feature film and two series available on netflix. and again there will be no recommendation but the last thing we talk about is a recommendation!

tier: exactly. So you are welcome to watch the other things, but the thing that we warmly recommend, if you want to watch something nice again that makes you feel good and everything is fine, then ..

SR: the last thing! we won't reveal it yet! I'd like to show you something now and I'll turn it on!

(music) let's go:

TRAILER: (music)

- and what is your motivation?

- to earn money!

- I like this area.

- i like disabled people very much!

SR & tier: (laughs)

TRAILER:

- I need three cancellations for the employment office.

- I understand, you need the

money. don't you have any other goals in life?

- yes, yes, I do! I'm looking at one goal and that is very motivating

(cool music)

tier: aargh!

SR: (laughs) this is the trailer for "the itouchables", describe what we just saw.

tier: several people are being interviewed and one person is sitting in a wheelchair, so i assume that it's somehow about some kind of assistance situation and then everyone is white except the last one who is interviewed is a young dark skin / black man, and he is immediately portrayed as somehow, as you may have heard, he needs a rejection for the employment office, so he is just not motivated to work in any way and then he ogles the white woman.

SR: exactly! let's continue watching:

TRAILER: (cool music)

- I'm ready to hire you for a month to test it out.

- I bet you won't last two weeks

- woohoo (music)

SR: how did the scene make you feel? or what did we just see? do you like to explain briefly?

tier: obviously this man in the wheelchair is very rich because the house looks like a palace and the black boy just comes there and is completely impressed by the luxury

SR: and throws himself on the bed with his shoes on and can also obviously not behave in such contexts

tier: of course, yes [irony]

TRAILER: (groovy music)

- well, satisfied, madame?
- hey, watch out! (music, phone rings)
- enjoy your meal!
- hey, hey hey!
- Sorry!

tier: oh dear

SR: (laughs)

tier: here it was shown how the assistant makes several faux pas, he somehow makes many mistakes.

SR: yes

tier: I don't know.. he does not answer the phone, or is too late and then when he ...

SR: the non-existent butt (laughs)

tier: exactly then (laughs) he wants to assist the man with eating and then almost puts the fork in his eye because he has to look at the butt of a woman.

SR: exactly and that, he is just so uncontrolled in his masculinity, in his black masculinity

tier: yes, he can't concentrate on his task, but has to

SR: look at the empty dress [irony]

tier: yes exactly! (both laugh)

TRAILER: (groovy music)

- you have to be careful, the boys from the suburbs have no pity!
- that's exactly what I want: no pity!

SR: I think the scene is really interesting! So we see two men, two white rich guys, who are talking about the black assistant and the buddy of the disabled guy says: "You have to be careful with those from the suburbs because they show no pity" and he says: "that's exactly what I want!" and that's what a lot of people are used to explain why the film is supposedly not racist, because the guy still employs him and so on. but the thing is, that's always my argument: sleeping with black people, hiring black people was never anti-colonial, that was the colonial structure!

tier: yes, that was part of it all the time.

SR: and he agrees: yes, they show no pity! he doesn't say "no, no, he's totally..

tier: ...nice and great and I like the"

SR: yes, exactly

tier: but: "I don't want pity and that's why ..

SR: I'm now hiring the black guy . .

tier: ..because he doesn't have any empathy, that's what that's being said!

SR: exactly!

TRAILER: (sad music)

- that means when you have red ears are you aroused?
- sometimes in the morning when I wake up they're even a bit stiff!
- (groovy music)

tier: erection joke!

TRAILER:

- I refuse! I wont stuff you back there like a horse!
- What nice things do we have here?
- I'm sorry, you have to be pragmatic
- pragmatic? (car noises)
- that's crazy (laughs & more car noises)

SR: briefly describe what happened.

tier: yes the millionaire has several cars, but of course they have to take the big car where the wheelchair fits it in and then the assistant says: "No, I don't want to cram you in the car!" and then

sees a fancy, I don't know, porsche or something

SR: (laughs)

tier: and then we see the two of them sitting in this porsche and the assistant is super excited and then wants to drive the car very fast. So it's also about this ..

SR: the wild, the unpragmatic, as was also said

tier: exactly, exactly! be pragmatic, but no

SR: that only works with a non-white, non-white person who is wild and unpragmatic and unempathetic and (laughs)

tier: yes

TRAILER: (cool music) (laughs)

- whoo!

- this is a birthday party! come on, move people!

SR & tier: ughhh (laughter)

TRAILER: (groovy music, sirens, car noises)

tier: well, he dances very well of course

SR: and teaches the white rich people to dance who can't dance

TRAILER: (groovy music)

- take care of the ears

- you have to be totally crazy to do that!

- but that looks good on you!

SR: I found exactly this scene exciting, everything that has to do with empowerment for the disabled guy consists of him spending money

tier: yes!

SR: and buying the black guy things, like a suit and then only when he wears the suit does the white woman become interested in him. so that means: what the black man has to give him is to get more emotional again and I don't know what? and the disabled guy has to give him money to finally .. "fixing the race" it's called in the Dominican context, he's dark skinned, so he has to date the red-haired, extremely pale woman, and what's behind it is the concept of "fixing the race," that dark skinned men mainly date white women, so that their children are lighter and have better access to society and he can offer that to him by wrapping him in his suit as if he were not beautiful just like he is!

tier: yes!

TRAILER: (groovy music)

- kilometers per hour?

- is that the maximum?

(opera singing) (laughs)

- that's a tree, a tree that sings! (laugh)

tier: wow!

SR: what did we just see?

tier: they sit in the audience in the opera, everything is dark and then an opera singer sings and then the assistant thinks it's funny because he's dressed like a tree and doesn't behave according to the situation, like in a very caricature way!

SR: And I think the picture is also exciting: we see the disabled guy mainly in activities where sitting is somehow normal and he is blending in with everyone on this ledge for the rich, I'll say

tier: yes, exactly, everyone looks the same.

SR: but he's so dark-skinned, but that's why they had to film it so that he shows his teeth, did you notice?

tier: right!

SR: and he throws his teeth around and throws himself against the shoulder of the guy, because

otherwise they would not have been able to tell visually, that if him being dark skinned can no longer be the marker because everything is black, then they have to show the white teeth and that is also a kind of blackfacing culture in film. so when we talk about blackfacing we don't just mean the typical minstrel picture, but this caricature-like blackness, exactly. and that always in contrast with the disabled man who actually has everything: he is male, straight, he is rich, he lives in the west, he is highly educated

tier: and the only "flaw" in quotation marks is the disability SR : exactly! and it now offers him access to the marginalized culture, so the idea behind it is, behind this film: there is such a general edge of culture and everyone who moves on this edge of marginalization is actually almost the same. that was the intouchables

tier: that was, it looks like an incredibly horrible film and i'm glad i haven't seen it yet!

SR: yes, a white boyfriend showed me this movie saying: "We can watch that together because it's about black people too."

tier: oh my!

SR: that wasn't a nice date!

tier: no, doesn't seem so. especially where there are so many great films that could actually fulfill that.

SR: definitely! the next thing is a series and you've just watched it, tell me!

tier: for a long time i didn't want to watch this series and then i was bored and then i watched it (heh). it's a series on netflix, also a netflix production. the series is called atypical, so a-typical and it is about an autistic young man who is just graduating .. there are three seasons and i think in the first two he goes to school and in the third he goes to university. the series has a lot ..

SR: this is a white autistic person

tier: exactly, the family is white and the series has received much criticism because the main actor, i.e. the one who portrays this autistic boy, is not autistic himself, but a secondary character who plays his best friend, the character is not autistic, but is played by an autistic!

SR: (laughs)

tier: I am ... so that makes me feel ... so to even explain that at all is difficult for me. (laughs) and I'm just ... I don't get it!

SR: yes and the representation is just ... of course there are autistic people who are like that!

tier: yes!

SR: because there are autistic people in every facet of life

tier: but ...

SR: but ...

tier: it's just very ... the series is called atypical and i think the representation is very typical!

SR: (laughs)

tier: this is how autism is portrayed:

SR: in every picture

tier: firstly he is a white boy, secondly he is super good at one thing

SR: thirdly, he is somehow a late bloomer, or it is portrayed like I also find questionable. that a boy who starts wanting to have sex at the age of 17 is portrayed as late bloomer or late puberty ..

tier: not nice! then there is of course the role of the mother, she is of course an "autism mom"

SR: controlling as fuck! the father is the laid back fire brigade type.

tier: kind of the nice guy, so .. the two good characters, I think the friend who is an of indian descent guy,

SR: who lives with his roommates (laughs)

tier: who lives with his flatmates, which are his parents, but he's grown up, so they are his flatmates! and first of all he's played by this autistic actor and i think he's incredibly good, incredibly great, it's a great character. why is it not about him?

SR: the whole series could be exactly like that, but he's autistic! it could be mentioned three times

tier: and then he just does his thing and is wonderful!

SR: exactly! that would be, they just have a couple, like a cutter, exactly, and the sister is absolutely

great!

tier: and the sister is great!

SR: the sister is written a bit like from another world because she's in this series, but it's a hardcore series for the community where it's about "how do we deal with our non-autistic family"? and in this world she plays this role, an incredibly gifted actress!

tier: yes, yes! I think she will turn out to be something really great, because she is unbelievably good!

SR: and she's also a queer person, bisexual or pansexual. yes, all of these plots are unbelievably great!

tier: yes, it's a lot of fun to watch, because she is very talented in sports and is therefore going to a different school where sports are more encouraged, to a better school and then it's just a lot and great and a it is treated very, very well, that is simply unbelievable, that in itself would be a good series

SR: and that again shows script and disabilities! that we can not just look at one person, but .. in this script we see how they can write, they can write so delicately about this bisexual person, can write so delicately about this indian boy with his family, they can, they write somehow about police violence and autism and, and about first responders

tier: they bring in a lot of interesting and important topics, which is important for autistic people, like "how he is supported in school, what about dating, who understands and who doesn't understand and what are his needs and such", but it is presented in such a stereotypical way and it is so (sigh)

SR: I am also extremely upset about the love plot for example. because this girl is just unappealing!

tier: that's right (laughs)

SR: and the actress isn't to blame!

tier: yes, that's how it is described, yes

SR: that makes it impossible to play this person sympathetically. I think they did that to make it clear that "autists can't read subtexts" and that's why they can't have a sexy vibe with anyone (sarcasm)

tier: yes, exactly!

SR: which is wrong, i can say that from experience! and it is so strange that it is almost said that she somehow has OCD, or ..

tier: she is very controlling

SR: controlling, but somehow she has a neurodivergence

tier: and he is then often very overstimulated by her.

SR: Exactly and that's kind of an interesting story in itself, but they don't have a vibe at all! yes and if i want to watch a teenie or coming of age story, then i want them to vibe together! that's the most important thing! that you think: "oh my god, yey!"

tier: yes!

SR: and that just doesn't work! so they just have ... to be honest, i don't even understand why they spend time together? somehow it is said that she likes him now!

tier: yes

SR: the script says that's how it is!

tier: and then he is pushed into it a little bit ..

SR: (sighs)

tier: where it is also shown, like it would not be possible to fall in love as an autistic person, but there has to come another person to tell them

SR: I didn't like that at all and he was so super obsessed with his therapist, I found that very disgusting!

tier: very weird, very .. and that's exactly what we mean when we talk about scriptwriting: these are choices, these are decisions and all these decisions, a team sits somewhere and writes this and all these things were choices and it's just ... i can't understand that these things were decisions in the writing process, but then this sister is written at the same time!

SR: who is written so incredibly well!

tier: i don't understand it!

SR: and the boyfriend she has

tier: oh yes!

SR: he's lower class, he's adorable!

tier: ah, amazing!

SR: finally a person who finds their queerness, then finds out: I like this other person, but still stays with the boyfriend and realizes: "Oh, you still fit!" this is a bisexual plot that we almost never read!

tier: oh yes!

SR: so she has a kind of a female crush and then the point is that he just feels bad because he is poorer than all the kids from the new school

tier: Exactly!

SR: and then it really is found out, that's really a wholesome representation

tier: and also a longer process, which is possible in a series! so that is, yes it's beautiful!

SR: and that's the same series where "he's autistic, that's why he likes penguins, works in an it shop .."

tier: (laughs) of course he works in an it shop! It is also never said that he is any good at it, or later that is said a little bit because it is established very quickly: he has a special interest. ok, many autistic people have that, i also have several, but of course he only has one: penguins and arctic, but then he works in an it shop because he is supposedly good at it. that doesn't make sense either!

SR: but actually he never does anything with it!

tier: yes, exactly! that's why it doesn't make any sense at all!

SR: that's so strange. so two things we can briefly talk about is that there are also two groups. there is once the group of parents who meet, do you want to briefly talk about that?

tier: (sarcastic laughter) yes, the mother goes to a self-help group where there are actually only mothers and they are all autism moms, so just over-correct, who say, my favorite topic: that they always say like this: "You mustn't say that someone is autistic, you always have to say 'person with autism'"

SR: that is, a person with autism, instead of an autistic person.

tier: this kind of person first language, so that they assume that it is somehow more respectful but .. exactly, so that they meet all the time and talk about their children, very creepy! and then later he, the main actor, goes to a group of autistic students who are graduating from school.

SR: (takes a deep breath) you can hear me breathing hard, because here we have the transparent effect [the tv series transparent]

tier: yes (laughs)

SR: the main character is not autistic, one minor character is autistic and this entire group consists of autists!

tier: so very obviously too!

SR: They also show us that they are constantly finding autistic people to act

tier: yes, that doesn't seem to be the problem! But above all, how the people in the group are portrayed, I believe that they are all "too" autistic, so the people who make the series think they are "too" autistic to play such a leading role.

SR: I think we often look at this medal of: Is it difficult for the feature film company or series company to produce this? There was a very large discourse on this in Germany in the 90s, but maybe we can discuss that at some other point. but there again the other side of the medal, namely indeed the medal, I'll look up the numbers, but I think it was a third of the Oscars have been awarded in the main role was because someone has played a disabled person!

tier: yes, yes, several immediately come to mind.

SR: Exactly, and that's just a continuous number. so if you work in hollywood and an oscar is important to you, play a disabled person or fill a disabled role with an abled person.

tier: exactly!

SR: and that's just something that's in there. so that is, that will be a big stepping stone for this actor

from this role, while nobody will remember the supporting characters. that's a bit of that weird aftertaste of this series. it looks nice, they can obviously write! they can write!

tier: and i think i really resent them for this! They decided to do it that way and they would have had all the possibilities, the framework conditions to do it differently!

SR: and they didn't.

tier: and that's really outrageous!

SR: our result of that is that it's not enough that there is a disabled person in the script, as you obviously notice! And that brings us to the next example! tier: yes, now we were very angry, but luckily we're talking about something really great now, which we highly recommend, something for the heart, the netflix series special! i will not say the german title because it is unbelievably ableist!

SR: oh, and I don't know it and I'm glad not to find out! yes, we don't really have a lot of time to talk about it now, but that's ok, because i can't say that much bad things about the series!

tier: exactly! i think the most important thing to say about the series is why we recommend it incredibly warmly: the series is based on an article by the creator [Ryan O'Connell], about something that happened in his life, he wrote an article about that and it was then made into a series. so he himself is the scriptwriter and leading actor in this series!

SR: Exactly and in a supporting role is a dark skinned person who is fat, very successful in her job, thinks her body is great, her approach to anti-fatness is incredibly cool .. it's also about the parents, for example. but in a great way!

tier: and what we didn't say: the main actor is disabled

SR: exactly and white

tier: and gay, and that's what he is in his real life too!

SR: Exactly, he writes about what he is and the whole thing is a kind of alienated version of his life. and there are so many great moments on the series and it is a bit difficult to describe in such a short time, but maybe each of us can say our favorite moment? ok, i think my favorite moment is what has been written about the most: the sex scene! because everything is right about it! i don't like it when people pretend that there is no ableism. of course there are a lot of people for whom it is different than for him, but for him it was important to have sex for the first time and somehow to have a form of not so extreme pressure to perform at the moment and that is why he works with a sex worker and they just have sex and regardless of disability, it's just great to see a scene like that!

tier: yes!

SR: it's not violent sex, it's not that someone has to throw themselves against walls, which is kind of a thing, or against fences at the harbor

tier: (laughs)

SR: which somehow seems to be part of gay culture in films where that's very important, they just have nice sex with each other and it's an important moment for him and that's great.

tier: yes, the scene is really very, very good, it's just, what a delicate touch there with the screenwriting, but it just makes sense because it's partly autobiographical and that makes the decisions like if we now talk about decisions in the script, the decisions were made by himself, now i don't remember the name, sorry, but we'll write it down for you. it actually doesn't occur to me now it's been a while since i watched the series, which is my favorite moment. i could also say the sex scene, but i think i'll say everything, i have to if i start thinking about this series i have to really think about him, how the series is so queer, the series is so unapologetically real, i like all of the characters, one of my favorite storylines is actually the mother! Here a decision was made to show a mother, a mother of a disabled child, although the child is now an adult. the way she is, because she is of course a mother of a disabled child, but she is not only that, and I find that incredibly important to show, because that almost never happens.

SR: it's often rather shown that it's actually really terrible to have a disabled child, because that's what happens to you. but the series doesn't do that at all.

tier: no, not at all! she is so incredibly happy to be the mother of this person that's so ...

SR: yes! and he's just a great son!

tier: yes exactly (giggling)

SR: yes, so that's our recommendation

tier: warmest recommendation!

SR: watch special don't watch the intouchables

tier: and really only watch atypical with reservations.

SR: just try to turn away screaming when it comes to autism and enjoy the queer things.

tier: exactly! (laughs)

SR: that's how we do it! we recommend you to follow us on different platforms, but above all we need support from time to time. and if that's ok for you, you can do it via patreon, you can choose an amount, or you can do it in the classic way via bank transfer, a standing order is also very welcome! You can find the IBAN below, or via paypal to rampereicht@gmail.com

tier: this is also our email address, there you can ask us, send topic requests and so on. the next episode will come out in two weeks

SR: and you can find out about it on youtube and on our twitter accounts and on facebook

tier: and on instagram we also have an account there.

SR: you can follow us @rampereicht. I'm SchwarzRund and you can find me everywhere as @schwarzrund.

tier: I'm simo tier and you can find me everywhere as @simo_tier

SR: we are: annoyed by the intouchables (both laugh)

tier: autistic

SR: crazy

tier: disabled

SR: pansexual

tier: bisexual (both laugh)

SR: sick

tier: migrated

SR: and this podcast

tier: it is too!