



The 'One Armed Woman': How Disability is Portrayed in Mainstream British Newspapers

Emma-Kay Belcher

Supervised by: Dan Goodley

March 2010

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ABSTRACT

Issues of disability and impairment are presented to us in multifarious ways, never more so than through journalism. Although often presumed to be under-represented similarly to other minority groups, the 'disabled' community are subject to a surprisingly wide coverage and representation throughout contemporary media.

This study focuses on the case studies of Carrie Burnell and Riam Dean that have appeared in mainstream British newspapers whereby disability and its interconnections with gender have held prominent roles. The research looks at coverage from both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers and through a process of critical discourse analysis, breaks down the key themes, issues and messages of each article, through an analysis of language and meaning- as both reader and researcher.

The study employs a form of critical discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough (1995) and adapted by Richardson (2008) for specific application to newspapers. The method involves a three-tier analysis comprising of textual analysis, discursive and social practices; as well exploring issues of intertextuality and presupposition.

The study identifies five key themes, highlighting discourses of enfreakment, victimisation, protection and normalcy in the coverage of both stories; continuing to explore the wider impact of such portrayals and possible directions for reporting in the future.

KEY WORDS:	DISABILITY	GENDER	NORMALCY	DISCOURSE	NEWSPAPERS
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Literature Review

Disability is a social phenomenon engulfed in political, social, economic and cultural issues, resulting in marginalisation on both an institutional and social level. The World Health Organisation estimates that, globally, 600,000,000 people worldwide currently have a disability (2005 as cited in Kiani 2009, p.517), though this is a figure that inevitably will continue to rise. Disability is often 'confounded with terminal illness' (Longmoore 2005 as cited in Schwartz and Lutfiyya 2009, p.27) and the rise in popularity of the 'social model of disability', has rendered it necessary to draw distinction between what is regarded as impairment and disability.

Barnes (1998 as cited in Goodley and Rapley 2002 p.133) argues that 'Impairment in the modern, materialist world remains characteristically biological and not an aspect of disabled people's lives that can or should be changed.' It is this 'change' that leads to Goodley and Lawthom (2006, p.3) to the conclusion that disability, in contrast, is a 'socio-political category; a cultural artefact, a relational and psychological phenomenon'. Disability, therefore, can be understood as 'the restriction imposed on top of our impairments... a form of social oppression to which *all* disabled people are subject' (Sheldon 2006, p.69).

Although this distinction may, at first sight, appear to eradicate marginalisation, impairment is frequently used as 'a metaphor for dependency and vulnerability' (Taylor, 2008 p.35), highlighting the essentialist nature of the way impairment (and disability) is viewed. Two prominent and dichotomous ways of thinking about disability have traditionally been found within disability studies; the 'medical' model and the 'social' model. The medical model locates disability as 'an individual problem tied to the functional limitations of the bodies of people with impairments' (Swain et al 2008, p.22); a view which essentialises the 'problem' (disability). Marginalising the individual in this way only reinforces the belief of the existence of a normal corporeality (and thus the belief that anything that deviates from this majority is *abnormal*).

Mons (as cited in Swain et al 2008, p.56) stated that 'people who are socially excluded and oppressed, may find solidarity in the shared experience of exclusion itself'. In 1976, this appeared to be true, when the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) proposed an ideology to counter the medical model (Swain et al 2008, p.23) , later coined by Oliver (1983 as cited in Barnes 2000, p.443) as the 'social model' of disability. Swain et al (2008, p.24) define the principles of the social model as the belief that 'disability is a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments'. However, Shakespeare (2006) highlights that even if the social barriers implicated by this model are removed; there are still a number of intrinsic limitations experienced by disabled people. Although both the medical and social models prescribe a way for us to theorise disability, both frameworks risk the [theorised] individual becoming 'lost within the framework of medical symptoms of

social inequalities' (Simmons et al. 2008, p.733). For example, in their attempt to define impairment (Bickenbach et al. 1999, p.1176) the UPIAS provide a definition that is highly problematic;

'Impairment is the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment.' (UPIAS 1976 as cited in Bickenbach et al 1999, p. 1176)

Through implying that impairment is a limitation *'within'* the individual, the UPIAS definition serves to further essentialise the impaired individual; contradicting their original notion and showing that this view of impairment holds its own disabling barriers.

It is the problems faced by these widely accepted models that draw the attention of Critical Disability Studies writers such as Shakespeare (2006) and Davis (1995). Shakespeare (2006) claims that the current position that British Disability Studies finds itself in is dangerous; caught up in the dichotomies discussed previously (impairment/disability and social/medical). Although it is undeniable that medicalisation and social/environmental barriers do exist, it appears important to not contain explorations of disability within these constraints or, as Shakespeare (2006, p.198) calls it; 'social model orthodoxy'.

Davis (1995) has argued the need for a re-evaluation of the category of disability itself, stating that;

'The first task at hand is... to see that the object of disability studies is not the person using the wheelchair or the Deaf person but the set of social, historical, economic and cultural processes that regulate and control the way we think about and think through the body.' (Davis 1995, p.2)

His argument is founded on the concept of normalcy, the perceived existence of an able-bodied corporeal 'norm'; a benchmark against which we 'create the 'problem' of the disabled person' (Davis 1995, p.24). This is highly problematic in that it instils the notion of corporeal deviance in disability thinking, serving to marginalise disabled people further. The notion of corporeal deviance is particularly applicable to studies of the interconnections of disability and gender. Garland-Thomson (1997, p.279) comments that 'both the female and the disabled body are cast within cultural discourse as deviant and inferior... both are defined in opposition to a valued norm'; a conceptualisation that can be linked all the way back to Aristotle (Davis, 1997 p.51) who referred to the female body as a 'deformity of man'. Similarly, Meekosha (2000,p.164) notes that, traditionally, media portrayals of women with impairments tend to emphasis discourses of 'suffering, overcoming and striving' which seem both unrealistic and unenlightening as a general conception of the lived experience of disabled women.

Disability as a phenomenon is not limited to academic discourses; it is within every part of our day-to-day experience and, therefore, it is important to establish how the lived experiences of disabled people are presented to and interpreted by, the non-disabled majority that constitutes society. One major practice involves the projection of societal issues, such as disability, in journalism and, more specifically, newspapers- the power of which Schwartz and Lutfiyya (2009, p.27) argue 'cannot be over-emphasised'.

Hafferty and Foster (1994) state that, as one of the catalytic facilitators of social change, contemporary news is important in that it both reflects and shapes public attitudes and values, in regards to disability. Biklen (1987 as cited in Schwartz and Lutfiyya 2009, p.27) asserts that it is this power of influence which allows newspapers to shape 'the public agenda' and positions journalism as a practice that 'exists to enable citizens to better understand their lives and their position(s) in the world' (Richardson 2007, p.7).

However, the journalism workforce mirrors society in that the population largely under represents disability. Only 9.5% of the working population identify as being 'disabled' (Labour Force Survey 2006) , and the Guardian, a large national paper in the UK, estimates that only 1% of the applications they receive for jobs, disclose some form of disability (The Guardian 2005). News stories and journalism in general, therefore, have an important responsibility to 'frame issues for the general public who may have less contact with people with disabilities than other social groups.' (Haller and Ralph 2001 as cited in Schwartz and Lutfiyya 2009, p.33). However, without a significant presence within journalism, disability risks misrepresentation; something which Hafferty and Foster (1994 as cited in Wall 2007, p.22) argue can actually benefit the non-disabled majority for;

'Presenting unrealistic images of the disabled absolves society and its agents from its responsibility to acknowledge and remediate its... disabling social environment.'

A number of studies have explored the portrayal of disability within news reporting; many of which have followed a quantitative methodology. Gold and Auslander (1999) explored a cross-cultural examination of the portrayal of disability in Israeli and Canadian newspapers. Their results found that the Canadian articles were of far greater length than those in the Israeli newspapers which the researchers suggest may be representative of a 'greater social valuing' of disability issues in Canada (p.722). This was also supported by the findings that disabled people were three times more likely to be quoted in Canadian newspapers than Israeli. Both nations displayed a tendency to medicalise portrayals of disability which Gold and Auslander (1999, p.725) noted, appears to be an ingrained (and unlikely to change) aspect of the industry.

Another quantitative study was conducted by Jones and Harwood (2009) who explored the portrayal of autism in Australian print media. The study found that

portrayals of autism were based on the misrepresentative dual stereotypes of uncontrollability/violence and stress/sadness (p.15). The study also found a noticeable lack of useful information in regards to autism. The articles analysed, as with Gold and Auslander's (1999) findings, generally medicalised the sufferers of autism they portrayed; showing a more traditional (than progressive) approach to disability.

Although quantitative methodologies allow for analysis of a wider spread of data, it could be argued that far more insight can be reaped from a qualitative approach. Quantitative approaches are far too quick to impose categories onto their subjects which, at times, can be just as marginalising as the issues being explored. In contrast to the studies already mentioned, Schwartz and Lutfiyya (2009) conducted a qualitative exploration of the portrayal of disability and assisted suicide in newspapers. The study followed a conceptual framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as proposed by Fairclough (1995) and adapted by Richardson (2008) for the specific analysis of newspaper articles. The study, again, found a medicalisation of disability, and a negative portrayal of disability as a 'fate worse than death' (Schwartz and Lutfiyya 2009, p.36).

Although there are some studies investigating the portrayal of disability in newspapers, there appears to be a lack of studies a) investigating British newspapers and b) investigating newspaper portrayals of the interconnections of disability and gender. Therefore, this study has chosen to explore both of these issues through the analysis of two case studies taken from British newspapers in the past year.

The study will follow the same CDA framework as used by Schwartz and Lutfiyya (2009) and will aim to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How is disability portrayed in British newspapers?
- 2) How are the interconnections of gender and disability portrayed in British newspapers?
- 3) What theorisations of disability are present within these portrayals?

Methodology

This study follows a conceptual framework of critical discourse analysis informed by critical disability studies in an attempt to explore the portrayal of disability in British newspapers. Discourse analysis is a form of theoretical practice which provides us with insights to 'pinpoint the everyday manifestations and displays of social problems in communication and interaction' (van Dijk 1985 as cited in Schwartz and Lutfiyya 2009, p.29). It is, therefore, a particularly useful method for an analysis of social phenomenon as it draws on not just the psychological, but sociological, anthropological and paralinguistic elements. Although the all-encompassing nature

of discourse analysis is undoubtedly a strength of the discipline, it also means that there is a contested view of what 'discourse' is understood to be (Schwartz and Lutfiyya 2009, p.29).

Foucault (1972 as cited in Schwartz and Lutfiyya 2009, p.29) describes discourses as 'sometimes the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements and sometimes as a regulated practice that counts for a certain number of statements'. He is also renowned for stating that 'nothing meaningful exists outside of discourse' (1972 as cited in Hall 1997, p.44) which Hall (1997, p.45) interprets as; 'the concept of discourse is not about whether things exist but about where the meaning comes from'.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) furthers this framework through providing a practice of discourse analysis that 'primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (van Dijk 2001, p.352). One particularly prominent CDA theorist is Fairclough, whose method aims to incorporate two different 'senses' of discourse; 'discourse as social action and interaction' and 'a social construction of reality' (1995 as cited in Schwartz and Lutfiyya 2009, p.30). Fairclough conceptualises discourse as 'the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view' (Fairclough 1995 as cited in Schwartz and Lutfiyya 2009, p.30). It is felt that such an approach is particularly relevant to this study as it compliments the underlying principles of critical disability studies.

Critical disability studies, is an extension of general disability studies thinking, in that rather than simply considering disability as medicalised or a result of social/environmental barriers; it calls for a 'counter-hegemony *with* people', understanding disability as an 'expression of wider socio-economic, political and cultural formations' (Goodley 2007, p.5). Critical disability studies, therefore, is particularly relevant to an exploration of disability portrayal in the media, as newspapers are a thriving arena of the socio-economic, political and cultural. The newspaper industry also represents a dominant institution within British culture; one which possesses the power to set the public agenda, as well as open public debates (Schwartz and Lutfiyya 2009, p.27). Therefore, a CDS/CDA exploration of issues of power, institution and ideology seems necessary in deconstructing the nature of disability portrayal in the news. Despite having undertaken extensive reading and research, it should be noted that prior to this study, the researcher had little experience of working within the realms of both CDS and CDA, and although they feel confident in their ability to successfully apply these frameworks to analysis, they are aware that, reflexively, this must be acknowledged.

A number of past studies (Gold and Auslander 1999, Jones and Harwood 2009) have successfully applied quantitative methods of analytic enquiry to the portrayal of disability in print media. However, quantitative techniques have a tendency to rely

on the categorisation of linguistic features in accordance with a predetermined framework: a potentially problematic methodology for an analysis of articles where multiple foci are often present.

The focuses of the analysis within this study are stories, whereby the primary issue relates to disability, which have featured within mainstream British newspapers. Newspapers represent a social practice ingrained in contemporary culture; 'enabling citizens to better understand their lives and their position(s) in the world' (Richardson 2007, p.7) whilst providing 'a representation of the world in language' (Fowler as cited in Schwartz et al 2009, p.28). Newspapers, therefore, represent a particularly relevant source for the application of critical discourse analysis.

The corpus for analysis is drawn from the two case studies of Cerrie Burnell and Riam Dean, chosen as, over the past year; there has been a large body of coverage of the stories which was readily accessible. As this is a retrospective analysis, articles were obtained by searching the online databases of all the national British papers (broadsheet and tabloid); with all the articles directly-related to these stories drawn for inclusion in the corpus. In total there were 16 articles related to these stories, 7 for Cerrie Burnell and 9 for Riam Dean; all of these were selected for analysis.

These case studies were chosen for two predominant reasons. Firstly, due to the extensive coverage across a wide range of newspapers (unlike some of the other stories that were considered); and, secondly, due to personal interest, as the researcher is also a young woman with a visible impairment.

Richardson (2007) has provided a CDA framework, derived from Fairclough's (1995) original CDA approach, for analysing newspaper reports. Following Schwartz and Lutfiyya's successful application of this framework in an analysis of the portrayal of disability and assisted suicide in contemporary print media (2009) has led to the decision that this is an appropriate method of analysis to be instrumented in this study. Richardson's method is three-dimensional, incorporating levels of textual, discursive and social analysis (2007, p.2) and thus also providing a method of discursive *deconstruction*. The first of these levels of analysis is textual analysis; described as 'the way propositions are combined and sequenced' (Richardson 2007, p.38). Textual analysis incorporates ideational, interpersonal and textual function (Richardson 2007, p.38) incorporating analyses of lexical choice and presupposition ('a taken-for-granted, implicit claim embedded within the explicit meaning of a text' p.63).

Secondly, an analysis concerned with 'discursive practices' is observed; involving attendance to issues of 'intertextuality' ('the notion that texts cannot be viewed or studied in isolation since texts are not produced or consumed in isolation'; Richardson 2007, p.100) as well as 'conceptualising the audience', whereby the manner in which the audience is theorised is explored. The final level of analysis is concerned with wider 'social practices', derived from the notions of Foucault (2002)

of the social relations of power. This final level of analysis requires an exploration of the issue, message and response articulated through the discourse as a result of the 'structures, institutions and values... that permeate and structure the activities and outputs of journalism' (Richardson, 2007 p.114).

Analysis involved condensing the data into analysable units, through the creation of themes. Richardson's (2008) methodology was then applied to each of these themes, incorporating all three stages, as well as considerations of intertextuality and presupposition. Reflexive issues were addressed throughout the analysis and will be reconsidered further, within the concluding discussion.

The Corpus:

Cerrie Burnell:

In early 2009, Cerrie Burnell, a 29 year old actress, was appointed the position of Children's Television Presenter on the popular mainstream channel 'CBeebies' (aimed at children from 0-6 years). Cerrie was born with a physical impairment that means her left arm ends just below the elbow. Following her appointment to CBeebies, a small proportion of viewers expressed dissatisfaction with her appointment on the grounds that the inclusion of a presenter with a visible physical impairment was inappropriate on daytime children's television. The story was picked up by the British press following 'nine' complaints (Mangan 2009) and an amount of internet interest in the story. However, this is a key example of intertextuality (Richardson 2007, p.100) for, without the public interest and 'official'/internet complaints, the story may not have surfaced at all.

All the articles are written at the time of her appointment (February 2009) by mainstream journalists, with one article (Lapper 2009) written by a guest writer who is also a disability activist.

Riam Dean:

In June 2009, Riam Dean, a 22 year old law student, took her employer Abercrombie & Fitch to an employment tribunal following her alleged 'unfair dismissal' on the grounds of her physical impairment. Like Cerrie, Riam was born with her right arm reaching just below the elbow. Unlike Cerrie, Riam has chosen to wear a prosthesis and the story claims that she faced discrimination on the grounds of the visibility of her impairment (or prosthesis) during her employment; culminating in an incident where she was informed that the cardigan she was wearing to cover her prosthesis contravened the company's 'look policy' (English 2009) and, consequently, she was asked to leave the shop floor and work in the stockroom. Seven of the articles reporting this story are written whilst the tribunal was taking place, whereas two (Hoyle 2009 and Malvern 2009) were written two months after Riam won her claim for compensation (receiving £9,000 in damages- Malvern 2009). All the articles are written by mainstream journalists.

Analysis

Enfreaking Female Disabled Bodies

Cerrie Burnell is presented to the reader as a 'slim, blonde' (Bannerman 2009) children's television presenter who is the 'victim of a disturbing campaign by parents' (Case 2009). However, the primary subject of these articles is Cerrie's physical impairment and the ableist response from the viewing public. Cerrie's impairment is reported differently in each of the seven articles analysed, with three, Case (2009), Lapper (2009) and Thomas (2009) referring to Cerrie as 'one-armed' (yet, clearly, accompanying photos show that Cerrie has two arms) and the remaining four acknowledging that Cerrie, in fact, does possess two upper body limbs. In the latter, lexical emphasis instead resides on the fact that one of Cerrie's arms is 'non-standard' and thus deviant from 'normal' corporeality. Mangan (2009) and Lambert (2009) both describe Cerrie as possessing 'only one hand', whereas Bannerman (2009) describes Cerrie as [having a] 'stump where her lower right arm should be'. All of these examples display lexical choices that focus on comparative accounts of *disability* with ability- implying an ontological 'lacking' requiring an apologia in the explanation of why Cerrie's arm deviates from what is regarded as the norm.

Portrayals of Cerrie display the juxtaposition of discourses of 'abnormality' with beauty. Whereas Cerrie is described as 'slim and blonde' (Bannerman 2009) and 'bright, bubbly and smiley' (Parsons 2009) in contrast, she is accused of 'scaring toddlers' (Mangan 2009), 'upsetting children' (Lapper 2009) and 'possibly causing sleep problems' (Thomas 2009); an example of how disabled women 'are continually objectified by the reaction of others' (Morris 1993 as cited in Fawcett 2000, p.16). The transition from conceptualising Cerrie as a young woman to a disabled young woman serves to highlight how 'the relationship between physical attractiveness, sexuality and impairment disqualifies disabled women on the basis that their impairment, in conventional terms, renders them sexless.' (Taylor 2008, p.35)

In many respects, Cerrie is presented as a 'dismembered body image' (Browne et al 1985 as cited in Begum 1992, p.76), defying the 'dominant notion of normal appearance' (Begum 1992, p.76). A clear example of this can be drawn from Mangan's (2009) report which serves to textually disembodify Cerrie's impairment, through referring at one point to 'Burnell's arm'- a seemingly separate disabled entity from Cerrie's otherwise 'normal' body (again, the separation of dis/ability). As a visible impairment, Cerrie's arm and general appearance is consistently discussed in terms of aesthetic qualities. She is described as a 'sight' (Mandan 2009, Bannerman 2009) which has 'sparked complaints' (Lambert 2009) and combined with Bannerman's (2009) particularly profound statement that Cerrie is 'conspicuous[ly] absen[t] of a hand'; the result in an enfreakment of Cerrie's impairment. She becomes the 'one armed woman', a spectacle that evokes fear and resentment and, perhaps, a perfect example of what Hughes (2010, p.11) describes

as a 'social contaminant'- she is portrayed as a reminder that disability is never far from our own lives.

Disturbing Ableist Pedagogies

Cerrie is presented as a 'victim' of a 'disturbing campaign' (Thomas 2009, Case 2009, Parsons 2009); which shows an interesting use of the heteronym 'disturbing'. What is it about Cerrie that is disturbing? At first it seems the 'disturbance' results from the normalising gaze inflicted upon her visible impairment , however, the real disturbance appears to be located in the notion that; 'non-disabled individuals embody and enact ableism by clinging onto normalcy and disavowing their fragile, transient, visceral identities' (Hughes 2010, p.18). A consistent theme throughout the articles is that Cerrie's inclusion on Children's Television has 'forced' parents to 'discuss the issue of disability' with their children (Mangan 2009, Thomas 2009, Bannerman 2009). Disability is described within these articles as a complex subject, which requires 'skill to explain' (Lapper 2009) and which shouldn't be 'discussed at a too-early-age' (Case 2009); with Cerrie herself claiming she 'presents an intimate opportunity to discuss disability' (Bannerman 2009) .

Freire (2000, p.72) argues that education too often becomes a situation whereby, rather than communicating, those in a position to teach/inform others, 'deposit' their knowledge and ideals 'into' those being taught. Freire calls this the 'banking' concept of education and, from some of the parental responses; it appears to be the form of education favoured by these adults. By removing disability from the equation (in this case, removing Cerrie) parents restrict the scope of action available to their children, who are denied both the opportunity to view impairment/disability and to comprehend it.

There appears to be a distinct irony in the placement of Cerrie in the 'Do and Discover' slot of CBeebies (Thomas 1999) when juxtaposed with the reports that parents do not want their children to 'discover' disability in what Cerrie describes as 'the security of their own home' (Bannerman 2009). Shaul et al (1985 as cited in Traustadottir 1990) states that 'since women with disabilities are seen as dependent... it is difficult for many to imagine how a mother with a disability can fill the caring and nurturing mothering role.' Cerrie herself is a mother, which is used by Bannerman (2009) and Case (2009) as a justification for her inclusion as children's presenter. Such a role is considered 'sacred' in that presenters 'become part of the family' (Lambert 2009) and thus, an acceptance of Cerrie also acknowledges an acceptance of impairment into the normal family life of thousands. In a culture where impairment 'embodies concerns held by able-bodied people about abnormal bodies' (Wendell 1996 as cited in Fawcett 2000, p.27) it is unsurprising that resistance has been observed.

Embodying Normate Corporealities

Riam Dean is portrayed to us as a 'pretty shop assistant' (Phillips 2009) and 'disabled law student' (English 2009) who wears a 'prosthetic forearm' (Fricker 2009, Hughes 2009 et al.) and, consequently, 'was kept away from Abercrombie and Fitch shop customers' (Fricker 2009). Unlike Cerrie, Riam's disability is reported consistently throughout all nine articles analysed. She is described as born 'with her left forearm missing' (Phillips 2009, English 2009) or, 'without her left forearm' (Fricker 2009, Hughes 2009); again, imposing a normalizing gaze on her 'deviance' from societal notions of corporeality. However, unlike Cerrie, Riam is portrayed as responding to this imposition through her choice of wearing a prosthesis. Shakespeare (1994 as cited in Fawcett 2000, p.15) alleges that 'the identity of individuals is strengthened by the isolation and rejection of anomaly or difference'. Arguably, through choosing to wear a prosthesis, Riam has positioned herself in a stronger position than Cerrie (this is not mirrored in some of the descriptions ascribed to her). In one article, Riam is referred to as having a 'false arm' (Fricker 2009) rather than a prosthesis (English 2009). This implies the instrumentation of a 'normalising deceit' by Riam; or, as described by Mitchell and Snyder (2000 as cited in Hughes 2010, p.14), 'a prosthesis seeks to accomplish an illusion' which 'covers-up and covers over... to re-present what an individual is'.

The use of the word 'false' in Fricker's (2009) article, in contrast to 'artificial' in English's (2009) suggests that Fricker is highlighting Riam's continuing exclusion from normalcy/able-bodiedness despite her attempts to present her body in the same manner as the non-disabled majority. Riam is quoted as stating that 'I was never asked whether I had a disability at my interview and, to be honest, it never occurred to me to mention it.' (English 2009), implying that prior to her employment Riam did not identify as being disabled. However, Riam's choice to cover up her prosthesis at the interview and during her employment implies that she is fully aware of her corporeal deviance and actively strives to re-present herself in a normate manner. To an extent this appears to result in a marked difference in the way Riam is depicted for, unlike Cerrie, Riam is textually granted acknowledgement of her upper arm. Phillips (2009) accurately states that Riam is 'missing her left forearm' (implying she possess an upper arm) and at no point is Riam subject to the same hyperbolic language as Cerrie: the 'one armed woman' (Thomas 2009).

It could be argued that through her choice to wear a prosthesis, Riam has been granted a 'honorary able-bodiedness' which, in turn, elicits protection from both the newspaper coverage she receives, but also from the non-disabled majority as a whole. Naturally, this is something that could have served to influence/bias the analysis, as the journalistic conventions employed do (quite convincingly) represent Riam in a vulnerable manner; this is something that will be addressed within the next theme.

Through sensationalism, (such as the headline 'I was *banished* to the stockroom' ,English 2009) the reports have portrayed Riam in a way that elicits images that serve to position her within a fairytale-like narrative; she is 'hidden' (Phillips 2009)

and 'banished' (English 2009) whilst 'forced to work out of sight in [the] storeroom' (Hughes 2009). To Riam, her prosthesis aims to serve the same purpose as Cinderella's glass slipper- it provides a connection and opportunity of transformation with a 'privileged' (able bodied) majority of which, at birth, she was not granted instant access to. As someone with a number of close friends and family with impairments, I found this particularly condescending as a reader and troubling when approaching the analysis as the 'fairytale-esque' nature of the narrative is, in my opinion, particularly diminishing of women (although it has positive consequences for Riam within the legislative framework).

Despite choosing to wear her prosthesis and thus, embody a 'standard' corporeality, Riam is still denied access to such an identity; a process which Begum (1992, p.71) states leaves the disabled individual feeling 'embarrassed and an inconvenience'. This is the approach taken by the articles, which position Riam as 'personally diminished' (Pidd 2009) 'humiliated' and 'questioning her worth as a human being' (Hughes 2009). Through her exclusion from the shop floor, Riam is left re-evaluating her position as a disabled female, acknowledging her position within a larger (non-disabled) framework leading to her claim that (since her experience at A&F) 'she wasn't the same person' (Hughes 2009). In turn, this supports the findings of Fine and Asch (1985 as cited in Begum 1992, p.73) that 'the disabled woman appears to be more likely to introject society's rejection, and to identify as disabled'.

Victimising the Disabled Female

'To be female is to be weak, passive and dependent... conforming to the social stereotypes of the disabled. For both categories the disabled woman inherits ascriptions of passivity, and weakness.' (Fine and Asch 1985 as cited in Begum 1992, p.72)

Both Cerrie and Riam are subject to the dual oppression of being females with impairments (Begum 1992, p.71); a weakened position which is clearly portrayed through the lexical choices made. Despite one article stating that Cerrie is a 29 year old woman (Mangan 2009) , she is referred to in further articles (Bannerman 2009) as a 'girl' and (in all the articles analysed) a 'victim'. Positioning Cerrie as a 'victim' is the result of the objectification that has resulted from the complaints made against her appointment on CBeebies. Unlike Riam, the opposition to Cerrie is directly presented to the reader, with quotes intertextually drawn from online message boards and blogs;

'Is it just me, or does anyone else think the new woman presenter in CBeebies may scare the kids because of her disability?' (Thomas 2009)

'I know *it* would have played on my eldest daughter's mind and possibly caused sleep problems' (Bannerman 2009)

Only two of the articles actually interview Cerrie and, serve to weaken her position further, rather than acting as a means for Cerrie to defend the victimised position she has been assigned. For example, in Lambert (2009), the statement 'If I had to change anything... it would be to make my hair blonder so I didn't have to keep paying for highlights' is misconstrued to produce the headline 'Disabled BBC presenter Cerrie Burnell 'would rather be blonde than have two hands''. This is telling of the interview technique, implying that Cerrie was posed a question that required her to consider 'changing' or 'normalising' her body. By attributing Cerrie to the position of 'blonde', Lambert (2009) succeeds in weakening her position further, due to the paradoxical nature of the social connotations attributed to 'blondeness'. 'Blondeness' is traditionally understood as a juxtaposition of desire/beauty with derision/unintelligence (Burton 2005, p.1). However, Cerrie is already denied the identification with 'beauty' as a result of her positioning as a disabled female (Begum 1992) and, therefore, is left with the negative attributes/stigma of being 'blonde'.

The difference between Riam and Cerrie is that, due to the legislative context of which Riam's story is embedded; unlike Cerrie (who tries to avoid victimisation) Riam is required to position herself as a victim. Only examples from within the legislative discourse are available to the authors who, instead, rely on the retrospective accounts of the incidents from Riam herself in their narratives ('Maria knew I wouldn't take off my cardigan and she banished me because of my disability' Hoyle 2009). The nature of Riam's story means that it is actually advantageous to position herself in the weakest position possible, in her attempt to succeed at her tribunal. Her accounts, therefore, are highly emotive, stating she was 'shocked' and 'ashamed' by her treatment (Hoyle 2009), 'humiliated' and 'taunted' (Fricker 2009) and 'never prepared for such debasement' (Hughes 2009).

Riam is never directly challenged by the authors in regards to her allegations; suggesting the press has accepted her use of the media as a vehicle for supporting her tribunal case. This is something that I feel particularly affected the way I approached my analysis of Riam's story. Through victimising herself and weakening her position I found it hard to view Riam positively as her story appeared to lack the genuineness of Cerrie's. There also appeared to be less room for objective opinion in the case of Riam in that, it feels the articles merely prescribe her story as *fact* whereas Cerrie's story elicited far more discussion and exploration.

Eliciting Discourses of Protection

Swain and French (2008, p.35) state that traditionally 'impairment has been used more readily as a metaphor for dependency and vulnerability', which can be seen in the discourses of protection present in both sets of articles. Lapper (2009) acknowledges the vulnerability of the disabled position, stating that 'the disabled are simply not granted the same kind of protection by the conventions of society'. Although both Riam and Cerrie are portrayed as victims in need of protection (whether through their own devices or others), only Riam is subject to discourses of

guardianship. Riam is the 'hidden girl' (Phillips 2009) 'banished' from the public gaze because her 'prosthetic arm didn't fit... public image' (English 2009). As Riam visually appears to have embraced normative corporeality, she is an example of 'the enhancement of the normalized disabled person over and above the valuation of disabled people *per se*.' (Taylor 2008, p.40). Riam's story is solely located within a legislative framework, with reports mirroring court proceedings in that support is drawn from close friends (Pidd 2009) and family (Hoyle 2009) and criticism from A&F representatives (Pidd 2009). No other comments from people outside of the legislative discourse were reported.

Cerrie, in contrast, has chosen to disavow her 'deviant' corporeality and as a result evokes no such protection. Whereas Riam is the young (disabled) girl taking on the big corporate chain, Cerrie appears to almost embody disability- a sort of catalyst for discussion of the disability rights movement, with support predominately drawn from other 'well-known' disabled individuals. . Alison Lapper is described as giving a 'impassioned riposte' (Lapper 2009) whereas [generically inferred] 'disability groups' have 'fiercely defended [her]' (Thomas 2009).

Through the use of sensationalism and presupposition, reports such as Mangan (2009) infer a wholly negative reaction to Cerrie's appointment. The reality is that only three actual negative comments are repeatedly reported throughout all seven articles, and further articles tell us that only nine official complaints related to Cerrie's appointment have been logged (Bannerman 2009). Given that the able-bodied response to Cerrie's situation has been described as 'strong' (Mangan 2009), 'nasty' and 'flooding message boards' (Case 2009), it seems that by choosing to draw on other disabled people in Cerrie's defence has resulted in the politicising of Cerrie; exposing the 'universal' notion of what the issues faced by disabled people are.

Support from the non-disabled community is found, however, these statements tend to offer messages of kindness rather than challenges to comments made about her (Thomas 2009). It is only other disabled people/groups that offer a response of equal fierceness to the ableist comments made; serving to further strengthen the dis/abled binary that has resulted in this situation in the first place. Therefore, the politicisation of her position places Cerrie within a larger context. This perhaps explains why Parsons (2009) states 'I can't bring myself to feel sorry for Cerrie'; for, acknowledgment of Cerrie's marginalisation is synonymous to the recognition of the marginalisation of the disabled community as a whole (a scary step for any journalist to take).

Discussion

A considerable amount of support for previous research was found within this study. Analysis identified a tendency to portray disability as an essentialised and pathologised phenomenon, with most explicitly in the case of Cerrie (due to Riam's

location within a legislative framework), the 'problem' (impairment/deviance) textually positioned with the individual. This was found by the research covered in the literature review, in particular, the studies of Gold and Auslander (1999) and Jones and Harwood (2009). Despite the differences in the problematising of impairment within the coverage of both Cerrie and Riam, one consistency within all of the portrayals is the weakened and inferior positioning of both women (namely through victimisation); resulting both from their impairment (and perceived disability) and their gender. Findings supported the previous work of Meekosha (2000,p.164) who found that, traditionally, media portrayals of women with impairments tend to emphasis discourses of 'suffering, overcoming and striving'; for Cerrie in terms of overcoming parental opposition and for Riam in overcoming her discrimination at work. Through victimisation, both narratives reinforce Taylor's (2008, p.33) observation that 'impairment is frequently used as a metaphor for dependency and vulnerability' as is seen in the discourses of protection (Cerrie) and guardianship (Riam) found.

Although not explicitly inferred, the ab/normal binary is consistently reinforced throughout all of the articles; through the 'enfreakment' of Cerrie's impairment, the challenge to dis/able(d) pedagogies and the general consensus that both women's impairments constitute an ontological lacking, as 'missing entities'. Similarly, the constant juxtaposition of beauty and impairment projects (and perhaps for some, reinforces) the belief that impairment is synonymous to unattractiveness.

The implications for the portrayal of such negative messages are potentially disabling, for both readers with impairments and female readers, as they serve to reinforce the already weakened position experienced by many disabled people. Naturally, this has the opposite effect for the non-disabled reader, reinforcing their strengthened position and (for some) misconstrued notions.

Generally, the articles tended to support the notions of the medical model of disability, with a strong emphasis on corporeal deviance and gender inferiority. However, the messages within the narratives contrastively illuminated disabling barriers and issues that would support the notions of the social model of disability. For example, Thomas's conceptualisation of the notions of the social model, that 'disability... involve[es] the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments' (2005 as cited in Swain et al 2008, p.24) can be applied to both narratives. For Riam, 'restrictions' lie within the narratives of the policies and attitudes of Abercrombie and Fitch, whereas, for Cerrie, it is both the restrictive nature of the attitudes of a (minority) of parents of children who watch the CBeebies channel and the choice to not wear a prosthesis.

Most predominately, the analysis highlighted a lack of progressive thought in the reporting styles attributed to disability coverage. Cerrie is enfreaked, her impairment is textually treated as an anomaly and she is located within a disabling discourse of pedagogy. Approaching disability through such an oppressive lens serves to only

marginalise Cerrie further and completely misses the opportunity to educate, help and inform the non-disabled majority of the audience to which the articles are directed. In contrast to present practices, if newspapers produced narratives of liberation education (Freire 2000, p.72) (whereby reporting of disability issues incorporates factual and moral education) readers would be presented with an opportunity to reposition themselves simultaneously as both 'teacher' and 'student', informing the pedagogies they implement with others, in particular, with their children.

Unlike the aforementioned literature, the analysis within this study adopted a qualitative nature which, generally, has been considered successful. This is predominately due to the degree of flexibility it offered as a methodology, imposing no predetermined conditions onto the data in terms of analysis, allowing themes to naturally develop within the process of collating and analysing the data. Despite relatively little prior work in the field of critical discourse analysis, the researcher experienced few difficulties in its application besides those mentioned previously (in regards to Riam's use of the media as a vehicle and Cerrie's enfreakment). Despite earlier concerns of a conflict between researcher subjectivity in producing an objective analysis, it was felt few problems arose and where this wasn't the case, issues were addressed within the analysis.

There were a number of limitations to this study, namely in the positioning of the researcher (as a woman with both an impairment and a number of close friends and family with impairments) which may have affected subjectivity. Similarly, the fact that only two case studies were explored (both of which concerned women) is potentially limiting. As a subscriber to one of the newspapers analysed (The Guardian) the researcher may have unconsciously shown bias in analysis to a write style and ideology which they are already familiar with. One way in which future studies could address these issues is by exploring the interconnections of gender and disability for men and, perhaps, offering a gender comparative study.

This study has highlighted a need for change in the way that newspapers portray disability. One suggestion that I would propose, is the adoption of a Deleuzo-Guattari (1987) philosophy; specifically, their concept of the 'body without organs' (BwO). The BwO is described by Goodley (2009, p.260) as 'a metaphorical destiny... a cautious 'escape' from the brutal ordering of the organism or body or person symptomatic of current society'; contrasting with the 'body-as-organism', which 'fail, lack, handicap [and] disable' (Goodley 2009, p.260).

I would argue that currently news (or at least, the content of my analysis) construct the disabled body by folding 'disabling discourse on top of disabling discourse to constitute a knotted, tight, failing body-as-organism'(Goodley 2009, p.260); through a continuous emphasis of lacking and deviance. In contrast, Deleuze (1987 as cited in Fraser 1997 p.20) proposes the notion that 'bodies are not defined by their genus or species, by their organs and functions, but by what they can do, by the affects of

which they are capable'; such a conceptualisation would be particularly empowering if adopted within news portrayals of disability.

A disabled BwO can affect or be affected; it can 'be a body of sounds, a mind or an idea' (Deleuze 1992 as cited in Fraser 1997 p.21) and in the cases of Riam and Cerrie it can provide a connecting (though not marginalising) force between impairment and gender; dis/ability. The BwO eradicates the need for a 'normate' corporeality; an 'other' against which one must distinguish oneself (Fraser 1997,p.32). Consequently, it can produce and inspire pedagogies of liberation and possibility and provide the ontological validity that 'disabled' people have long since had removed from their possession.

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