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# Film adaptations and the limits of disability representation

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# Examining the limits to representation

Form and genre

 Today's focus - the value of adaptations

# The value of adaptations for understanding representation

- Potential benefits:
- 1. Dig deeper into specifically cinematic expressions of disability and comparisons with literary texts

2. Address questions of authorship and 'conditions of possibility' for representations of impairments

# Geraghty on analysis of adaptations (2008)

Cinema and realism/ literature and imagination

 Tendency to prioritise 'transposition over interpretation' – narrative over other forms of cinematic analysis, mise en scène, genre etc.

### Geraghty and 'the work of recall'

- Need for textual and contextual analysis (all films are adaptations)
- Impact of genre how film makes sense to viewers
- Links to Deleuze and processes of recollection

#### Deleuze

- Movement-image -image as verb; to image, or image as movement
- Perception Images, affection-images and action-images

'Images become different, become other than what they are/were, simply by being woven together differently.'

(Vitale, 2017)

# Me Before You – from novel to cinema; first impressions

- Striking omissions
- Striking additions
- Mise en scène

Locations, camera angles, shots and use of light

### Me Before You – from novel to cinema

Mise en scène...

### Pembroke Castle, Wales



#### Image on the last slide

The location for Will's home – a large castle

#### Dinner at Lou's home



#### Image on the last slide

 Lou's dining room, in her cramped home, with seven people around the table (six visible)

#### My interpretation

- Class and cultural capital
- Rand's 'moocher' and rational selfactualization/self-sufficiency, without 'help'
- Moral discourses on the value of work and ambition

#### Spectacle in Me Before You

 Denigration of working-class males and their embodiment

Disabled people taking up space

The beauty of wealth

#### **Patrick and Will**



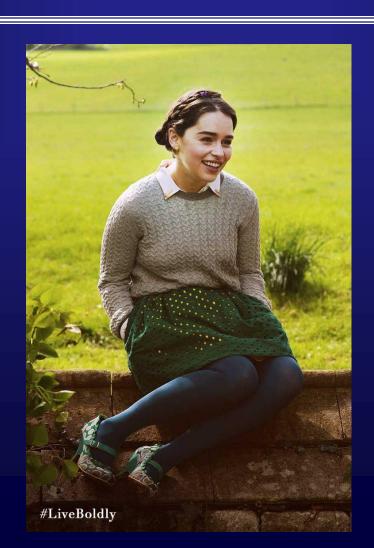


#### Image on the last slide

 Two pictures. The first is of Lou's boyfriend Patrick, running on a race track, wearing a shirt which says 'young entrepreneur of the year'

 The second is of Lou shaving Will, in his wheelchair, in the bathroom

### Affect and the use of space



#### Image on the last slide

 Lou sitting on a wall, smiling broadly, talking to and looking down at Will, who is out of this shot.

#### Affect and the use of light

Metaphorical use of:

- White
- Darkness
- Snow
- Storms

### Dominant discourse – hierarchical heterosexuality

- Young female audience
- Middle-class, non-disabled masculine athleticism as the ideal
- Failed masculinities classed and embodied; loss of physical functions/ crudeness of working class physicality

### Lou as central protagonist – this is *her* story

 Moral messages – 'matter out of place' - relocated by Will

 Discourse/POV her narrative in the film/comparative polyphony of novel;

### Before and after her Pygmalion-esque conversion

 Lou is the predominant spectacle colour palette for the film







#### Visuals on the last slide

- Three images of Lou, first in bright colours and 'wacky clothing' laughing in obvious joy at bumblebee tights bought by Will for her birthday.
- The second is a pink pair of 'irregular choice' shoes
- The third is of Lou looking chic in plainer clothing and bumblebee tights

# Visual metaphors – Lou brings...

Warmth (in a cold world)

Light and optimism

Fun/joy

### The endowment of Will's riches to Lou

Bequeathment, rationality and puns

Is this really a story about suicide?

Disabling discourses

# How can adaptations inform us about disability in cinema?

 Inevitability of the removal of disablement themes in adaptations?

 Move from textual form for a primarily visual (and auditory) type of expression – creation of 'spectacle'

### Thank you for listening!