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**Watching 'Freaks' – young
people negotiating what it is to
be human**

**Alison Wilde, Leeds Beckett
University, January 2018**



The Study

The film and its reception since 1932

Stereotypes, 'cripples' practitioners and academics



Moving from ideas of bad and good - considering the audience

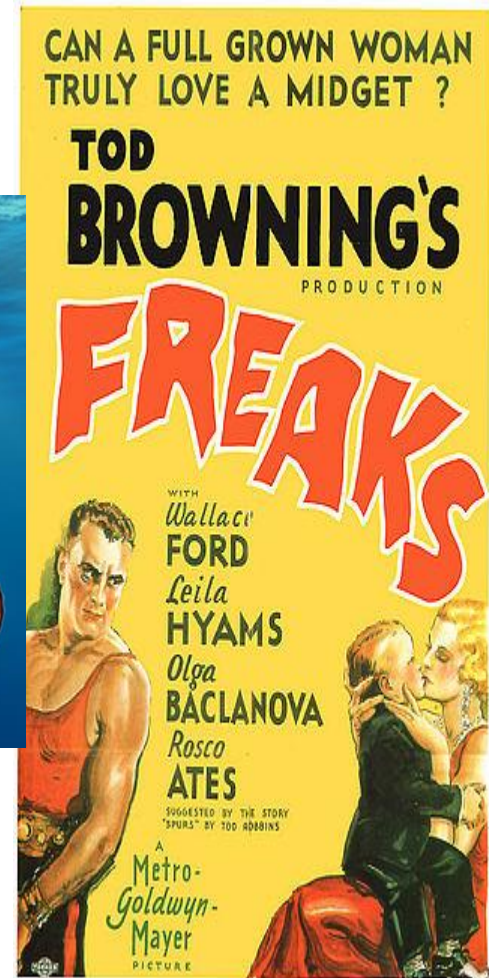
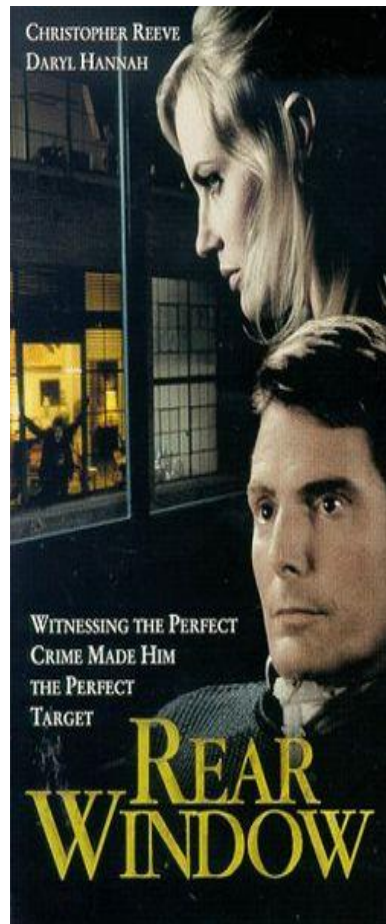


Focus groups

Three schools
Six-seven young people
Met over four months
Three films



The films



Freaks- Gooble Gobble

[Gooble gobble](#)

The Simpsons Season 1

One of us - (Homer as the voice of reason, and shock treatment)

Big Bang theory - one of us

One of us (geeks)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgKhEmxgSMs>

South Park - one of us

South Park gooble gobble

I Robot- One of us (meets I'm Spartacus)

[I Robot, 2004](#)

Ramones- Pinhead

Gabba Gabba –we accept you, one of us

WE ACCEPT



Christine and the Queens' H  lo  se Letissier

‘behave communally as a “normal” character in the way that any victim of treatment or abuse might when confronted with an outsider who perpetrates such abuse, especially when the abuse is “justified” by a lack of respect for the characters who shared “othered” bodies’

(Chivers, 2001, 63)

‘imbues such bodies with understandable motivation, suggesting a continuum of body types rather than an ideal and a lack’,

‘no choice’ but to become ‘one of us’

Gill, not helping Nemo, for his own good...



Freaks and Spectacle

- Hilton sisters from *Freaks* (and the Bunker Brothers
- (b. 1811), both 'news' in the Daily Mail, in 2014 and 2015)



Freaks and spectacle

[Prince Randian lights a cigarette](#)



Imperator Furiosa, in *Mad Max* – *Fury Road*



Thank you for listening!

