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CONFLICT, MORALITY, AND HUMAN INTEREST. FRAMES USED TO CONSTRUCT FILM REPRESENTATIONS OF A PERSON WITH CEREBRAL PALSY*

Introduction: Although social visibility of people with disabilities is growing, people still have little knowledge about them. Film bridges this gap, strongly influencing social perception of disability. As a universal language of our time, it does it most quickly and attractively; it addresses a wide range of topics in the boldest way. It appeals to both intellect and emotions. Therefore, it is crucial to analyse film material in various ways, comparing its message to research findings and verifying whether it is reliable, up-to-date, and consistent with current guidelines for portraying people with disabilities in the media.

Research Aim: Identification, description, and analysis of film frames for constructing an image of a young person with CP in selected feature films.

Method: The research utilized frame analysis, based on Palczewski's original theoretical model. This allowed for identification of film frames that describe the situation of the protagonist with CP. Interpretative media frames are schemas that organize reality, at the same time determining how it should be perceived.

Results: The films analysed for the purposes of this paper were examined for presence of frames outlined by Palczewski. Study participants outlined the frames applicable to film representations of individuals with CP. According to the respondents, each film adhered to the assumptions of human interest and morality frames. In two films, the respondents recognised the conflict frame and one responsibility frame. Analogies were observed between the frames as well as assumptions of the disability models.

Conclusions: Participant responses, supported by examples of situations presented in the films, allow to conclude that in the analysed films, regardless of the time and place of their production, people with CP are presented partially in the context of the same frames. The characters are able to speak up for themselves; they are active and persistent in pursuing their goals. When comparing assumptions of disability models to descriptions of individual frames, certain con-

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nections and relationships can be observed. Media messages should be subjected to constant, diverse, and systematic research.

Keywords: cerebral palsy, film, disability model, framing theory

INTRODUCTION

People have been telling stories since the beginning of time. By using this primeval form of communication, they discover the world and learn to distinguish good from evil. A narrative, as stated by Pisarek and Fortuna (2017), carries a message that is easy to read and understand, it attracts recipient's attention, and does not require any special cognitive processing. Nowadays, film narrative is the most abounding in terms of forms and genres.

As an element of popular culture, film has been one of the principal media types that enable adult learning (Burszta, 2002). For many people, a silver or television screen is the only place where they can encounter a disabled person. Wlazło (2021) draws attention to the fact that while discussing the film-disability relationship, disability is the examined phenomenon, whereas film is merely a manifestation of its culture-based nature and a carrier of specific meanings (p. 81), which is significant, as the situation of people with disabilities depends not only on socio-economic factors, but also on culture-determined circumstances in which they have come to live.

In the literature, authors have analysed representations of film protagonists with disability (Bieganowska-Skóra, 2017), described changes in the way such protagonists had been presented over time (Mironiuk–Netreba, 2016; Otto, 2012; Żuraw, 2012), offered classifications of typical stereotypes repeated over the years (Barnes, 1997; Longmore, 2003), and analysed ways of presenting selected spheres of human life in film (Mackiewicz, 2018). Recent years have brought about reflection on subsequent issues emerging from the cultural model of disability. The literature has abounded in analyses essential to provide a proper description of the fragment of reality in question; the art of film has been used, among others, to explain changes and perspectives of the cultural model of disability (Wlazło, 2021) and to explore media-imposed determinants of shaping the image of people with disabilities (Wlazło, 2013). As regards depictions of people with disabilities in cultural works and images created in and by them, authors have prepared analyses integrating multiple perspectives, in recent years.

In cultural texts written by Polish and international scholars (including Chivers et al., 2010; Godlewska–Byliniak et al., 2017; Markotić, 2010; McRuer, 2020; Pamuła, 2021; Podgórska–Jachnik, 2016; Rzeźnicka–Krupa, 2019; Siebers, 2027, 2023; Szarota, 2019; Wlazło, 2023, 2025; Zrodowska, 2016), there have appeared terms such as narrative prosthesis and crip theory (treating the notion of a cripple

as inclusion-promoting and non-segregating) in relation to all types of disability (Wlazło, 2021). They pay attention to such notions as the aesthetics of disability and the ways it is concealed (Siebers, 2017, 2023), address the questions of staring and presence (departing from the commonly accepted standards of bodies in public space, see e.g., Garland-Thomson, 2020a, 2020b), and create the category of brilliant imperfection (Clare, 2024). The indicated directions of analysis stem from the cultural model of disability, which is based on four assumptions. First, disability can be understood differently across cultures. Second, people view reality through the lens of their culture, its embedded experiences, and specific meanings. Third, people use language to convey their ideas, beliefs, and express emotions, all of which occurs through interaction. The type of discourse influences construction of the meaning of disability. Fourth, to understand disability, one must focus not only on the disability itself but also consider the perspectives of society and culture (Twardowski, 2023). If any change is to take place after watching a film, it needs to absorb viewers – engage their attention, emotions, and imagination.

A film can substantially revise ways of thinking, enhance or diminish certain pursuits in the audience, facilitate insight into problem situations, and help understand oneself and others regardless of whether or not the story is real. At the same time, watching a film reduces viewers' critical thinking skills. As Pisarek and Fortuna (2017) state, a skilful director is able to build a positive and persuasive representation of a criminal or awake disgust in the audience toward any protagonist (p. 202). According to Blaustein (see Kozubek, 2016), a viewer does not believe in the watched reality but believes in the truth conveyed by a film despite the fictitious nature of the characters and the plot. Cinema viewers fail to believe that what they can see has really happened but they are certain that this is what happens in reality and that the events have been taken from real life (p. 130). What is more, Reeves and Nass (in Kisielewska, 2009) observed that people of different cultural backgrounds, different ages, and different levels of education respond to the media in a similar way and they identify them with reality. Therefore, it is important to ensure that representation of people with cerebral palsy (CP) in film is positive worldwide.

Over the years, CP has been defined in multiple ways. A common feature across all definitions is a statement that it involves chronic and non-progressive disorders emerged as a result of damage to the central nervous system (in particular, motor nerve) during pregnancy, in the perinatal period, or in the earliest years of life (Kulak et al., 2015). Cerebral palsy can, but does not necessarily have to, be associated with intellectual disability – quite commonly, however, these two terms go hand-in-hand. Communication disorders are a frequently occurring component. Due to its specificity, CP is a visible and peculiar disability – mobility problems, unusual walking style (gait), speech problems, a wheelchair or crutches cannot be concealed or ignored. It is common knowledge that pecu-

liar appearance is often stigmatising and culture-determined lack of tolerance of anomalies has been one of the most popular traits of the Western way of thinking (Garland-Thomson, 2020b). As stated by Goffman (in Doiczman-Łoboda, 2019), stigma is a social construct: it consists in noticing a difference based on a certain property and in disapproval and depreciation of the person carrying this specific mark, only due to the absence of some characteristics typical of a specific group. It is also the reason for the *disability paradox* described by Garland-Thomson (2020b). On the one hand, it makes disability invisible, which results in failing to recognise a person as a full-fledged component of the public space environment on equal footing with others. On the other, it makes the person hyper-visible: it overshadows all other traits, leading to immediate, stereotypical categorisation. According to Garland-Thomson (2020a), the fact that we do not look at someone who looks different does not mean we do not notice them. Inattention is an active form of denying the other person's existence. And it is the first step towards building metaphorical walls.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND AIM

As stated by Mironiuk-Netreba (2014), regardless of exact proportions, the world depicted in film combines fantasy and realness, generating new reality that from the viewers' point of view is equivalent to everyday experiences. Skowronek (2016) observes that today the media discourse of any film is no different than other discourses, as all media offer only variants of the pictures of reality, which are always merely their interpretations, but never full and neutral, *objective* reflections (p. 192). Information coming from the screen is intertwined by viewers with information obtained from their personal experience, giving rise to *film identity* (Burszta, 2004). What is important, reception of the works of culture never occurs along the sender-medium-recipient line; the viewer is not passive: they enter into a dialogue with the works of culture, not only receiving but also interpreting them, building them anew (Jakubowski, 2010).

Thus, it is important to remember that oftentimes films not only present the truth of the times being depicted – as expected by the environment, reflecting current knowledge, tendencies, and approaches to disability after all, as film is a work of art, not a piece of journalism or information. To a large extent, productions use cinematic truth, which is the manifestation of creators' artistic freedom, and which quite often boils down to perpetuating stereotypes, inducing emotions, controversies, and ambiguities. The very appearance of a person with disability deviating from societal norms is a catalyst that activates stereotypical and distorted reception and visibility of the disability that in the film often becomes (as defined by Mitchell and Snyder) *narrative prosthesis*, or imitating something it is not, while adapting

the disabled body to the expectations of an able-bodied viewer – thus consolidating certain damaging stereotypes (Ojrzyńska, 2019; <https://www.pismowidok.org/pl/archiwum/2019/24-de-formacje/niepelnosprawny-hamlet>). As noticed by the author, different works of culture offer a dichotomous approach to disability: as a trait that distinguishes a given character and making them unique, or as a measure of helplessness, evil, and powerlessness. This is also the case with cerebral palsy (CP), whose representations in film have been analysed in this paper.

This paper explores ways of portraying individuals with cerebral palsy in film; globally, this large group encompasses 17 million individuals (<https://paleyeurope.com/kiedy-diagnostuje-sie-mozgowe-porazenie-dzieciece/>). Three film representations of young people with cerebral palsy were subject to the analysis. The aim of the study was to identify, describe, and analyse film frames used to build representations of characters with CP in selected feature films.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To this end, frame analysis was conducted. It has been used since the 1980s to describe media phenomena in the form of frames presenting ways in which we should think about events and issues addressed by the media; they provide prompts regarding the essence of a given topic and put it in contexts easily decoded by recipients (Bartoszewicz, 2020; Palczewski, 2011). Media frames constitute specific interpretative packages; they promote a specific outlook on the problem, interpretation of the causes, moral assessment, and/or recommended conduct in relation to the described object of these activities (Palczewski, 2011, p. 32). According to Watson (2011), media frames prevail over the reality, as our world has been dominated by the media to such an extent that for most of us there is no reality beyond our personal experience and at times it exists only in the media frame or in a repertory of frames we have used to render the reality (p. 96). Such is our media-dominated world that for most of us reality beyond personal experience exists, and sometimes only exists, in the media frame (p. 109). For the analyses, the author applied a theoretical framing model used in analysing news content, developed by Palczewski (2011). Palczewski distinguished 5 frames: conflict, human interest/human impact, attribution of responsibility/responsibility, moral values/morality, and economics/economic consequences.

Models of Disability Valuation Scale [Polish acronym: SWMN] developed by Kirenko is used to examine the connotative meaning of terms present in the human language regime. It allows to focus on the emotional attitude towards designations of a given term and to appraise it. In this paper, the author took into account the differences in affective meaning of characteristics that describe two different models of disability: individual and social. The scale consists of 14 items

making equal references to either model, based on 7 comparison criteria described in the literature.

Study participants were 30 fifth-year female students of Special pedagogy, with the following majors pursued during their study programme: Education and rehabilitation of people with sensory disability, Educational therapy, as well as Education and rehabilitation of people with intellectual disability and people with ASD. Their task was to watch films selected for the analysis and subsequently answer the questions characteristic for the frames.

Before the screening, study participants were familiarized with the measures, interpretative framework, and models of disability portrayed in the films. In case of any doubt, the participants could ask questions or clear up any potential doubts. They could also take down their comments on specific films or fragments illustrating their assignments. Based on responses given by the students, it was possible to identify the frames and disability models appearing in specific productions.

Three (3) films were subject to the analysis: Pieprzycza's "Chce się żyć" [Life Feels Good] (2013, produced in Poland), Dębska's "Święto ognia" [The Feast of Fire] (2023, produced in Poland), and Sealey's "Out of My Mind" (2023, produced in the USA). In each film, the main character is a young nonverbal person with CP, who as the plot develops, has to stand up and fight for education opportunities adjusted to their needs. Their family members and one significant other (a teacher, therapist, neighbour) were allies in their endeavours. Their enemy, on the other hand – was a group of professionals and the education system. Selection of the films was determined by the desire to compare varied representations over time. "Chce się żyć" and "Święto ognia" present the Polish reality and the time span between the production of both films is 10 years. The second criterion was the way of depicting the protagonist in the same time period but in two culturally and geographically different locations (Poland and the U.S.).

DATA ANALYSIS

Palczewski (2011) assigned 4 questions to each frame. A positive answer to at least two questions shows that a given frame is present in a specific film. Descriptions of the frames, including the questions, are presented in Table 1 below. Characteristics of observed frames have been illustrated by quotations from the motion pictures, confirming their existence.

Table 1.
Description of analysed frames and assigned questions

Frame	Description	Questions posed
Conflict frame	addressed issues are presented as a dispute, discord, fierce controversy, or irreconcilable difference of opinion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) does the story told in the film reflect a discord between individuals/groups? 2) do individuals/groups make accusations against each other, fight against themselves, are there winners and losers? 3) does the relationship consider and present arguments of two or more sides of the discussed problem/issue? 4) do any offensive and provocative images, words, terms, and expressions appear in the relationship addressed at other entities engaged in a given issue/problem/event?
Human interest frame	presentation of the issue or problem through the lives of specific persons or by presenting their impact on the lives of individuals and groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) is a given event presented in the context of its impact on an individual/group? 2) is the relationship personalised, which means that it has a human dimension, presents it from a personal, human point of view? 3) does the film use adjectives or personal images/descriptions that evoke the feelings of indignation, care, liking, or sympathy? 4) does it address private or personal aspects of the lives of depicted individuals, or does it treat their responses as a benchmark?
Responsibility frame	is expected to answer the question of who is responsible for causing or solving the key social issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) does the relationship suggest who is responsible (or guilty) for a given issue (government/group/party/the individual/others)? 2) does the film point out what consequences should apply to persons/groups/parties/government for causing a given situation or for giving no response, or does it suggest any rewards for positive solution of the issue? 3) does it propose any solution for a given issue/problem? 4) does it give any suggestions as to who should solve a given problem/issue?
Morality frame	settles events in the context of moral and religious judgements and obligations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) does the film communicate any moral message? 2) does it make references to moral issues, God, religious dogmas, ethical principles? 3) does it include any moral judgement? 4) does it show any standards of morality to be followed?
Economics frame	examines issues and events in the context of their economic consequences for the individual, group, or institution; takes into account profits and losses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) does the relationship present the event or problem as economic implications for the individual, group, institution, region or state? 2) does the work contain information about profits and losses, resulting from certain current or future actions? 3) does it address the issue/problem in terms of market values and economic interests of states, groups, individuals? 4) does it mention the impact of economy on everyday life?

Note. Author's own materials based on Palczewski, 2011.

The next step was to identify (for purposes of comparison) which model of disability was used to present the protagonists of films they had watched. This was possible owing to the use of Models of Disability Valuation Scale [Polish acronym: SWMN] developed by Kirenko – semantic differential referring to the assumptions of the social and individual model of disability (Kirenko, 2007).

RESULTS

Analysis of responses given by all study participants brought about the following findings. All participants concluded that from among 5 considered frames, only one (the Economics frame) was not reflected in the motion pictures – it failed to collect more than two positive responses. The human interest frame and morality frame were discerned in all films. The remaining frames were describing the reality presented in only some of the motion pictures: according to the female students, the responsibility frame was revealed only in “Out of My Mind,” whereas the conflict frame was not identified only in “Święto ognia.” Existence of specific frames indicated by the majority (23) of participants is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2.
Presence of frames per film according to respondents

	“Chce się żyć” [Life Feels Good]	“Święto ognia” [The Feast of Fire]	Out of My Mind
Conflict	✓	—	✓
Human interest	✓	✓	✓
Responsibility	—	—	✓
Morality	✓	✓	✓
Economics	—	—	—

Source: Author’s own study.

In order to confirm the presence of specific frames in the analysed films, they were assigned situations presented or fragments of the characters’ statements relating to the issues covered by each frame.

According to the respondents, the conflict frame is present in two motion pictures; namely, “Chce się żyć” and “Out of My Mind”. The conflict in question occurs between the person with CP (their family members) and school/system representatives. The former expects to be treated humanely, with openness, and primarily to be given the possibility to find their place in the structure of the system of education or social welfare, and the ability to utilize them. The latter are portrayed as uncompromising segregationists, failing to take into account the potential and abilities of the person with CP. By adhering to the regulations,

they reinforce damaging stereotypes and in their opinion, it is not possible to reach a compromise.

The main character in “Chce się żyć” (Pieprzyca, 2013) appears in front of the committee that will decide about his future. Mateusz is hiding his true abilities to be able to stay in a group of people who he is familiar with and with whom he feels well. In light of applicable laws, he functions too well to remain in the current establishment. In another scene, a psychologist tries to convince the protagonist's mother that he will remain in persistent vegetative state. She rids him off his human qualities by comparing his response to food to a dog's patellar reflex. She accounts for her reasoning by referring to her status of a professional: *“My opinion is objective and I can evaluate it as a professional”* (Pieprzyca, 2013, 4:31).

In “Out of My Mind” (Sealey, 2024), the conflict is related to the opportunity to access inclusive education. Melody attends a special education class. It had been arranged in an H 4-6 trailer situated next to the school building, where children with different disabilities learn or rather spend their time in a single room. The girl's father is trying to persuade the teaching staff to raise expectations of his daughter. He insists on making her able to attend regular classes once a week, which is met with a lot of resistance and doubt, although school regulations provide for such a solution. Melody's father and one of the educators who notices her untapped potential and looks at her as a learner not as a ward, are the only supporters of her integration. Katherine (Melody's teacher) convinces the girl to make the effort: *“They will be saying that children do not feel safe; that you take their time during lessons; that you are not able to learn. But even if this was to be true, you still have the right to learn and attend classes like everyone else”* (Sealey, 2024, 1:25:47). She induces Melody to rebel, showing her the difference between education she wants and the status quo – *learning in a trailer: “Why aren't you angry? If I were to make anthropomorphic trees, play Bingo for years, I would pound my fists against the wall”* (Sealey, 2024, 1:25:19).

Initially, the girl's mother and other members of the teaching staff are the other party to the conflict. They are afraid that non-disabled students will make fun of her and lack of achievements will discourage her from going to school. They refer to her integration with the mainstream class as a risk. During the conversation of the parents, her mother says: *“go ahead, enrol her [to this class] but when she returns crying because she will be sitting at the back of the class and other kids will pick on her, this will be your problem”* (Sealey, 2024, 21:24).

In the Polish film “Święto ognia” (Dębska, 2024), the respondents failed to detect the conflict frame, although a similar thread appears in the plot. Anastazja wants to pass her matura examination [final exam of the secondary school] and it is necessary to conduct the entire procedure. However, this is not depicted in the context of winners and losers or a fight, but simply as shortcomings and gaps in the system which are bridged by the persistence and quick wits of her neighbour.

The conflict frame is linked to the responsibility frame.

Individuals who watched the films subject to the analysis stated that this frame was clearly outlined only in the “Out of My Mind” movie. The viewers had no doubt that it is not disability that holds everything back, but the school. The conflict cannot be attributed to disability or the regulations – the latter allow students with disabilities to learn together with their non-disabled peers, but to the mindset and approach of the teaching staff who question viability of this solution: “*What will happen with Melody when the programme draws to a close? THESE kids always end up in special education*” (Sealey, 2024, 1:10:29). A teacher fails to check Melody’s test for he assumes that physical disability goes hand in hand with intellectual disability. He justifies his behaviour by his lack of qualifications: “*I am not qualified. I don’t know how to talk to her. I’ve never worked with someone like her. I did not check her test*” (Sealey, 2024, 1:08:02).

The girl is not invited to the breakfast organised for all participants of the competition before the departure as it is disgusting to watch her eat. Her peers, or more specifically their behaviour, are also responsible for the situation. This is pointed out by the protagonist herself:

No matter what I did and how well I was doing, you never treated me like a part of the team. [...] Bad weather and broken lifts happen everywhere, just like occupied accessible toilets. That sucks but that’s just the way it is when you’re on a wheelchair. But you excluded me and that was your choice. (Sealey, 2024, 1:38:04)

At the same time, she draws attention to the fact that only maintaining of the experimental solution (attending “regular” classes) will enable her to achieve the set objectives:

We learn about the future to get ready for the future. This class is the only place at school where I can do it. I want to be in the sixth grade, so I’m staying. It doesn’t matter what my voice sounds like. What matters is what I have to say. (Sealey, 2024, 1:40:37)

Another frame listed by Palczewski (2011) is the human interest frame. According to the students, this frame is instilled in all analysed films and it encompasses all aspects. Therefore, it can be regarded as the principal and leading frame. Each production tells a story of an individual character – a young person living with CP – which is intended to individualize the story, to give it a human face and emotional appeal. The viewer finds out about problems and challenges faced everyday by young people with CP; what they struggle with, what and who they can count on, what their life looks like, and whether it substantially differs from the everyday of their non-disabled peers. Human interest of Mateusz, Anastazja, and Melody are related to the environments in which they came to live: home,

school, peer relationships, community, as well as the already mentioned system of education.

Persons with CP are fully supported by their families, accepted by their close ones, and treated as full-fledged family members. They do not get preferential treatment; they have their tasks to fulfil. The apparent lack of acceptance by Melody's mother or Anastazja's father is dictated by their care for the best interest of their child.

Mateusz is compared by his mum to his non-disabled siblings. When his sister Matylda concludes that her brother will never learn to walk, their mum recalls that she also learned to walk quite late. His brother introduces Mateusz to his girlfriend: "*This is Mateusz, my brother, you know I told you about him*" (Pieprzyca, 2013, 1:16:28). His father builds a special device that enables the boy to move around the house. The need to transfer Mateusz from his family home to the centre is a tragedy for his family. When Mateusz tries to speak and bites his lips; the staff interpret these communication attempts as acts of self-aggression; they react forcefully and make a decision to remove the boy's teeth. Considering the 21st-century context and having the social model of disability in mind, the audience has no doubt that it is not only Mateusz's needs that were not comprehended but also that his autonomy was violated: he was treated in accordance with the terminology used by the doctor – as staying in a vegetative state. The viewer observes a contrast between his family home and the centre: in the former, Mateusz is a full-fledged citizen; in the latter, a passive recipient of medical and nursing activities. There are not many people in his environment – these are mainly his family members and neighbours, professionals, co-residents of the Social Welfare Home, and a few people whom he has encountered during his lifetime, including his would-be-fiancée. Due to his disability, the boy is treated like a child – during dinner, he is offered juice, while other adults drink alcohol; and when his neighbour, onto whom Mateusz had dropped a flower pot, finds out that this was done by a person with disability, he only wags his finger at him.

Similar things happen in Melody's environment and a little less in Anastazja's. Melody's family struggles with the system of education. The professionals, that is therapists and teachers, opt for the simplest solutions that comply with an individual model of disability – segregation and therapy. The manner in which Melody communicates (Augmentative and Alternative Communication – AAC) is found by the teacher to be an impediment – he comments on this, revealing lack of understanding: "*this was not supposed to disturb the lesson*" (Sealey, 2024, 27:12).

The human interest frame also demonstrates that what a teenager with disability wishes for and dreams of, is something obvious in everyday lives of her non-disabled peers: "*learning in class where everyone is a sixth-grader*" (Sealey, 2024, 28:09), nice shoes, taking a bath without assistance, washing one's teeth, climbing the stairs without help, singing, chatting with a female friend about boys,

kissing, buying fashionable clothes without assistance, and wearing what is trendy and not only comfortable, reciting poems. Melody works steadily to achieve it, but the viewer realizes that majority of difficulties in reaching the set objectives arise from barriers in the environment rather than from the girl's health status. Airport staff approaches her as an observer not participant of an incident; her friend helps and accompanies her in return for promised benefits. Melody protects herself against exclusion – she gives voice to herself, to the puzzlement of the environment. She clearly and straightforwardly speaks about instances of injustice she had experienced. She states the reasons as well – superficial acceptance, lack of understanding by the community, lack of faith in her abilities, unwillingness to look beyond disability, both by the teaching staff and by her peers.

The situation looks a bit different for the twenty-year-old Anastazja who is brought up by her father; her mother struggled for 3 years with postnatal depression and then she was diagnosed with brain cancer and died in mysterious circumstances. Nastka, as Anastazja was often called, has always had a close relationship with her father and her grandparents, and for some time now with her sister – a ballet dancer who strains her spine while lifting Anastazja, which brings into question her ballet career. We do not see the protagonist in situations related with medical treatment or rehabilitation (for financial reasons, she is rehabilitated by her father) (Dębska, 2024). However, she participates in every moment of the family life: she is a frequent visitor to ballet premieres, dressed accurately to match her age and circumstances. Struck with platonic love of her neighbour, every day she awaits the moment when he comes back from work and observes him from her balcony. Her room looks like rooms of her able-bodied peers, the only difference being a number of devices making the life of a person with CP easier – a cerebral palsy bed, specially equipped computer. We do not know anything about her education path – at some point, Anastazja announces that she would like to take the final secondary school examination, which meets with her father's resistance (*"Nastka, why are you talking about it again? We have talked about it hundreds of times, and she knows it very well that she cannot do it. She doesn't need it for anything,"*) (Dębska, 2023, 39:10). School is no ally either – the principal explains it to the neighbour: *"You mean this girl with cerebral palsy? Yes, we've had such cases before, and they were not able to make it. They've got this Maths gap"* (Dębska, 2023, 40:45). The official consent to sitting the final secondary school examination requires numerous procedures and formalities to be completed; it is given only at the ministerial level. Anastazja passes the examination. To celebrate this success, her family throws a party at which for the first time in the film – at the very end – we can see friends of the main protagonist. Interestingly, there are only a few of them, they are much younger, and all of them live with disabilities (physical disability, Down syndrome). In previous scenes, members of her family and an eccentric neighbour were the only companions of the protagonist. What is more, Anastazja

addresses an important topic from the point of view of the human interest frame that failed to appear in the other two films; namely, the future after her parents pass away:

when I think about the future, [...] I know for example that Łucja will have a huge problem with me because when this moment which I don't even want to name in my thoughts arrives, she will inherit me after my dad (Dębska, 2023, 1:10:28).

This frame cannot be separated from the morality frame observed by the study participants in each of the watched films. It essentially consists in a black-or-white presentation of the topic in the context of moral or religious obligations and rules that should be obeyed by individual citizens, as well as by the entire society (Bartoszewicz, 2020, p. 79). In the films subject to the analysis, components of the morality frame (moral messages and judgements, ethical principles or role models) stem directly from the human interest frame.

In the examined motion pictures, the characters fail to utter their moral judgements straightforwardly. The viewer imagines them independently while watching the film. The most dramatic scenes are ones in which Anastazja is born and when her parents are informed about the diagnosis. The doctor ignores and disregards the patient's condition and refuses to carry out a C-section. When it turns out that the delayed medical intervention results in oxygen deficiency and the need to save the child's life, the doctor, with his back turned to his interlocutors explains, justifying his gross negligence:

There is no easy way to say it. Unfortunately, perinatal hypoxia has occurred [...]. Well, sadly in the final phase of the delivery there was the umbilical cord compression. This restricted blood flow to the baby. The result is absolutely clear: cerebral palsy. I am very sorry. It's nobody's fault. Rehabilitation can do really a lot. We could have not rescued the baby at all (Dębska, 2023, 05:14)

The doctor whose primary task according to the Ancient dictum *primum non nocere* is to save health and lives, violates this principle with impunity, putting the patient's health and life at risk due to his negligence. He speaks about it in the third person, which is supposed to confirm that nobody is guilty of this situation and that such things just happen.

In "Chce się żyć," the professionals also violate ethical principles. They make diagnoses over the top, deliver opinions not supported by the facts: they treat Mateusz as a person with intellectual disability, trying to convince his mother that she will never be able to connect with her son. When she objects, they undermine her experience. The world of professionals is depicted as being deprived of empathy and standards of ethics. The professionals do not care about an individual but about a patient – a medical case meeting specific criteria. Paradoxically, the high-

est standards of ethics are presented by the energy healer who refuses to accept excessive remuneration, for he is unable to help: “*money won't help here – you must come to terms with it*” (Pieprzyca, 2013, 9:40).

Melody encounters violation of ethical and moral principles at school both from the teaching staff and her peers. A teacher fails to check her test because he questions her intellectual abilities. He justifies his negligence with the lack of competence. He does not invite the girl to the breakfast organised for all participants of the competition. He justifies this with his concern for Melody, his willingness to protect her from her peers who laugh at the way she eats. These situations show that people and communities on whom people with disabilities and their environment should be able to rely in different situations, violate such universal moral principles as: always tell the truth, keep promises, help people in need, be honest, respect others, be responsible, or last but not least: obey the law.

The economics frame is the only one not discerned by the participants in the films they watched. Only while responding to the second question related to the *losses and gains resulting from certain actions* did they confirm the presence of its components. Elements of the economic framework refer to the costs that a family incurs due to the disability of one of its members.

Viewers learn from “Out of My Mind” that the tablet computer used for alternative communication is very expensive and that purchasing it would exceed the financial capacity of the family; they need to take out a loan. The first question asked after learning about the possibility to buy such equipment is “*How much is it? 17 000 dollars for the device*” (Sealey, 2024, 34:37). The economy motif appears as well when the school management considers accepting a larger number of learners with disabilities, which involves the need to employ a teaching assistant: “*we cannot afford it*” (Sealey, 2024, 1:10:36).

In “Święto ognia,” the viewer learns that in the long run provision of private rehabilitation services is a significant strain on the family budget: “*Antek was great but expensive. He charged us PLN 150 per hour and there was nothing we could do about it*” (Dębska, 2023, 14:50). In “Chce się żyć” on the other hand, the financial question emerges in a different context – the boy’s parents believe that engagement of “surplus” money will ensure higher engagement of professionals in Mateusz’s case – they want to pay the energy healer for his additional (i.e., more effective) efforts. Although the economics frame has only been signalled in the analysed films, it leaves the viewer with the belief that disability requires financing families are not always able to afford, and at the same time helps realise that payment of specific costs is significant for the success of the rehabilitation process. This is stated straightforwardly by Anastazja, the protagonist in “Święto ognia” who comments on the advantages of the fact that her father is in charge of her rehabilitation process:

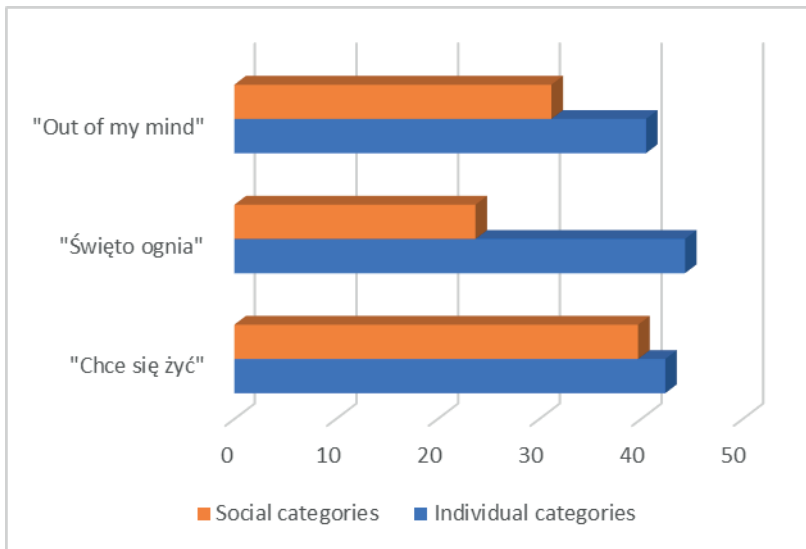
My dad completed rehabilitation courses. This has certain advantages, primarily that I have it for free. We exercise at least one and a half hours a day because if we did not ex-

ercise that much or exercised less, it would all end with what the doctors refer to as >it's no use taking< (Dębska, 2023, 15:40).

Study participants also examined specific methods of portraying disability in the analysed films in view of the assumptions of different models of disability. Summary of average scores for particular criteria is presented in Diagram 1 below.

Diagram 1.

Model of disability in analysed films according to respondents



In "Chce się żyć," average scores in the social and individual categories are at similar levels and give evidence of the advantage of the individual model. According to the respondents, the main character is depicted through the conflict, human interest and morality frames. Description of assumptions of the individual model and characteristics of the conflict frame overlap, which confirms the belief that the frames have been properly assigned. The conflict, strongly outlined in the film, takes place between the family and the establishment; the dispute is at times insoluble.

The main character of "Święto ognia" falls within two frames: human interest and morality, as well as most clearly outlined preference of the social model of disability corresponding to the film context. Anastazja is accepted not only by her family but also by nearly her entire environment; she is prompted to exercise her rights and live her life fully, which she does with great pleasure, overcoming numerous barriers, but without excessive effort. She insists on having access to education, but it is her neighbour who fights for this on her behalf. In this film, things just roll and the protagonist's disability is simply one of her traits, which indeed

makes it harder for the entire family to function every day, but is not the only issue that draws viewers' attention.

"Out of My Mind" is the only film in which the respondents identified a clearly outlined responsibility frame, with the context embedded in the individual model. Literal observance of the regulations and limitations of the system, exclusion of the girl from various activities is excused as taking responsibility. Melody identifies parties that bear responsibility for the situations she is experiencing. She consistently fights for herself and clamours for her rights to be respected, which complies with the assumptions of the social model outlined in the film.

DISCUSSION

The framing method has been used for the first time in the analysis of representations of disability in film. Indeed, the literature lacks similar studies that would allow for a comparison of results. However, the results of this study can be referred to studies that describe different aspects of living with CP and assumptions of disability models, as certain analogies have been observed between the frames and existing models.

Similar polarisations in preferred models of disability as those previously mentioned were examined by Kirenko (2007) who pointed out that persons with congenital disabilities opt for the social model of disability, whereas the system and professionals prefer the individual model. Persons with CP and their families expect a *human approach*. However, the establishment unconditionally approaches a person with disability as a patient requiring specialist and professional help, who needs to be monitored and has to adjust to the expectations of the environment.

As emphasised by Otto (2012), in a commercial film representation of disability, viewers are offered entertainment under the guise of caring for another person. Highlighted threads (communication problems or obstacles on the way to proper education in the case of the films in question) are supposed to make the plot more attractive. But at the same time, they reinforce the already mentioned media-promoted stereotypes of disability: equalling physical disability with intellectual disability, emphasizing medical aspects of functioning by people with CP, and special education as being stereotypically the most appropriate type of education for people with cerebral palsy. Despite presenting the assumptions of the social model of responsibility, at the same time reinforcing the individual approach, the films are making a contrast in this respect with the individual approach: a person with CP and their immediate environment versus the system and its requirements.

By referring the threads emerging in the analysed films to studies addressing the issue of CP, it should be stated that the question of communication and impediments in this area have been addressed not without reason: facilitated communi-

cation has been indicated as a factor significantly improving the quality of life of people with CP; it does enable their linguistic interactions, but primarily it does their social ones (Grabias, 2009). The protagonists demand to be able to use alternative communication methods. Professionals who appear in the film question the protagonists' ability to develop communication skills, wrongfully identifying CP with an intellectual disability. It is the latter, not CP, that constitutes the main factor that disturbs the communication process (Boksa, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

1. Conducted analyses have shown that in the analysed films, regardless of time (the gap of a decade between the two Polish films) and place of their production (Poland, USA), a person with CP is partially portrayed in the context of the same frames. In each film, study participants pointed to the presence of the human interest frame and morality frame, without which it would be difficult to imagine a story about a person.
2. Despite being nonverbal, the protagonists are able to speak their mind on the issues related to themselves; they are active and persistent to the best of their ability in pursuing the objectives they had set for themselves. The viewers watch their determination in fighting for issues that for a non-disabled individual comprise an ordinary component of reality, (e.g., education).
3. When comparing the assumptions of disability models while describing specific frames, certain relationships can be observed (e.g., between the individual model and the conflict or responsibility frames, or between positive overtones of the human interest frame and the social model).
4. Considering the pace of social change in the area in question, and the importance of paying attention to the ways of depicting people with disabilities in the media, the message communicated by the media should be subject to permanent, diversified, systematic, and in-depth research, the results of which should be popularised in the film industry and incorporated in the process of training the filmmakers. Such research should be grounded in today's and currently explored approaches to disability and models used to describe it.

LIMITATIONS

The number of films subject to the analysis may be considered as a limitation. This may be accounted for by the fact that although there are many films that tell stories about people with CP, very few meet the criteria adopted in this research for the

purposes of comparing the main characters. The literature substantiates selection of the research material in question, hence allowing it to become a platform for comparison and entitling to undertake research and discussions in question.

Similar studies, against which the findings of these analyses could be referenced, are also lacking. To-date, framing has not been used as a criterion in comparing representations of film protagonists (despite the absence of methodological contraindications). Therefore, it was necessary to relate the findings to assumptions of the disability models. Hence, it appears reasonable to conduct further research on the representations of individuals with disabilities in film, taking into account this interesting perspective of looking at constructing film reality.

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KONFLIKT, MORALNOŚĆ I LUDZKI INTERES. FILMOWE RAMY PREZENTACJI OSOBY Z MÓZGOWYM PORAZENIEM DZIECIĘCYM

Wprowadzenie: Mimo iż rośnie społeczna widzialność osób z niepełnosprawnością, ludzie mają wciąż jeszcze niewielką wiedzę na ich temat. Tę lukę wypełnia film, silnie wpływając na społeczną percepcję niepełnosprawności. Jako uniwersalny język epoki robi to najszybciej, najatrakcyjniej; najodważniej podejmuje różnorodną tematykę. Oddziałuje zarówno na intelekt, jak i na emocje. Dlatego tak ważne jest, aby materiał filmowy poddawać różnorodnym analizom odnosząc przekaz do wyników badań i sprawdzać, czy jest on rzetelny i zgodny z aktualnymi wytycznymi co do ukazywania osób z niepełnosprawnością w mediach.

Cel badań: Identyfikacja, opis i analiza ram wizerunku młodej osoby z mózgowym porażeniem dziecięcym (MPD) w wybranych filmach fabularnych.

Metoda badań: Do badań wykorzystano analizę ramową zgodnie z autorskim modelem teoretycznym stworzonym przez Palczewskiego. Umożliwiło to identyfikację ram opisujących sytuację bohatera z MPD. Interpretacyjne ramy medialne są schematami, które porządkują rzeczywistość i jednocześnie narzucające sposób, w jaki ma być ona postrzegana.

Wyniki: Poddane analizie filmy zostały przyporządkowane wymienionym przez Palczewskiego ramom. Respondentki, odpowiadając na pytania zakreśliły ramy, w które wpisują się wizerunki filmowe osób z MPD. Każdy z filmów, zdaniem badanych wpisywał się w założenia ramy ludzkiego interesu oraz moralności. W dwóch filmach dostrzegły ramę konfliktu, a w jednym ramę moralności. Zarysowały się analogie między ramami a założeniami modeli niepełnosprawności.

Wnioski: Odpowiedzi uczestniczek badań, poparte przykładami sytuacji prezentowanych w filmach pozwalają stwierdzić, że w poddanych analizie obrazach, bez względu na czas i miejsce powstania osoba z MPD ukazywana jest częściowo w kontekście tych samych ram. Bohaterowie filmów potrafią wypowiadać się we własnych sprawach; są aktywni i wytrwali w dążeniu do realizacji postawionych celów. Porównując założenia modeli niepełnosprawności do opisu poszczególnych ram można zauważyć pewne powiązania i relacje. Przekaz medialny należy poddawać stałym, różnorodnym, systematycznym badaniom.

Słowa kluczowe: mózgowe porażenie dziecięce, film, model niepełnosprawności, teoria uramowienia