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

Rear Window

Finding Nemo

Freaks
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)
South Park - one of us
South Park gobble gobble

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgKhEmxgSMs
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’ Héloïse 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!