**THE PROJECT**

1. **Proposed title and subtitle**

Documentary and Disability

1. **Brief description of project’s scope and content**

**Include here a description of what makes your project distinctive. What are the particular benefits offered by its content, scope, organisation and/or educational features? What needs does it aim to satisfy?**

This is an edited collection of essays exploring the intersection between documentary film and disability studies. Documentary has played a significant role in the social construction of disability, and several essays exist in different contexts that explore both the destructive and the positive aspects of this history. Thus, the proposed volume aims to make an explicit connection between these two fields in order to understand better how the tools of documentary studies and disability studies can be brought to bear in understanding the past and the current potential of documentary in the socio-cultural construction and awareness of disability. Consequently, the volume will illuminate the topic not only from an academic perspective, but will also offer a practice-focussed viewpoint from industry practitioners and practice-based researchers. The volume is intended to fill a gap in both disciplines: on one hand, documentary studies need to discuss contemporary portrayals of disability, practices of disabled filmmakers and industry policies that determine access, inclusion and representation; on the other hand, some of the many areas of disability studies need to adopt more explicit methodologies that explore film texts, authorship and spectatorship in order to assess the current situation of disability in the television and independent documentary sector. On a more social level, the purpose of this volume is to address the medial construction of disability and reduce “otherness” as a phenomenon of cultural stigmatisation.

**DOCUMENTARY AND DISABILITY**

Edited by Catalin Brylla and Helen Hughes

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**Foreword**

***By Professor Michael Schillmeier, University of Exeter***

The foreword outlines the wider implications of the documentary-disability studies synergy and the role of media in the emergence of social relations, actors, practices and concerns whereby the 'non-normal', 'unexpected', 'uncommon', or 'unknown' plays a central part.From the point-of-view of a process-based sociology and empirical philosophy, it places disability and documentary within a discourse about the material dynamics and heterogeneity of societal orderings and change.

Michael Schillmeier is Professor of Sociology at the University of Exeter and author of many articles, chapters and books including *Eventful Bodies. The Cosmopolitics of Illness*, (2014) and *Rethinking Disability* (2010). His work combines process-oriented Sociology, Science and Technology Studies (STS) and Empirical Philosophy. Currently, he holds a Schumpeter-Fellowship (VolkswagenStiftung) to research ‘Innovations in Nano-Medicine’ in Germany and the UK (2010-2015). Main focus of this project is to analyse and engage with the emergence of nanomedical knowledge practices, objects and technologies. He is also co-editor of Space & Culture.

**Introduction**

***By Catalin Brylla, University of West London, and Dr Helen Hughes, University of Surrey***

The introduction looks at the benefits of linking documentary and disability studies from an academic and socio-cultural perspective. It outlines gaps but also potentials in both disciplines and propagates that new knowledge can emerge through inter-disciplinary approaches. Referring to the foreword, this knowledge not only maps disability through documentary, but also contributes to an enhancement of the socio-cultural awareness of disability mediated by non-fiction film and media. The diversity of the volume’s contributions demonstrate that disability and its perception/construction through media reflects social practices and the perpetual movements of associations, dissociations and connections, from which networks of practices emerge, transform, globalise or collapse.

**PART ONE: Film Practice**

The opening section begins with the perspective of the filmmaker discussing the contemporary issues associated with making documentary films that address or include disability. The practice of making documentary films has become one of the most significant branches of research in contemporary documentary studies, drawing out insights that come from the exploration of the multiple perspectives of direction, participation, cinematography and editing. When combined with approaches developed by disability studies, questions relating to the body of the filmmaker and the filmed, subjectivity, ability and disability, perception, and creativity emerge in a new and energised way. This perspective is central to our argument that the intersection between documentary and disability studies represents a significant interdisciplinary project.

***Chapter 1:Not Without Us - Collaborating Across Difference in Documentary Filmmaking***

***By Samuel Avery, State University of New York at Cortland***

While some progress has been made over the last 10 years to produce media that more authentically represents people with disabilities, the psychiatric survivor community has been largely left out of this movement. Now more than ever, those who live with a diagnosed mental disorder are charged with counteracting negative stereotypes produced largely through popular news media, many have turned to independent documentary film as an outlet for self-expression and definition. Most documentaries are a collaborative effort, however, how is the nature of collaboration altered when the filmmaker is not a member of the mental health community? What are the barriers to translating self-definition through documentary media, in the case of collaboration across difference? This chapter seeks to answer these questions by tracing the trajectory of the conception, production, post-production, and distribution of the award winning documentary *Not Without Us* (2013) from the perspective of the filmmaker/outsider using the framework of community collaborative filmmaking as a theoretical guide. Issues of trust building, representation, defining insiders/outsiders, conflicting counter-narratives, language and vocabulary acquisition and (mis)use will be explored in an attempt to better understand what it takes to collaborate effectively across difference to produce more equitable inclusive media.

Samuel Avery is an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at State University of New York, College at Cortland as well as a documentary filmmaker with a focus on social justice. In 2013, Avery collaborated with the Mental Health Peer Connection of Western New York to produce the award winning short documentary *Not Without Us* which attempts to deconstruct the complex issues at the heart of one of the most harmful and prevalent forms of discrimination in America - the chronic abuse and stigmatization of people labeled mentally ill. *Not Without Us* has been shown primarily across the United States as well as in Austria, Australia, and Sweden and continues to gain traction within the national / international film festival circuit. Website – www.notwithoutusfilm.com

***Chapter 2: Conducting on-camera Interviews with Cerebral Palsy***

***By Sapna Ramnani, SMARTlab (Ireland)***

This chapter is a call for interviewers with disabilities involving speech impairments to find solutions to overcome limitations while conducting interviews themselves on camera. It seeks to promote a better understanding of what inclusion actually means for all media professionals hoping for positive and inclusive portrayals of disability, both on-camera and behind it.

The researcher is an independent documentary film-maker with Cerebral Palsy with a speech impairment impacting the way she produces documentaries. She argues for the possibility of conducting on-camera interviews successfully while having a speech impairment and a physical disability and makes the claim that this does not compromise the quality of the interview or the levels of comfort of the interviewees themselves. The chapter explains how, using herself reflexively, the filmmaker conducted a series of trials on-camera as the interviewer using various communication techniques. She investigated the reactions to herself as the on camera interviewer using the help of personal assistants and a speech output device. Interviewees were put at ease by making small talk before the interview, informally familiarizing themselves with the disability. In most cases, interviewees were comfortable with the interview process. In the end she determined that despite her own expectations the speech output device was not the better option as it compromised spontaneity and limited vocabulary. A personal assistant (or PA) as the word-for-word interpreter was the fastest way for her to communicate with the interviewee, which will be discussed in terms of mediation and intersubjectivity.

Sapna Ramnani has been a documentary film maker since completing a Masters in Video in 2000. During her career, she has successfully managed all aspects of production from the initial stages of researching an idea through to filming and editing the rushes. She has produced several documentaries which have been selected for numerous film festivals including screenings at the ICA and the NFT, London. She is currently writing her PhD on the issue of conducting on-camera interviews. The principle supervisor for her thesis is Professor Lizbeth Goodman.

***Chapter 3: Visual Psychological Anthropology and the Lived Experience of Disability***

***By Dr Robert Lemelson and Dr Annie Tucker, University of California, Los Angeles***

One crucial Disability Studies concept is that of the "social model,” which locates disability not in variations in appearance or ability per se, but in social responses and structures that render some of these accommodated and others stigmatized. Anthropology, with its emphasis on cultural relativism, has provided a useful framework for analyzing the intersectional factors that contribute to the labelling, interpretation, and reactions to human variation that may lead to—or mitigate—processes of disablement. Written ethnographies have elaborated upon these processes with regards to various human differences in various cultural places. But how to capture and communicate them onscreen across cultural norms in a way that is faithful to individual lived experience?

This addresses the making of *The Bird Dancer*, an award-winning ethnographic documentary about Gusti Ayu, a young Balinese woman with Tourette Syndrome, reflecting on key narrative decisions made and representational strategies used in the film. Informed by the psychological anthropological method of longitudinal person centered ethnography, the documentary follows Gusti for over a decade, moving beyond a focus on her symptoms to understand what is truly at stake in her life. Ultimately caste and gender constraints, beliefs about witchcraft and lineage, and familial oppression are all more disabling factors for Gusti than her tics. Through a process-oriented analysis of the film production, the chapter will illustrate how critical disability theory can be applied in transnational contexts by combining visual and psychological anthropology methodologies, with implications for educational and translational documentary film.

Robert Lemelson, Ph.D. is an anthropologist and documentary filmmaker whose work focuses on the relationship of culture, psychology and personal experience in Indonesia. Lemelson’s area of specialty is Southeast-Asian studies, psychological anthropology and transcultural psychiatry. He is the founder of the documentary film company Elemental Productions and is currently an adjunct professor of anthropology at UCLA and a research anthropologist in the Semel Institute of Neuroscience at UCLA.

Annie Tucker, Ph.D. writes, translates, and edits content on the various intersections of culture, personal experience, disability and the arts, with a focus on Indonesia. Her work has been recognized by support from the PEN America Center and the Southeast Asia Council of the Association for the Asian Studies, among others. She is currently a lecturer for UCLA’s Disability Studies Minor.

***Chapter 4: Valorising Disability On Screen And Why Has ‘Inspirational’ Become A Dirty Word?***

##### ***By Veronica Wain, National Council on Intellectual Disability (Australia)***

The construction and deconstruction of disability as visual spectacle and literary device within narrative construction have been necessary steps in the evolution of disability studies. Mitchell and Snyder’s notion of disability as*“artistic prosthesis” –* that which needs to be cured, curbed, purified or obliterated and Norden’s discussion of the stereotypical portrayal of disability in fictional film are two of many works challenging our historical depiction of people with disability.

As we move forward, asserting and redefining our place in the world and our identities within disability, there exists, not surprisingly, tension within our ranks. Thrust together, mustered beneath the collective umbrella identified as the “disability community” we are as diverse as the wider communities we exist within. As we continue to incrementally gain our voices, fragmentation from within continues has become more apparent, most particularly the veritable experiential chasm that exists between those living with physical disability and those with intellectual disability. Whilst areas of commonality exist, there are some critical differences whereby needs, desires and aspirations are as diverse as humanity itself.
This chapter will discuss the creation of heroes, heroines, anti-heroes and mentors within disability discourse, most particularly within autobiographical/biographical documentary film production. The backlash from within our ranks whereby self-advocates such as Stella Young, decried her categorisation as inspirational and asserted that she wants “to live in a world where we don’t have such low expectations of disabled people that we are congratulated for getting out of bed and remembering our own names in the morning, will be contrasted with the joy that is experienced by people with intellectual disability when they achieve these seemingly insignificant achievements and experience happiness in doing so. The importance of documentary film and its potential as a conduit to build understanding and acceptance within disability and the wider community, will be demonstrated as content of pivotal documentary films is discussed, including the author’s autobiographical documentary work.

Veronica Wain is an independent filmmaker and academic, currently employed with a Disability Service Organisation. She is mother to her nineteen year old daughter who was born with a rare genetic condition located on the 18th chromosome, resulting in physical and intellectual disability. Her interests are in documentary film, ethics and disability. Her post graduate practice based research and documentary film production was completed at the Griffith Film School located at Griffith University, Australia.

***Chapter 5: Framing Blindness through Documentary Practice***

***By Catalin Brylla, University of West London***

The portrayal of blindness in Western culture has largely constituted of stereotypical representations, branding blind people as either unfortunate, disabled and deprived, or exotic, mysterious and supernatural (Barasch, 2001). Documentaries, such as Black Sun (2005), have followed this trend by imposing themes in relation to memory, trauma, perception, the overcoming of sensorial limitations, and the coping with socio-cultural stigmatisation, resulting in blind people being commonly perceived as “the other” (Pointon 1999, Riley 2001, Corbella and Acevedo 2006).

This exclusive focus on the ‘extraordinary’ has come at the expense of omitting the ‘ordinary’. As Corbella and Acevedo (2010) observe, “it is infrequent to find characters with visual impairment represented as people who do housework, go shopping, or travel; that is, coping with the everyday tasks that are common to all people”. Accordingly, the notions of ‘ordinariness’ and ‘quotidian life’ prove valuable for representing blindness in documentary film, thus subverting stereotypical portrayals. However, in order to undo “otherness” and ensure an emic (instead of the usual etic) approach, the filmic representation of the ordinary needs to operate on an affective and experiential level of spectatorship (MacDougall 1998, Pennington 2000, Forgas 2001), which requires careful consideration in relation to narrative form and style.

My practice-led research endeavours to map blind people’s experience through studying their ordinary everyday practices and spaces with regards to what Ben Highmore (2010) calls the grammar and materiality of ordinariness. Daniel Miller (2010) considers attention to tacitly lived materiality (clothes, objects) the most effective way to understand and convey human subjectivity. Thus, my documentary films depict the material world of the blind characters as an embodiment of their subjectivity, and translate their spatial experience into an indexical (not iconic) experience for the viewer, shifting spectatorship away from ocularcentric interpretation towards synaesthetic experience.

***Chapter 6: Documentary and Aberrancy***

***By Dr Phoebe Hart, Queensland University of Technology***

This chapter explores the creative practice challenges of disabled filmmakers working in documentary. Throughout history, people with disabilities have been positioned somewhere between ‘prodigy literature and pornography, mythology and medical discourse’ (Gilbert 2000, 145). Indubitably, contemporary representations may have changed in step with societal values and ethical standards, yet it could be argued there is still slippage, and, moreover, very little is seen or heard about the disabled at all. Where once there was the ‘awe and horror’ of the highly visible carnival sideshow or medical treatise, the disabled body is now rendered absent by medical intervention, which is invoked to fix the disabled in both mind and body. Disabled filmmakers disrupt unwarranted categorization and erasure, by “owning” discursive practices, privileging their voice and creating a new ‘messy’ dimension. Taking into account the practices and aims of disabled filmmakers such as Jason DaSilva (*When I Walk*), Jenni Gold (*Cinemability*), Niko Von Glasow (*My Way to Olympia*) and the author’s own creative practice (*Orchids: My Intersex Adventure*), this chapter argues that collective memory and revised representation of difference ruptures stigma, and pre-inscription. Our work defies current medical interference and promotes ethical debates around the ‘will-to-normalize’ what is considered to be aberrant, deviant and abject. As such, the issue of intersexuality and its socio-cultural perception will be discussed, especially in relation to disability.

Dr Phoebe Hart is an award-winning television writer, director and producer and a screen studies academic at the Queensland University of Technology with an interest in screenwriting, autobiography, digital disruption, identity and representation in documentary, cultural studies, and feminist phenomenology. She is known particularly for her autobiographical road trip movie, Orchid: My Intersex Adventure, which has been screened and broadcast globally.

Her bibliography can be found at: <http://staff.qut.edu.au/staff/hartp/>

**PART TWO: Representation**

Spectatorship continues to be an important aspect of all forms of screen studies. In the case of documentary the study of spectatorship continues to act as a means to understand process of social construction as they develop and change. Scholars in disability studies have developed a considerable body of literature looking at the construction of disability on screen from the beginnings of moving images at the end of the 19th century to the present day. The discussions presented here continue this scholarship by looking at contemporary examples of representations with an emphasis on the appreciation of films that enrich the resources of disability history.

***Chapter 7: Thomas Quasthoff and the Performativity of (Dis-)ability***

***By Anna Drum, Dresden University of Technology***

The German Bass-baritone Thomas Quasthoff is one the great song and oratorio singers, who has been setting standards for almost four decades as a singer on the international stage with a remarkable range from the Baroque cantatas of Bach to solo Jazz improvisations. Today he works as a teacher at the Academy of Music “Hans Eisler” in Berlin and as speaker and reciter at concerts and at readings. At the same time, he was one of thousands Thalidomide babies who were born severely deformed in the Fifties and Sixties after their mothers had innocently taken the drug during pregnancy. In an interview with the German *Spiegel* in April 2012 the German said: ‘There was certainly a bonus for being disabled. But you only get it once.’ Often it is difficult to hide a disability. In case of Thomas Quasthoff it is nearly impossible. Most covers of his music CDs are designed with the portrait of his head. These covers do not reveal in reality, he has shortened arms and missing fingers. His legs were short so that he reaches only a body height of four feet three inches.

This chapter analyses the representation of visualizations of Quasthoff in three documentaries considering when and in which way the films mention the disability recognizing that they are not documentaries about disability but films about a specific singer. The disabled body is not the focus, but it is not possible to negate. If you try it, you deny the sitter’s identity. The chapter discusses how the medium film makes clear that the potential of iconology (description, analysis and interpretations of icons and iconic representations) is not yet exhausted. With this method you can describe the visual language. A language where ‘disability’ and ‘images’ are not considered by themselves, but are a construct of assignment by a culture.

Anna Drum is a Research Assistant at the Institute of Art and Music at the TU Dresden. She is currently writing her PhD thesis in History of Art/Film about the perspective of importance (size) in Modern Time in context with the extremely big and small body in the visual presentation since 1932. After completing her Magister exam in History of Art, Romance Philology (French), Modern German Literature and Media Science at the University of Kiel she was a graduate assistant at the Institute of Art History at the CAU of Kiel. Since 1989 she has been a regular contributor to the Art Gallery Drum in Schleswig (Northern Germany). Since 1999 she has worked as photographer for magazines and book publishing.

***Chapter 8: Rethinking ability and disability in the work of Van der Keuken***

***By Dr Hing Tsang, University Campus Suffolk***

This chapter adopts an inter-disciplinary approach to the representation of (dis)ability in the work of van der Keuken. As has been noted by the German film scholar Thomas Elsaesser (2005), van der Keuken’s documentary cinema is a highly embodied practice. This also includes an account of disability, whereby the latter is incorporated within a wider account of human ability that is constituted by tacit inter-corporeal consciousness and forms of deliberative agency that refuse to submit to reified forms of social apriori.

The chapter will discuss an early but key film *Herman Slobbe: Blind Child 2* (1966) as well as other later moments which frame and reframe the “impaired body”. Initially, the Dutch filmmaker had previously made a more general film about the blind, but he noted the rebellious and angry nature of one of the young adolescent protagonist who seemed to be a trouble maker. The chapter will then conclude with a brief consideration of some of the other moments within Van der Keuken’s oeuvre, most notably in *Face Value* (1991) and *Amsterdam Global Village (*1994) where the filmmaker celebrates a sense of beauty that arguably transcends the able/disabled divide. The sense of ‘making special’ (Dissanayake 1992) and extrapolating the extraordinary from the ordinary will be put forward as the achievement of van der Keuken’s recognition of personhood within the disabled. The stare of his subjects (Garland-Thompson) towards the viewer remind us not just of social divisions and constructs, but ultimately what is shared throughout the evolution of a developing and enabling species.

Hing Tsang is senior lecturer in digital film at University Campus Suffolk. He is author of Semiotics and Documentary: The Living Sign in the Cinema (2013). This book applies Peircean sign theory to the work of Jon Jost, van der Keuken, and Rithy Panh. He has previously published in journals and books on the work of van der Keuken and Jon Jost.

He currently teaches film practice at University Campus Suffolk. His research interests include American pragmatism, sign theory, bio-semiotics, visual anthropology and Asian film.

***Chapter 9: The Phenomenology of Animated Documentaries on Disability***

***By Slava Greenberg, University of Tel Aviv***

Social movements are discovering that it is no longer possible to think in Cartesian/Kantian ways about the body and society. Social interaction is intercorporeal (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), as well as intersubjective. What kind of intercorporeal and intersubjective interaction occurs while watching animated images and hearing the actual voices of people with disabilities? How does our sensible-body interact with these indexical sounds and symbolic images? Can they make a body sense the being-in-the-World (in-der-Welt-sein) with disability? Is it possible for these sensations to make the viewers uncomfortable in their own temporarily abled-bodies? And, can we talk about these phenomenological experiences in political terms?

This chapter focuses on two animated documentary series which explore the disabled experience in different cinematic styles*: Animated Minds* (Andy Glynne 2003) and *Creature Discomforts* (Lonard Cheshire Disability and Aardman Animations 2007-2008). These two series deal with the meaning of being-in-the-World with disability; *Animated Minds* explores the invisible disabilities of people with mental illnesses whereas *Creature Discomforts* explores visible disabilities of people with physical impairments. On the audio level, both series use the indexical voices of people narrating their subjective experiences of disability, but on the visual level, each series uses different animation techniques and cinematic styles. It is the visual differences which create two distinct viewing experiences. *Animated Minds* bombards the viewer with excessed colorful and metaphoric animated images, while *Creature Discomforts* uses a realistic "talking-heads" documentary style combined with stop-motion animal clay-mation.

Slava Greenberg is a PhD student and a lecturer in the Department of Film and Television, the Faculty of the Arts at Tel Aviv University. She has a B.Ed in Special Education and an M.A in Film and Television. She wrote her Masters thesis on Body in Conflict: The Disintegrated Body in Israeli Post-Second-Intifada Film. She currently teaches a course titled ‘The Body in Cinema’ which focuses on the contribution of the Critical Disability Studies to Cinema Studies. She is currently writing her dissertation supervised by Prof. Anat Zanger on animation and disability using Phenomenology as a methodology.

***Chapter 10: The Poetics of Touch: mediating the reality of deafblindness in documentary***

***By Dr Anne-Marie Callus, University of Malta***

As an audio-visual medium, the documentary cannot engage our sense of touch. But for people who are deafblind, it is the sense of touch which they use primarily to connect with people and with the world. Insofar as the documentary provides a mediated reality of its subject, how can one present the world of deafblind people through the two senses which are most inaccessible to them? And how can one portray the life of a deafblind person without the ‘touchy-feeliness’ and sentimentality which often accompany narratives about disabled people? This chapter discusses these two questions mainly with reference to Yi Seungjun’s 2011 documentary *Planet of Snail*. It analyses how this documentary conveys the world as experienced by Young-chan, a deafblind poet, arguing that while we can watch and listen to him ‘being in the world’ (including excerpts from his own poetry), we cannot experience the world as he does. The chapter then analyses the documentary as a narrative of a loving couple, Young-chan and his wife, Soon-ho, who has a physical disability, and how their love is portrayed touchingly but not in a touchy-feely manner. This aspect of the documentary is analysed in terms of what is considered acceptable or not from a disability rights perspective. This perspective is then extended into a consideration of the accessibility of audiovisual information through haptic technologies for deafblind people themselves.

Anne-Marie Callus is a lecturer in the Disability Studies Unit, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, University of Malta. She obtained her PhD at the Centre for Disability Studies, University of Leeds in 2011. Her research subject was the self-advocacy movement of people with intellectual disability in Malta. Among other subjects, she lectures and researches on the cultural representations of disabled people, and issues of rights and empowerment especially for persons with intellectual disability. She has worked in the disability sectors in Wales and in Malta since 1994. Prior to her appointment as a lecturer, she worked in special and inclusive education, community-based services, development of disability policy and research about disability issues. From 2010 to 2013 she was the Executive Director of the National Commission Persons with Disability, Malta’s disability anti-discrimination body.

***Chapter 11: Yes, we fuck!*- Sexual dissidence and *Crip* empowerment**

***By Andrea García-Santesmases, University of Barcelona***

In 2013 an activist group started *Yes, we fuck!* (De la Morena y Centeno, 2015) a documentary about sexuality and disability. The title is a declaration of interests: it is not about describing a piece of reality, it is more about blowing up the collective imaginary that visualizes disabled people as non-sexual beings. The strategy is to show real stories with explicit images that reveal disabled people as sexual beings, as bodies that desire and are desired. It wants these images to break our notion of “normality” and challenge our ideas on desire, pleasure and beauty. They are real stories where sex becomes a pleasure weapon for the individual and collective people’s rights.

*Yes, we fuck!* is a documentary that seeks not only to address sexuality in people with disabilities, but also a project where people participate to communicate their ideas and, above all, question themselves. Social networks are fundamental - the Facebook page has more than 6.000 followers. The project has been funded through a crowdfunding campaign because the directors did not want to be constraint by corporate agendas. One of them is a disabled man, thus, the documentary is not about how ‘normal’ people gaze at the different, but how disabled people represent themselves through *Crip* empowerment.

Andrea García-Santesmases is a sociologist and anthropologist. She holds a post-master’s degree in sociological research. Currently, she is doing a PhD in Sociology at the University of Barcelona about the construction of gender identity in people with physical disability. She is a member of COPOLIS, an international and inter-university research group of gender and social control. Her main lines of research are: disability, gender, body and sexuality.

**PART THREE: Identity, Participation and Exhibition**

This section presents research into the formation of identity through participation and exhibition. Conventional and new media are discussed with regards to the preservation, extension and exploration of disability cultures.Film festivals, reality TV formats, social media networking and YouTubing have all become part of the documentation and exhibition process, enabling a more pluralistic participation and informing the formation of real and virtual identities. This development calls for the analysis of documentary’s potential to provide inclusive participation of content creators and audiences, but also its capacity to create new barriers and stereotypes.

***Chapter 12: Global In(ter)dependent Disability Cinema: Targeting Ephemeral Domains of Belief***

***By Professor David Mitchell, The George Washington University, and Dr Sharon Snyder, The George Washington University***

The topic of this paper is a contemplation of some overarching modes and methods of presentation (one might even call them archetypes) in international in(ter)dependent disability films – particularly within the genre of disability documentary. Although it’s important to point out that we believe one cannot fully understand the form of disability documentary alone without a necessary juxtaposition alongside disability fiction films. Thus, we will move back and forth between two genres throughout this analysis.

In(ter)dependent disability films when contextualized and screened in a meaningful way within international disability film festivals allow for a crucial alternative approach to imagining disability: namely, these visual works provide opportunities for not only raising public awareness about inclusion (i.e. the sharing of public space) but, even more importantly, global disability cinema now provides viewers with an alternative ethical map of living interdependently with each other. Although we use in(ter)dependent living, interdependency, and in(ter)dependent film throughout this essay to address a variety of goals we primarily intend it to signify the ways in which disabled people pursue lives among others as a foundational value of what they bring into the world. This key shift in representational approaches to the interdependency of disability has the potential to exponentially escalate audience understanding of disability as a productive social identity in its own right. One that complicates previous social model efforts to merely argue disabled people should be able to live as non-disabled people do (Mitchell, Biopolitics of Disability).

Both based at the George Washington University in Washington DC, David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder have co-edited and co-authored amongst many other publications the foundational books *Cultural Locations of Disability* (2006), *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (2000), and *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* (1997). Their documentary *Vital Signs: Crip Culture Talks Back* (1997), won multiple awards, including the grand prize for best film at Rehabilitation International.

***Chapter 13: The early Years of Disability Programming on Channel 4***

***By Tony Steyger, Southampton Solent University***

In Channel 4’s1986 Annual Report, the broadcaster stated that it “continues to reflect the interests of those with special needs.”This statement was in its very own section, entitled Special Needs.When Channel 4 started there was little or no established disability programming on television.Indeed, there was barely any subtitling and most thinking people knew that until disabled people populated all genres on screen, across the schedules, this marginalisation would continue.

In 1983, with the overt encouragement and support of the Channel, Interface Productions had been formed by a group of disabled people with the express intention of representing their voice and perspectiveon and in television.

However, many of the documentaries subsequently produced by Interface, with the notable exception of Paralympics ‘84, were ghettoised intolate night or weekend daytime fare, a type of ‘otherness’ not really palatable for mainstream consumption.

The first documentary, *Second To None*, aired in 1983, took an explicit editorial position. It was a celebration of disabled artistes whose work was informed by their disability, not made despite it. Other programmes followed which were more campaigning, explorations of Religion, Care and Education, contextualising the status and inequality of disabled people.

It was in the sports programming produced by Interface Productions, which included *Gold*, a one-hour film about the Special Olympics in Dublin, where this high-minded positivity around disability ran into difficult and ambiguous territory.On the one hand, Paralympics ‘84 celebrated athleticism, but in the Special Olympics this sporting representation quickly reverted to stereotypes of the brave, the pitiable, the courageous and the unfortunate, with sports commentary by Olympic athlete Adrian Metcalfe.

This chapter explores the efforts of Interface Productions to represent disabled people on broadcast television through a variety of subject areas including art, sport and current affairs. Throughout, the chapter also reveals the political and creative soul-searching within this group of fledgling programme-makers. Finally, there is an assessment of the legacy the company had on the development of disability in the media.

Underpinning the chapter is the author’s first-hand account, as film director of the programmes, of the production realities on and off camera and the external checks and balances put in place by Channel 4 to ensure delivery and compliance.

Tony Steyger is a television producer and director and has worked for all the major UK broadcasters including BBC, ITV, Channel Four and Five. At the BBC he produced ground-breaking documentaries for Video Diaries. In 1994 he launched Maverick Television where he created BBC2's iconic Trade Secrets and made award winning programmes for Comic Relief. In 1997 he established the BBC’s first New Media Programmes unit, developing innovative programming for the BBC’s digital platforms. Tony continues to make programmes with a focus on new technology and developing the documentary form. He has been teaching all aspects of film and television production at Southampton Solent since 2005. In 2007 he helped establish the in-house production centre, Solent Productions, which makes projects for clients and broadcasters and provides professional industry opportunities for students.

***Chapter 14: Disability, independent living and the model communities of reality television***

***By Dr Anita Biressi, University of Roehampton***

This chapter pursues three related aims. First it provides a brief, critically engaged, overview of the early 2000s representation /marginalisation of disabled people in reality TV formats; considering the social makeup of reality TV populations and the scope for the involvement of non-normative subjects. In doing so it draws attention to some of the key debates which have taken place in media and disability studies, and among audiences, around disability and participation in popular factual programming. Second, focusing on the docusoap format, it explores the political problems and possibilities inherent in the model reality TV communities which predominantly feature people with disabilities. Third, it makes the argument that any critical reading of these programmes should be worked through in the context of the political, economic and social realities which constrain and/or enable disabled people in their everyday lives.

To address these issues in detail this chapter focuses on an observational documentary series called *The Specials* which features housemates with intellectual disabilities*. The Specials* began as an online docusoap following the lives of Sam and his friends Lucy, Lewis and Hilly, who live together in Brighton on the South Coast of England. The series was launched on the web in 2009 where it was critically well-received; attracting two Webby Awards (both 2010) for the People’s Choice and for the best show in the reality category. It also won a Cinema Tous Ecrans Prize to support public recognition and distribution. The Prize panel announced: “The Jury has unanimously decided to reward this audacious, polished, touching and funny work. This Web Series knows how to stage an original universe, freed of all voyeurism and conventional good feelings.” Since then the series has been adopted by the Oprah Winfrey Network which showcased Season One and then screened Season Two in 2014.

Anita Biressi is Reader in Media Cultures in the Department of Media, Culture and Language at the University of Roehampton, London. Her publications include Reality TV: Realism and Revelation (2005), The Tabloid Culture Reader (2008) and Class and Contemporary British Culture (2013). She has published widely on documentary formats including most recently in The Documentary Film Book (Winston 2013), A Companion to Reality Television (ed. Ouellette 2014) and A Critique of Judgment in Film and Television (eds. Panse and Rothermel 2014).

***Chapter 15: The production of disability in televisual experimental systems***

***By Robert Stock, University of Constance (Germany)***

Until recently, the production of disability in television formats was mainly limited to magazines and portraits or news coverage. Since the 2000s though, this conventional approach has been constantly challenged by projects like *Freakstars 3000* (Viva, Germany 2002), *Cast Offs* (Channel 4, UK 2006) or *The Undateables* (Channel 4, UK 2012). These experiments with conventional TV formats envisage the production of emancipated representational strategies and participation, disturb established regimes of envisioning dis/ability and raise awareness about the issues at stake when talking about dis/ability. At the same time, the approaches of these projects arealso partly being appropriated by mainstream media, where disability has recently become a significant factor inreality and casting shows. In order to analyse theproductionsmentioned, the chapter draws on the concept of experimental systems and connects it to the analysis of television. Indoing so, it is stressed that disability is not a fixed parameter reproduced in audio-visual media but has rather to be conceived as an emerging process framed by filmicpractices and connected conditions of possibility.

In the first part, the chapter concentrates on *Freakstars* 3000 by the well‑known theatre director Christoph Schlingensief, who is often criticized for staging the participating people withdisabilitiesina way that resonates with ethnologicalexhibitions or freak shows. In the second part, the contribution analyses the production of dis/ability in mainstream casting shows and their ‘enabling’ scripts that frame the “making up” of candidates with dis/ability (Hacking 2006). The focus lies on shows like *Supertalent*(Germany 2010), *American Idol* (USA 2009) or *Dancing with the Stars* (Australia2009) in order to demonstrate that knowledge about blind, deaf or prosthetic ways of perceiving the world are not to be taken for granted, but produced within the media framework of televisual practices andexperimental systems.

Robert Stock is a research assistant and the University of Konstanz where he coordinates the research initiative ‘Participation and Media’. He holds a Masters Degree in European Ethnography from the Humboldt University of Berlin. IN his dissertation project at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (Gießen) he analysed postcolonial politics in documentary films from Mozambique and Portugal. His main research interests are media studies, visual culture, disability studies and postcolonial studies. A postdoctoral project on the production of disability in documentary film, mainstream media and artistic practices and their ambivalent implications for contemporary participative culture is under development.

***Chapter 16: Document to preserve: moving pictures and the sign language***

***By Dr Magdalena Zdrodowska, Jagiellonian University (Poland)***

After a nationwide fundraising campaign in 1909 the American National Association of the Deaf (NAD) grounded the Motion Picture Fund. Its aim was to make use of then new technology, the moving pictures - the first medium able to capture the sign language. The collection of films produced by the NAD between 1910 and 1921 is a remarkable example of the community cooperation and collective efforts to document the core element of deaf identity. The main aim of the films was to document and preserve the sign language for the future generations. The masters of signing were asked to perform in front of camera in order to capture the finest signing. Films were descriptive, as real people and their performances were filmed, but also normative, because films were to be distributed among the deaf communities to unify the sign language as well as promote it.

This chapter analyzes the NAD films and reconstructs their contexts from both official and private documents gathered in the archives of the Gallaudet University (Washington, USA), presenting a unique case study of the deaf community’s self-consciousness and collective effort to maintain its language and culture through film.

Magdalena Zdrodowska is a media researcher and anthropologist. She is currently assistant professor in the Institute of Audiovisual Arts of the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. In 2010 she defended her doctoral thesis on television as a medium of intercultural communication. Now her interests concentrate on the relation between the d/Deaf and technology (including governmentality and bio technologies, audio and video representation media and assistive technologies). In 2013 published she published her book Television on the Borderlands. In 2010 she was visiting researcher at York University, Toronto, Canada and in 2014 at Gallaudet University, Washington, United States.

***Chapter 17: ‘First-time activation’ as a technology of inclusion and exclusion***

***By Professor Beate Ochsner, University of Constance (Germany)***

In recent years, a growing number of so-called ‘activation scenes’ in non-professional videos documenting the first activation of cochlear implant users have been published on different kinds of digital social networks like *YouTube* or *Vimeo*. Usually, the activation videos of babies, toddlers, children and adults follows a strict standard operating procedure thus producing almost identical sociotechnical arrangements. In this chapter these videos are presented not as mere representations of pre-existing events, but as experimental spaces through which knowledge about hearing, non-hearing or cochlear-implant hearing is produced. Relations, perceptions or reflections that arise from the interaction of different actors congeal into images, texts or practices. Rather than analysing the behaviour of hearing, deaf, hard-of-hearing or CI-hearing persons, the focus is on the mediality of knowledge spaces and thus on the translational processes between identity and alterity, ability and disability, hearing and deaf practices that are produced in the mediatic in-between of the audio-visual arrangements of the activation scenes.

In an exemplary choice of activation scenes in professional and non-professional documentaries, the materialization of the first time hearing-event through the technical object CI makes the ‚miracle‘ appear as a pure (and natural!) emergence, an act of addressing a presupposed (pre-)consciousness that always has been there and that now is positively addressable through the CI and/in its sociotechnical arrangement The technical object, on the one hand, thus guarantees the addressability of a deaf person, a selection which entails a fundamental inclusion, because the „subject“ is interpolated and produced at the same time that participation is made possible. However, simultaneously, it brings up exclusion on a very elementary level, because it anticipates and separates what can or will be an eventual (hearing) address in the future.

Beate Ochsner is a Professor in Media Studies at the University of Constance (Germany). Her research areas include Media and participation, audiovisual production of dis/ability; practices of hearing and seeing; monster and monstrosities and mediality/intermediality. Recent publications include: Monography: DeMONSTRAtion (Munich 2010), Andere Bilder: Zur medialen Produktion von Behinderung (Other Pictures. On the media production of disability), (B. Ochsner/A. Grebe (eds.), Bielefeld 2013). She has also published several chapters and articles in collaboration with Beate Ochsner, Robert Stock, and Markus Spöhrer.