What is "Inspiration Porn" on social media and how does it effect deaf people and communities?

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Abstract

As a deaf person situated firmly in hearing culture, I face ableism and audism on a regular basis. I wanted to explore the ableist dynamics and desire to represent deafness and hearing devices in an audio centric way, and how this ultimately impacts all of society not just those who are deaf. This led to the topic of Inspiration Porn, which is the objectification of disabled people portrayed as 'overcoming' their disability and I wanted to look at this concept in the context of deaf Inspiration Porn on social media. The case study clips selected for textual analyses were both posted on Facebook and I use them as discussion points within the questionnaires and interviews. I used Grounded Theory to analyse the qualitative data collected on the lived experiences of Deaf, deaf and hearing participants. By combining all these data sets with a review of key historical events and contemporary views of deafness in the digital era, I was able to find the roots of many issues and why they have persisted. The result of this study was that the overall impact on society was profoundly negative and social media in this context does not improve how deafness is viewed. Recommended areas for further research are included to build upon this study with a view to include a wider diversity of deaf people or specific communities and how they interact with Inspiration Porn content.

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Introduction

The focus of this MA Thesis will be on how Inspiration Porn and social media can effect D/deaf people and the wider community. This research aims to explore if D/deaf people on social media have felt the impact of Inspiration Porn either negatively or positively in their lives.

As a deaf adult who was born deaf to hearing parents and raised predominantly in hearing culture, taught to speak through intensive speech therapy as well as being made to wear hearing aids and then placed in a mainstream school environment. It was not until becoming an adult that I was aware of the internalised ableism I held about my own deafness. As I progressed through my university studies, I grew more aware of issues facing D/deaf people and communities. For example, the topic of Inspiration Porn became of interest when I came across it while researching my undergraduate thesis, I personally found that Inspiration Porn is not a positive depiction or raises awareness of any disability. Instead, it appears more offensive and patronising as the majority of the audience to these videos are ignorant to the issues that are faced by Deaf and disabled people within society.

Inspiration Porn is the objectification of disabled people framed as inspirational for undertaking activities that able-bodied people may take for granted. This definition was given by the late disabled activist, Stella Young's TED talk (TED, 2014). The focus of Inspiration Porn is on the "overcoming" or "curing" of said disability. Unfortunately, this stance can perpetuate myths and stereotypes surrounding disability, the ability of current and developing technologies. It can also misinform the wider audience of the issues that arise in society for a disabled individual.

The difference between Deaf and deaf is that Deaf with capital D is referring to the customs, values and the language that is part of their culture and identity and may not consider their deafness as a disability or themselves as disabled. Small d deaf is being unable to hear and refers to the disability of deafness therefore a deaf person is not automatically Deaf culturally. Small d deaf can also be described as Hard of Hearing (HoH) as part of the spectrum of hearing loss. This is important as the research will be reflecting on views by both Deaf and deaf/HoH participants.

The tensions that arise from the concept of Inspiration Porn is that these videos take a snapshot of the disability in a situation that can be experienced differently, depending on the individual and the environment. This is then taken out of context, generalised, and used in an exploitative manner. The entire D/deaf community and experience becomes reduced to a serious of moments from one individual in one very particular situation. What is not seen is the effort and struggle that comes with the disability (Aitken 2021), Inspiration Porn then becomes a potential advert for curing or fixing the impairment.

For those who are culturally Deaf, Inspiration Porn has the potential to profoundly diminish the richness of Deaf culture. The Inspiration Porn that appears most popular regarding deafness is the focus on hearing and speaking, a deliberate move away from embracing deafness and sign language. This becomes a way to diminish both Deaf and deaf people as the disability of deafness and the culture both were considered threatening to hearing culture and the progression of the human race.

Therefore, the research questions that are going to be investigated here are.
•   How is Inspiration Porn understood?
•   Has there been a change in attitudes towards D/deaf people and issues they face?
•   What is the impact of social media?
•   What is the impact of Inspiration Porn on D/deaf and hearing communities?

The relevance of social media in this research is to see how participants both D/deaf and hearing interact with the media and each other. This media has the ability to be shared multiple times by any user on any platform and anyone can leave comments. This could be problematic as there is a potential that users can feel less inhibited about what they say and how it is said, leading to shutting down of conversation with other users that understand or live with the disability. Toxic inhibition online appears to have the effect of normalising inappropriate language and microaggressions as well as a refusal to learn or be informed about the issues that arise from Inspiration Porn (Suler 2004).

There is also a difficulty in educating able-bodied people as they do not understand what it is like to be disabled or how to navigate society as a disabled individual, even if they do have an awareness of the disability. To gain an understanding of this concept as an able-bodied person would be almost impossible because of the inability to empathise with disabled people

even with knowledge of the disability. Just as a man may struggle to understand sexism or a white person to understand racism within a predominantly white, able-bodied, patriarchal society. This can effect a deaf individual on a deeper level by becoming more conditioned by society. The concept of internalised ableism or "disabled self-hatred" (Campbell 2008) is the idea that the individual has to try harder to fit in society and potentially looks down on those that do not e.g. a deaf person who has perfected their skills and speech where they can pass as a 'normal' person then looks at other D/deaf people as not trying hard enough or faking the severity of their issues, this would also be considered as Audism, which is prejudice specifically towards D/deaf individuals or 'hearing superiority'. Unless an individual has had their day-to-day living effected by stereotypical views towards them, they could probably identify or at least empathise with those who have been 'othered' and marginalised by 'normal' society.

With this context in mind this study seeks to make a contribution towards not only disability or Deaf studies but also to Social and Media studies. Research into Inspiration Porn has been predominantly done around physical disabilities but very little has been done around hidden disabilities, and as being Deaf has cultural implications unlike other forms of disabilities, this research intends to open up this area to further scrutiny.

As the data from this research is based on individuals' lived experience, the original data analysed reveals a variety of results. I suspect that Deaf respondents will have the strongest views against Inspiration Porn. Whilst deaf or hard-of-hearing respondents will be more likely to follow the pattern of hearing respondents because of the hearing environment that they have been raised in and more so if born to a hearing family and/or deafened later in life. I suspect that many hearing respondents will not know what Inspiration Porn is or why it is potentially problematic.

The proposed structure of this paper will be to introduce the reader to a definition of Inspiration Porn and why it may be considered offensive from both a cultural and disabled perspective. This thesis will begin with a literature review that will serve to introduce the reader to the concept of Inspiration Porn, what it is and the context in which it is being viewed including historical perspectives and events that will allow for greater understanding of the positionality of the participants. This will also include theories that will be relevant to aspects of this research, both clinical and cultural perspectives. The methodology used will be

presented to show the framework in which this research was undertaken. Additionally, how the combination of methods were tailored to this study when taking into consideration some of the obstacles faced during data collection.

This thesis will then present an overview and analysis of the two case studies selected and how they function, not only as digital texts but how specific elements within the texts can be interpreted. Questionnaire data will be presented to indicate a broader view based on both case studies combined with the interview data to explore and highlight any reoccurring themes and anomalies. Incorporating the questionnaire and interview findings within the analysis of each of the clips specifically to answer the research questions, how is Inspiration Porn understood and has there been a change in attitudes towards deafness. From this the negative impacts and connotations of Inspiration Porn on social media can be explored, such as perpetuating stereotypes, advertising a form of eugenics and cyberbullying specifically related to social media. This data may also indicate any perceived positives of Inspiration Porn in as much as what constitutes as Inspiration Porn and if an increased awareness of the disability and culture is still a positive outcome for D/deaf people.

As the thesis moves into the last section, by acknowledging the history and enabling far greater depth when answering each of the research questions, giving greater context to the analysis of the findings as they are discussed. This will include data from all the sources used within this study, by combining the data from the questionnaire, interviews and the analysis of the case studies. Within the concluding chapter the thesis will ultimately answer the title question as well as suggesting recommendations regarding Inspiration Porn on social media and how this potentially translates into reality. Then a reflection on the elements of study, such as method choices and areas of improvements that could be made. Finally, there will be recommendations for areas for further study that could be done to build upon this topic looking at different demographics of participants and how that data could relate to race, class, gender etc. giving yet another perspective in how this concept is viewed.

Literature Review

Historical Perspectives

To understand the positionality of Deaf, deaf, and hearing views on this subject it is important to look at some key perspectives and policies within history that have influenced the thinking and attitudes into contemporary times. As Ladd states "cultural attitudes held at any one time could be deconstructed to reveal their roots in history – and particularly in the nature of oppression itself" (2013 p.571-572). By looking at very specific themes within the data and their roots in history this will give clarity to the perspectives that are stated, elaborating on the context of the data and experiences of the participants within this study, starting with the historical event that initiated these perspectives of deafness to flourish.

"Eugenics emerged in 19th Century Britain based on Darwinian theory which fitted well with the self-perceptions of social elites who saw in it both a justification of their own social and political status, and a rationale for the control of groups whom they perceived to be a threat" (Swain, French and Cameron 2003 p.48). Disabled and Deaf people fell into this category of being a 'threat' as "in Western societies these 'atypicalities' have often been pathologized and result in negatively valued characteristics" (Swain, French and Cameron 2003 p.47). "Social Darwinists coined the phrase 'survival of the fittest' and help influential policies that resulted in the segregation and sterilisation of many disabled people" (Swain, French and Cameron 2003 p.48). The terminology surrounding deafness at this time in relation to the medical and educational settings were 'deaf and dumb'. Dumb initially was used as a reference to non-speaking with roots back to the Middle Ages but evolved a dual meaning with stupidity around the 18thC, the phrase 'deaf-mute' became a more prominent label of deaf people as a medical diagnosis during the 19thC (OED Online 2022). In 1880, the second congress on Education of the Deaf, also known as 'The Milan Conference', took place and as a result of this "the oral method was voted to become the officially acknowledged method for instructing the deaf" (Traynor 2016). Sign language had ultimately been banned and in its place oralism became the chosen method to integrate D/deaf people into society. This particular event is considered as a pivotal moment within Deaf history, as we see the aggressive destruction of Deaf spaces and culture initiated. Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, coined the term eugenics in 1883 and this concept became popular gaining traction in the UK and USA.

Inspired by the eugenic movements in the UK and USA, Hilter adopted this concept and developed this to progress his own world view. This was taken to extremes in WW2 as the "Nazi's exterminated tens of thousands of disabled people, having designated them 'life

unworthy of life'" (Swain, French and Cameron 2003 p.48). "The social and political context which allowed the Nazi euthanasia policy to function with little opposition was one generated by influential scientist expounding negative views of disability and disabled people" (Swain, French and Cameron 2003 p.48). The method of gassing that were developed for the extermination of disabled people within the T4 euthanasia programme would later be the method of choice in the extermination camps that killed Jewish people and other groups deemed undesirable to the Nazi cause (Perry, no date). This allows us to understand how disability was viewed and 'dealt' with into the 20thC within the political sphere with no opposition and how the eugenic foundations can be seen within the medical model as it developed.

Whilst the overtly negative practices that are associated with the Nazi's T4 program have ceased, newgenics has arisen as a form of 'positive eugenics' "a potentially kinder, gentler alternative (Lyster, 2013). Wilson (2013) states that both "positive and negative eugenics travel hand in hand" and indicates that "positive eugenics poses deeper moral problems". This could be as this form of eugenics is so ingrained within various parts of society such as health and education, again with little opposition, that it becomes the forced assimilation of the D/deaf into the hearing world "an understanding of deafness and disability according to medical, social and educational models is important in that it highlights many of the implications of being deaf or disabled in a hearing, non-disabled society" (Gregory 1998 p.222). Ennis (2015) points out that Oralist (those who believe that deaf people should not sign, only speak) and eugenists "overlapped as both sought to "restore deaf people to society" echoed by Gregory that "the aim of an oral approach is to teach these children to speak so that they can communicate with their family and the rest of the hearing community to which they have been born" (1998 p.69). "Oralists would contend that the best way to promote spoken language is through the use of residual hearing and this must be exploited as soon as possible after birth" (Gregory 1998 p.69) with "the aim is to replicate for deaf children those conditions which have been identified as being facilitative in encouraging language development in young hearing children" (Gregory 1998 p.70). As clip 1 demonstrates, a baby given aids and spoken to emphasises the exploitation of the residual hearing as young as possible. Oralists also opposed the teaching of sign language as "there is concern that the use of sign language will encourage the deaf child to begin to rely more on vision than on audition thus making the implementation of an oral/ aural approach more difficult" (Gregory

1998 p.76). This shows that oralism was and is still a main part of 'instructing the deaf', coupled with hearing devices and deliberately not facilitating sign language.

The Warnock Report was released in the UK in 1978, followed by the 1981 Education Act and this radically changed how the concept of Special Educational Needs (SEN) was approached at an educational level. Predating this report Deaf spaces were already in decline (Scully 2012 p.113), but this report advocated for the integration of deaf children in mainstream schools as this was seen as a realistic way for them to be part of 'normal society' after education. Once this Act became implemented this encouraged the closure of many Deaf schools to continue, as many hearing parents preferred to mainstream their deaf child as opposed to Deaf parents that saw Deaf schools as a positive environment to educate their Deaf child. Scully highlights that "The identification of culturally Deaf people with the Deaf world and Deaf culture is undoubtedly strengthened by the fact that even today, for most deaf people, the Deaf world is a found community" (2012 p.112). Unfortunately, in 1988 the introduction of league tables in the UK where schools competed in relation to the academic attainment of their students would prove to be counterintuitive to the provision of education for students classed as 'special needs' (Select Committee on Education and Skills 2006).

Hearing aids became commercially available from 1913 in a rudimentary form as a bulky, heavy contraption compared to the modern-day hearing aid, but the technological advancements were delayed by World War 1 and 2 (Bennett 2021). Ironically after World War 2 the Hearing Aid technology leapt forward as the technology used for military operations was developed and adapted to make Hearing Aids lighter and more wearable as well as improve the quality of sound received through the devices. These Hearing Aids were more similar to their contemporary cousin and became available from 1940's, adding features and continuing the technological development into the present day (Bennett 2021).
In 1987 Cochlear Implantation became available in the UK (Gregory 2017) after several studies and experiments from 1957 on the effectiveness of the implantation technology that would be developed for deaf people specifically (Eshraghi et al. 2012). The cochlear implantation of younger babies became a controversial topic more so when new-born screening for deafness was introduced in the UK in 2006 as before then children were usually implanted around the age of two (Gregory 2017). Cochlear Implantation which is an invasive medical procedure into the head to aid hearing was and still is being promoted as a cure, Sparrow refers to the darker motives of this in that the "technology is here being used to

advance a cultural agenda – a scenario that brings to mind some of the worst abuses of medical authority in the past" (2010 p.160). Sparrow links this to other historic examples of cultural integration "the policy of promoting cochlear implantation in young children risks repeating the history of past policies of forced cultural integration wherein children were taken from one culture and prevented from learning its language but were also effectively denied the opportunity to assimilate into another culture" (2010 p.161). Gregory (2017) also poses this question of "could families cope, not only with finding out their child was deaf, but having to make the decision for their young baby to have an operation?". From the data collected, cochlear implantation is a contentious issue within D/deaf communities rather than the use of hearing aids as participant 24 states it is "hard for deaf people to accept". The resistance may stem from the nature of eugenics' violent past, as implantation is seen as something done to deaf people for the benefit of hearing people rather than allowing the decision to be made by the deaf individual in question. At this point it is important to note how hearing aids and cochlear implants differentiate as hearing devices to understand why the resistance to cochlear implantation seems greater than towards hearing aids. Nowadays, hearing aids are provided to those with less severe hearing loss and can only amplify sounds that are then processed through the normal structure of the ear, these devices require no surgery and can be removed at the choice of the individual. Whereas cochlear implants are recommended for those with severe hearing loss and require surgery to put the device in place, the implant bypasses the outer ear and stimulates the auditory nerve directly to give the 'sense of sound', the individual can remove the external component of the implant but not the implant itself.

With the development of new technology, society is making deaf people appear more hearing, so as more 'cures' are bestowed on ever younger children there is a resistance from Deaf communities to the eradication of Deaf culture. As within medicine and education it is believed that "early detection of hearing loss has long been identified as a key feature of providing early sensitive support for families of deaf children" (Gregory 1998 p.155) and that "the data shows that the earlier that profoundly deaf children receive a cochlear implant, the better the outcome, whether it be speech perception or production" (Gregory 1998 p.196). Sparrow states a consequence of this "Over the longer term, this policy is likely to result in ethnocide – the destruction of a people's culture" and the wider implication of such is that "not only is this likely to lead to the destruction of the culture, it also seems to involve a profound lack of respect for it" (2010 p.160). As many of these children are born to hearing

parents trying to 'save' them from being a deaf person in this society quite often in the long term this is detrimental to the deaf person and their identity, as well as to Deaf communities collectively as "they are all-too-aware that a reduction in the numbers of people using signed language threatens the long-term survival of their culture." (Sparrow 2010 p.161). Resulting in deaf people "not becoming full member of the Deaf or hearing cultures." (Sparrow 2010 p.161). In the case of deaf children born to hearing parents especially, these choices are often removed from the deaf individual and made for them "there is also a belief that the claim of medicine to be offering parents a choice is disingenuous given the negativity with which disability is often perceived by the medical profession, and the pressure which is consequently applied to the parents" (Swain, French and Cameron 2003 p.49). The loss of sign language is a repeated theme through the interview data as a significant consequence which in turn is decimating Deaf culture, so when discussing clip 2 with the interview participants, this was seen as a more positive representation of Deaf culture.

The development of particular laws have also influenced how deaf and culturally Deaf people are affected in the UK specifically. British Sign Language (BSL) became recognised as an official language in 2003 but without the legal protections of the Equality Act, as the act does not cover linguistic rights, the provision of interpreters or information in BSL format are not considered as a legal obligation for service providers (Ambrose 2022). At the time of writing there was progression of the 'BSL Act' within parliament to obtain the legal protections and provisions under the Equality Act 2010 which shows a distinct lack of urgency when nearly two decades have passed. In 2010 the Equality Act was passed combining the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 with other laws to pertaining to race, gender, age and sexual orientation to protect people from discrimination within wider society, but again Deaf people are still without linguistic rights. Unfortunately, the Equality Act in the general sense is not enforced unless advocated for by the individual or escalated through various legal pathways. This is important because to 'normal' society it appears that society understands and recognises the diversity within the population and is rectifying the imbalance. Yet, in practice the rights of disabled and D/deaf people are not protected sufficiently. This can also be seen in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008; this was updated from the 1990 Act to embed the developing scientific advancements within this Act. Within the Act the addition of Section 14(4) looks specifically at preference given to an embryo with no 'defects' for implantation. From screening for the deaf gene in embryos in the UK (Murphy 2008) and encouraging abortion Scully reaffirms this by stating "The new Act embeds in law that the

conviction that deafness is undesirable enough that an alternative embryo … must always be preferred" (2012 p.117). Meaning a Deaf couple undergoing IVF wanting a child like them, would be met with resistance if they wanted to try to increase their chances of conceiving a deaf child as the resulting embryo would be defective and considered unethical to implant because of the undue 'harm' placed on the future child.

Taking into consideration the weight of the history leading to this point when thinking about Inspiration Porn it is clear that this is not a new concept, rather a concept that has been modified and reframed to fit with social thinking. Elements of Inspiration Porn can be found in the literature of Wilkie Collins' 'Hide and Seek' in 1854 and Charles Dickens' 'Dr Marigold's Prescription' in 1865. These stories have been identified specifically because in both these stories include deaf characters and commonality of the representation of these deaf characters during this era is to save them from their affliction. During the 19thC Asylum Tourism and 'Freak Shows' were increasingly popular, and people would have family outings to gaze at the patients or 'performers' like animals in a zoo. In this context the objectification of disabled people remains the same. Although the treatment of disabled people seems to have improved over the course of history. Even the availability of this content in the 19thC would have been restricted to those who could afford books and/or attend these 'shows'. In contemporary times it seems that the birth of the internet saw a different, unrestricted space for these 'freak shows' and 'asylums' to occupy allowing for anonymity from the viewer. It also provides an unprecedented freedom of access that is allowed on a global scale to this particular content, this is evident from the amount of 'likes' and 'shares' of clip 1. In 2014 when Inspiration Porn was given a clear definition in the context of modern times, the concept was already in existence even in a rudimentary form. While the location of where D/deaf and disabled people are viewed has moved and the overt violence permitted by the state has ceased the benevolent ableism and pity has continued feeding from the ethos of eugenics and this goes beyond Inspiration Porn as short clips on social media but can also be seen in film and depictions within other forms of media.

This is not a complete history of all the events that could have influenced what deaf people have had to endure but a few key events focusing on the themes of eugenics, oralism and the roots of Inspiration Porn to develop our understanding of why there is an element of distrust between Deaf and hearing communities. Sparrow echoes this sentiment by stating "members of Deaf culture may have cause to wonder why they should have any loyalty to a society that

is dedicated to, or at least complicit with, the destruction of their culture" (2010 p.164). These are not new concerns for the Deaf community but have been re-emerging and re-represented over hundreds of years but now in a digital context with the birth of the internet and specifically social media.

Contemporary Clinical and Cultural Perspectives

As previously mentioned in the introduction the terms that the audience will need to be aware of and are provided with a definition are Ableism, which is discrimination against disabled people in general and Audism, which is "one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears" (Bauman 2004 p.240). Analysis of the language surrounding Inspiration Porn may show clear examples of Audism or microaggressions which are a subtle but offensive comments or actions directed at a marginalised group and have the potential to originate from both hearing and D/deaf individuals.

The theories that will be referred to within this paper are Critical Disability Theory, Social Representations Theory and Ambivalence Amplification Theory. These theories are important because they allow deeper analysis of how deafness is treated and viewed within society.

The framework of Critical Disability Theory "centres disability as it compares liberalism's norms and values with their actualization in the daily life of disabled people" (Hosking 2008). This framework looks at the various models that are used when discussing the concept of disability, starting with the medical model "which identifies the source of the disadvantage experienced by disabled people as their medical condition" as defined by Hosking (2008). With the medical it put the responsibility of remedying the disability and/or its symptoms with the aid of medical professionals onto the disabled individual. This stems from a historical perspective of disabilities as Hosking (2008) adds "liberalism has traditionally conceived of disability as a personal misfortune preferably to be prevented and definitely to be cured". While CDT represents how the medical model of disability is now outdated, it is still the commonly held perception of society, Hosking (2008) illustrates this point by stating "the dominant paradigm for understanding disability throughout most of the 20th Century has been the medical model". As the medical model continues to be the dominant view of disability even into modern times, it is important to this study to be aware of what this entails.

The disability is seen as the problem and the responsibility is placed onto the disabled to obtain rehabilitation or a means of fixing/curing their impairment, thus creating enormous pressure on disabled people to appear non-disabled. As a consequence, the methods rooted within the eugenics movement and the medical model of disability are still the response towards disability and 'fixing' the individual. Within this model the focus is purely on the disability and not on the individual as Goodley agrees that "Disability is normatively understood through the gaze of medicalisation" and that "Disability is an inconvenience to rectify and problem requiring elimination" (2014 p.4-5). Unfortunately, whilst this model firmly places the responsibility of the disability onto the individual. The medical area has blurred the boundaries regarding the individual's autonomy feeding from the historical eugenic ethos. Häyry presents an argument used by those in the medical field that if "a condition that could be reversed or removed the medical staff would be negligent if they failed to reverse or remove it" (2010 p.83-84). The view that ALL disabilities 'harm' the individual irrespective of the nature of said disability, seems firmly embedded within the culture of Western medicine. In the context of reproductive rights and ethics regarding deaf people, Häyry demonstrates this with a statement from Harris that "To prevent future disability and harm…the potential mother has a moral duty not to choose the 'deaf embryos'" (2010 p.84).

The next model which developed as a direct response to the medical model, taking into consideration the issues that disabled faced within society was the social model. According to Hosking (2008), CDT "adopts a version of the social model based on the principles that disability is a social construct, a complex interrelationship between the impairment, individual and environment and the social disadvantage experienced by disabled people". This moves the focus off the individual that has a 'problem' and onto how accessible is society for a diverse collective of people. This model does not erase the diagnosis or condition but gives the opportunity for disabled people to exercise their rights to function as equal members of society without barriers that would restrict them otherwise. Häyry states that "the social view does not deny that disabilities can be, and often are, harmful. The harm is not however, caused by the difference or impairment individuals live with. It is caused by the attitudes of people without the difference or impairment and by ensuing poor recognition of the needs of those with particular conditions" (2010 p.85). This model seems idealistic in what it has to achieve but only because society appears to be slow to change. Häyry also points out that "disabilities are social constructs which harm individuals and groups to whom

they are assigned" and adds that "the way to alleviate the situation is to focus on societal reactions and support systems, not on the medically defined variations in individuals" (2010 p.85-86).

As both of these models are incomplete when thinking about the totality of disability, another model was developed called the 'biopsychosocial model' defined as "a synthesis of the medical and social models" (Hosking 2008). This model uses elements of both the medical and social models but incorporates a third elements that focuses on the psychological factors of the individual. This means that this model "proposes that all three factors *affect* and *are affected by* the person's health" (Sarafino and Smith 2012 p.12). On the surface this model proports to include all the factors that can effect the individual but how it is used within medical and political spheres still seems to be firmly anchored to the individual's 'problem' as seen within the medical model. The addition of the individual's psychological factors within this model reverts back to how the disability is 'dealt' with by the individual and in turn removing the pressure from society. For example, a deaf woman who uses hearing aids and speech as her main method of communication has clearly engaged medical and support services to minimise the 'detriment' of her hearing loss. She is requested by her employer to answer phone calls as part of her work duties, when she states that this is a physical impossibility without additional assistance her employer tells her she is 'not trying hard enough', 'deliberately shirking from work duties' or 'overreacting'. Later the deaf woman resigns after developing depression and anxiety, she is unable to get state assistance because she 'made' herself unemployed. In this example using the biopsychosocial model, the lack of adjustments made within workplace contributed to the psychological factors and disabled her more than the hearing loss itself. The consequence was the chain of events where she was considered the instigator of her own detriment rather that the social barriers implemented by her employer. Critical Disability Theory is relevant in how society viewed and continues to view disability as a whole and the desire to fix the impairment. The difference between how society is more disabling to the individual rather than the impairment (Hosking 2008 p.7).

In more recent times another model has been presented call the cultural model of dis/ability. This model appears to build on the social model but adds culture as a factor as Waldschmidt, Berressem and Ingwersen state "The cultural model of disability implies a fundamental change of epistemological perspective since it does not deal with the margin but rather with the 'centre' of society and culture" and that with the "introduction of the slash (dis/ability)

indicates that one should not problematise the category of disability but rather the interplay between 'normality' and 'disability'" (2017 p.25-26). This builds on the social model that the medical as we can see vast differences between this model and the biopsychosocial model. In the context of culturally Deaf people, the cultural model of disability is likely to be the model that best fit their situation. However, the language used is where the Deaf community diverge from the disabled community e.g., impairment and disability. The Deaf community do not necessarily ascribe to the 'disabled' identity and within Deaf culture the Deaf are not 'impaired'.

Swain, French and Cameron say, "the medical model reflects a framework of thinking about disability that has been and continues to be imposed by non-disabled upon disabled people" (2003 pp.23), which can be seen when looking at the decision makers within the medical and educational fields. A potential side effect of this is that "Generally, any label describing a thing society considers a negative attribute comes to have a negative social connotation" (Hosking 2008). The social model incorporates the assumption that all members of society must aspire to the same norms which can be an issue in the context of D/deaf communities as "the social model itself is also criticised for having the goal of 'normality' for disabled people" (Gregory 1998 p.216). But ultimately "the social model of disability is essentially about social change" (Swain, French and Cameron 2003 p.4) which is sorely needed to progress on issues that affect all D/deaf communities.

At this point, it needs to be said that in the context of Deaf individuals the models that insist on focusing on the 'disability' do not give space to incorporate the added dimension of Deaf culture. As previously stated, Deaf individuals do not necessarily ascribe to the disabled identity and may only feel 'disabled' when trying to operate within 'normal' society. This is why Ladd's work important to introduce within this study, Ladd, who is a Deaf academic and joined the culture as an adult, has highlighted very important issues with how Deaf individuals are studied within the academic sphere and how this in turn impacts Deaf communities within society. By retaining the medical model, this has heavily impacted how we approach studies focusing on issues faced by the Deaf community academically as Ladd states that the "traditional structures and discourses of academia are characterised by a privileged subject investigating an underprivileged object". This then means that "when it comes to research in the Deaf domain, we find that because of the dominance of the medical model of deafness, only the barest minimum of resources has been available to examine Deaf

communities as communities" (2003 p.267-268). As academic texts then have the power to influence decisions and views of wider society, Ladd indicates that the internalisation of the medical model within 'normal' society gives rise to questions such as "how can the term culture be linked to a medical disease?". Ladd also adds that the "discourse surrounding Deaf communities is heavily laden with ideas about curing or changing the Deaf state" by promoting the eugenic ideas and emboldening the "affirmation of 'Superiority through Science'" (2003 p.171-172). Ladd also discusses how as academics we can develop the way these areas are studied by reframing the context of how we consider Deaf culture in that "Deaf communities should be constructed around a culturo-linguistic model" (2003 p.268). Building on this, it also becomes clear that you cannot get a true representation of a minority culture without considering the dominant culture in which it sits as Ladd and Lane goes further in that it "became clear that Deaf cultures could not be understood in isolation from the societies in which they were embedded" (2013 p.569). From this there are distinct weaknesses in how D/deaf people and communities are studied and shows that Deaf studies needs to be moved out of the medical model and taking focus off how the individual is disabled by impairment, even with the social model the emphasis is on the disability. If Deaf people do not identify as disabled then trying to place them within these models will not give an accurate depiction of their culture, language and experiences. From this Ladd is suggesting that Deaf culture should be explored with a cultural lens as there are more similarities with minority and linguistic cultures in terms of the impact and issues faced. Unfortunately, Ladd also states the main problem with this is that the complexity of cultural studies means lack of unity in the approach undertaken within the cultural research discipline.

Social Representations Theory will be used within this research as "social psychology focuses on structure and dynamics of representations" (Moscovici 2000 p.30) this focus will be used in this research to understand the purpose of this representation of D/deaf people in this way. "To classify something means that we confine it to a set of behaviours and rules stipulating what it is, and is not" and "to give a label and a set of rules/behaviours to define 'it' by" (Moscovici 2000 p.42-43) and to "make the unfamiliar, familiar" (Moscovici 2000 p.36-37). In the context of D/deaf people it will need to be answered if this concept of making something strange, familiar is acceptable anymore. D/deaf people are in society and leading normal lives, so why does society still need to represent D/deaf people with assistive technologies in Inspiration Porn? Does the idea of being 'cured' of deafness give hope to those who are deafened or make those born deaf seem more normal? Is deafness still

considered as abnormal to society? This point of view could potentially give rise to misinformation and stereotypes attached to the being/concept in question. The lack of development of society's attitude to progress towards the social model also links to Social Representations Theory. This is because of how Deaf people and deafness are represented to non-disabled people. It could be argued that SRT should no longer be relevant in modern society as diversity is more widely accepted so there is no need to represent D/deaf people in this way. This leads to Ambivalence Amplification Theory, the idea that society has entrenched views both positive and negative towards the concept of deafness and this could explain elements of data found within this study.

To understand how as a society, we have retained such notions around the concept of disability, we first have to look at how the representation of disability occurs. Shakespeare indicates a documented starting point of disabled representation within history by stating that "In the 17th, 18th and 19thC British society, the freak-show is a clear example of the way that human beings were seen as non-human, as potential exhibits in what was perhaps a cross between a zoo and a museum" (1994 p.287). This element of being 'non-human' or being less than human is a form of thinking that has carried through the ages. Shakespeare also refers to deaf people specifically in the context of 18thC thinking by adding "In the 18thC there were long debates as to whether deaf people were fully human, or if they had souls" (1994 p.295). Moving into contemporary times and specifically looking at society views deafness, Chapman states that within their research they found that "Hearing loss was seen in general as an adverse phenomenon and widely associated with disability and poor mental state" (2021 p.377). Even though deafness is labelled as a disability the cultural aspect of being Deaf appears non-existent and unknown to society, so it is clear that all deaf people, regardless of which culture they are part of are collectively disabled according to mainstream society, as there is very little acknowledgement of the spectrum of deafness and what it means to be D/deaf. As Chapman states "Any positive connotation 'was not in the view of celebrating deafness, as many deaf people might do within the deaf culture' but rather focused on 'solutions to hearing loss as a condition'" (2021 p.377).

As many of the problems of how disabled people are represented can be linked to the medical model, this presents a bigger issue within media. Goodley sets out four particular points in how

medicine, culture and media intersect:

1. Tragic life of the individual portrayed in a way to elicit maximum effect;

2. Technology is portrayed as delivering a person from disability;

3. Securing the technology means that the disability has been 'dealt' with;

4. Disability as a political issue goes away, until the next time it is needed in the powerful politics of media representation (2014 p.5).

Areheart (2008) comments on this by stating how "mass media representation of disability has a powerful effect on how people understand disabled individuals" this has clearly contributed to the continuation of inaccurate assumptions about what it means to be disabled and the wider disabled experience. Hosking (2008) agrees by stating "despite the introduction of many euphemisms, the media and culture industry still consistently reflect the negative attitude towards disabling impairments which the medical model reflects". Chapman also highlights the issue from the culturally Deaf standpoint in that "Despite efforts to shift representations and affirm a cultural identity, research shows that negative attitudes to being deaf remain widespread" (2021 p.377).

So, while Ladd states that "many Deaf people have long known that the views and attitudes of ordinary people are either more positive or less damaging than those held by the professions which hold power over our communities" (2003 p.13). This can be seen in the fact that "the distinction between HoH and Deaf signing communities has been blurred, the blurring was a deliberate tactic, forming part of the array of tools that were used to suppress sign language in Deaf education over the past 120 years" (Ladd 2003 p.14). This ultimately means that there are "few opportunities for colonised people to present accounts of their own cultural experiences; moreover, in order to do so, they must often use a language other than their own" (Ladd 2003 p.12). Ladd also stipulates that "Deafhood is not a 'static' medical condition like 'deafness'. This represents a process to explain to themselves and to each other their own existence in the world" (2003 p.3). Adding that "Deafhood seeks to encompass these larger dimensions and cannot be constrained by the feeble diminutive of 'deafness'. (2003 p.14). Ladd builds on this by stating that increased awareness of one's Deafhood and identity can be used in a positive way in that the "examination of individual Deaf identities and Deaf potential could be linked to the recovery and reconstruction process of Deaf communities" (2013 p.571) and as a result "Deaf people are seeking a greater understanding and appreciation of themselves and their communities and cultures" (2013 p.575).

What is Inspiration Porn

The concept of Inspiration Porn is the portrayal of people who experience disability as inspirational because they are disabled (Liddiard 2014 p.94). So, in the case of deaf Inspiration Porn the empathises is put upon the deaf person being given a hearing device and the audience interpreting the response from the deaf subject as positive and they are now 'cured' and be 'normal'.

As Shakespeare has already alluded to the history of how society views disabilities it is clear that Inspiration Porn is not a new concept and states that "Disabled people are 'objectified' by cultural representations". Shakespeare elaborates on this point by adding that "Disabled people are objects, on to which artists project particular emotions or which are used to represent specific values or evils" (1994 p.287). Before the insidious nature of social media came into being and a label given to this concept, Shakespeare refers to examples of Inspiration Porn within society as "examples of this objectification, or fetishism, is evident in the way that contemporary societies provide for disabled people by means of charities, filling the gap left by the unwillingness of statutory bodies to meet their obligations to disabled citizens" (1994 p.287). This ultimately maintains the inequality and the "prejudice, in the context of everyday interaction, media and charity imagery, popular assumptions etc, plays a similar role in reinforcing a subordinate position for disabled people who enter mainstream society" (Shakespeare 1994 p.294).

Moving forward into the 'digital age' Grue (2016) echoes the notion that "Inspiration Porn is chiefly problematic because it perpetuates…ideological mechanisms that contribute to misapprehensions about disability and impairment". Indicating that "people with impairments are thus represented as having a smaller scope for achievement than is the case". Inspiration Porn is a snapshot that is taken out of context as Grue (2016) agrees as "Inspiration Porn does not invite a thorough consideration of the actual lives of the people being depicted" and follows this with "it presents a single, impressive aspect, and glosses over whatever might disrupt the fantasy". The audience for these types of clips would not be D/deaf people themselves as Grue (2016) raises an important point that Inspiration Porn "relies on the notion of a non-disabled audience that knows little about the embodied reality of the

impairment". This adds to the idea that "representations of minority identities are mostly produced by the majority for the majority" (Carah and Louw 2015 p.183). This continues to build on the opinion that "medicine is marketed as giving and improving life" (Goodley 2014 p.5). As Grue (2016) states that the types of Inspiration Porn "tend to focus on a person with a visible impairment or signifier of impairment". In the context of D/deaf Inspiration Porn, clips using a hearing device or sign language could both fall into this category. The popularity of the clips of showing a baby/person hearing for the first time with a hearing device could be explained by Grue's (2016) point that "Inspiration Porn is a single-tracked and focuses the mind to an impressive degree. For that, it requires a prosthetic point of fixation – a visual expression of the desirable but undesired". Swain, French and Cameron add that "some labels applied to disabled people, such as 'brave' and 'extraordinary' appear, on the surface, to be positive but are regarded by disabled people as negative" (2003 p.13). This reiterates that while obvious forms of Ableism or Audism may have declined, the benevolent forms are still very apparent.

Some of the issues that have emerged are that Inspiration Porn objectifies people with disabilities, as previously mentioned, as well as it giving a tainted view of the disability portrayed and perpetuating misinformation surrounding deafness. All people tend to compare their own situation to others, but this becomes problematic when able-bodied people consider themselves the norm as "able bodied people think about disability from their abled perspective. For them being severely disabled is imagined as unmanageable suffering, a life subject to constant dependency and without value" (Hosking 2008). Shakespeare refers to this element of fear as "disabled people remind non-disabled people of their own vulnerability" (1994 p.297) and indicates to why society responds in such a way as "people with impairments are the ultimate non-conformist, and as such are perpetually threatening to the self-image of the average, so-called normal population" (1994 p.296) echoing the view from the late 1800's when the concept of eugenics was being developed. Abled-bodied people who compare themselves to someone 'lesser' to feel better about themselves gives way to pitying the disabled or a view that the lives of D/deaf people are not as fulfilled or that they are missing out in some way. By portraying a potential cure or fix of the impairment then raises the issue of eugenics and a deliberate way to eliminate Deaf culture as Inspiration Porn clips are usually a snapshot of a 'positive' moment and do not show the struggle and effort. "It reinforces the notion that society is fixed, and that disabled people must 'overcome' what are viewed as 'their' problems if they are ever to become valid members of

it" (Swain, French and Cameron 2003 p.13). This leads to Deaf and disabled people having a real fear of "the advent of stealth eugenics" (Goodley 2014 p.28) that may or may not have already happened. Goodley also proposes that "ableism edits out the lack and emboldens the (hyper) normality" (2014 p.33) which would agree with the opposition of Inspiration Porn. For culturally Deaf or people that use sign language as a first language, trying to integrate into 'normal' society is problematic because their deafness is a part of their identity and not a disability, as "the Deaf community see themselves as wishing to be perceived as a linguistic minority group with a unique cultural identity to be preserved rather than a disabled group to be normalised" (Gregory 1998 p.222). "Dominant (or mainstream) cultures will always reflect the interests of those within particular social groups or societies who have the power to define situations and the resources with which ensure that their own definitions are accepted as true" (Swain, French and Cameron 2003 p.20). Which leads to the question of who is making these decisions that effect D/deaf people and how society functions to include or exclude them as Swain, French and Cameron follow up with "our ideas about disability and about ourselves are generally formed by those who are not disabled" (2003 p.68). Goodley adds that even with the negativity and prejudice faced by those who are disabled within society "It is not the case that disabled people are hated, it is just they do not fit the world's (ableist) demands" (2014 p.28).

Social Media

To understand the issues that arise from social media as a platform for Inspiration Porn, we need to understand the nature of social media. In the context of this research the interaction with and visibility of Inspiration Porn content is a vital part of the focus. Social media allows for a more interactive, rather than passive consumption of this content as Hinton and Hjorth state that "audiences play a participatory role in its creation" (2013 p.11). Social media has made the production and global distribution of content far easier than before and "Instead of simply responding to content that has been created by an organisation, here the user becomes the source of the original material" (Hinton and Hjorth 2013 p.58). Lindgren proposes that the consequence of this is that "the rising tide of user-created content and its rapid circulation will undermine the authority of experts and professionals" (2017 p.56). While the internet is not an owned entity, the social media platforms within are and have been manipulated as Lindgren concurs "money and power has made it possible for the 'alien overlords of our

digital age' to make the digital future as hierarchical as the analogue past" (2017 p.55). The 'hierarchy' may not be as obvious as within analogue media but there is an influence, whether it be minimal or indirect, it still exists. Lindgren adds that a detrimental side of this is "the internet's decentralised character might have made it much harder for governments to censor what people say, it may at the same time have made propaganda much more effective" (2017 p.55). Another form of 'control' can be linked to the algorithm processes embedded within search engines and social media platforms, these can restrict the 'recommended' content for the user. As Lindgren comments that algorithms "offers people a personalised and filtered reality where all search results and other information that they are served reinforces their already existing values" (2017 p.56). Users may enjoy the convenience of having content recommended on their platform of choice without the effort of seeking it out, but there is a risk as "things that we hold to be true are seldom challenged" and this in turn "reduces drive and desire to try to understand others" (Lindgren 2017 p.56).

The use of social media in giving a platform for Inspiration Porn gives rise to questioning the agenda for posting such content. Inspiration Porn subjects the person depicted "to an ableist gaze which both invites and incites pity, admiration, approval and awe" (Liddiard 2014). In the context of Facebook as a platform, the pages are more valuable the more 'Likes' it can acquire from their content. Liddiard (2014) states "it is in the interest of fan page creators to accumulate as many 'Likes' as possible". Liddiard (2014) also points out that the 'comments' function on this content "serves no other functional purpose than to generate interest in order to gain more 'Likes'". Liddiard (2014) raises the issue that the disabled identity is used as "an ableist commodity for consumption" which is produced for the benefit of 'Likes' and 'Shares' rather than awareness or any disability positivity. Liddiard (2014) states that "Facebook provides yet another space through which ableist notions of our lives – and all of the associated violations which emanate from these – are preserved".

The link to toxic inhibition to the fact discussions are either shut down or hostilities escalated fit Hosking's view that "if the voice of the disabled opposes the able-bodied expectation, the able-bodied appear to dismiss these views as an overreaction or over sensitive" (2008 p.12). The social representation of D/deaf people cannot evolve if society has no desire to unlearn bad habits or incorrect assumptions and take on board what D/deaf individuals are saying. Even language used about disabilities carry negative connotations for example, 'deaf and dumb' is still used even though it is obsolete in educational settings and is considered hugely

offensive. The progression of how language is used to refer to disabilities could be hindered by the fact that the chosen language still reflects the medical model and negative attitudes towards disabilities (Hosking 2008 p.14). This can potentially be harmful to society if able-bodied use comments like 'I would kill myself if I was like that' this leads to those D/deaf people feeling like there is something wrong with them or their lives. When inhibition is lost because cyberspace allows users to behave in a freer manner without fear of repercussions toxic disinhibition shuts down open discussions of cultural matters. Saunders simply states that "voices shunted for positive and normalized message" (2016 p.6). Social media companies do not police their platforms thoroughly enough to either remove cases of Inspiration Porn or monitor the forums of discussion, this could be that staff diversity is lacking as well as they are not aware of issues such as Ableism and Audism and how it can manifest, and platforms do not update their policy accordingly. It is commonplace to see debates escalate quickly in a hostile fashion with little or no resolution to the argument. The right to maintain an opinion and the freedom to do so seems to supersede the rights and voices of marginalised groups of people, no matter how wrong it is, leaves those who are trying to educate others are ignored or met with hostility, so they may give up trying to educate those who do not wish to be educated. "Disabled people and non-disabled people have both been schooled in the same ableist discourse" (Swain, French and Cameron 2003 p.68). It is also important to consider how social media "participation reinforces the importance of offline realities in online behaviour" (Hinton and Hjorth 2017 p.75), as the views held are likely to have been there before someone accesses social media and engages with the content.

Methodology

The approach that underpins this study is Grounded Theory. The definition of Grounded Theory as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is Grounded Theory is "the discovery of theory from data, systematically obtained and analysed in social research". This theory as explained by Charmaz "consists of the systematic approach to inquiry for the purpose of theory construction", adding that Grounded Theory is an "excellent tool for accessing and developing knowledge most useful to the social sciences" (2012 p.3). This framework allows for the production of theories to be data led as well as having a set of procedures to follow in how the analyses is carried out, which differs from other methodological frameworks. These

key features of the Grounded Theory framework were considered to be most appropriate for this research, the most important being the component of constant comparison in which continuous re-checking of concurrent data sets with each other as well as linking to literature will lead to identification of relationships, themes then theories to emerge. This iterative loop allows for the process to be repeated throughout the course of this study in a consistent manner. The main disadvantages identified with this methodological approach is that this framework has the potential to produce large quantities of data, researchers need to be skilled in using Grounded Theory methods and that there are no particular rules within the identification of categories during the coding process. In the practical context of this framework within this study it allows for a more responsive research strategy in that theories do not restrict the data, the methods embedded in this framework were key to how the qualitative data collection would be undertaken and the coding process would dictate the development of the themes and in turn the theory. The qualitative methods used to generate the data for this study are textual analysis of the clips chosen for this study, questionnaire and interviews.

How this research intends to answer these questions.
- Has there been a change in attitudes towards D/deaf people and issues they face?
- Does social media help?
- What is the impact of Inspiration Porn on D/deaf and hearing communities?

Is by using a collection of different sources, initially the answer to what is Inspiration Porn will be found within documentary research to provide a definition. This then will be expanded and evolve with the data received from the questionnaires and interviews. The impact on various communities will be answered from the data from questionnaires to get a broad overview and interviews to try and pick apart specific elements that arise. To answer the question if there has been a change in attitudes towards D/deaf people will be answered specifically with the data from D/deaf participants in the questionnaire, interviews and textual analysis of the clips chosen for this research this could in turn answer the question does social media help. As well as then looking at the impact on D/deaf communities and wider society.

To ensure good quality data collection, the design involved a range of methods. Starting with sample size, increasing the target to 1000 would ensure a more balanced range of participants in terms of gender and hearing status and/or identity as well as being more representative of

the general population but also the D/deaf population within. In turn this would allow for statistical patterns to be analysed in conjunction with the qualitative data using a mixed method approach as well as reducing margin of error and minimising potential sampling bias. Ethnographic field work along with focus groups would improve the data as participants would have been studied interacting with each other on this topic, which allows for freer discussion and potentially highlighting areas for exploration within this topic. Also building trust within the Deaf community would have potentially made the recruitment of participants for the survey and interviews far easier. The number of digital clips used for analysis could be increased to show the difference or lack of when considering the definition of Inspiration Porn but also analyses of the comments would allow for a range of examples of potential ableism/audism and even examples of hostility to other users. The questionnaire would include more questions to really understand the personal effects of these clips to the individual as well as in different formats e.g., survey for British Sign Language users.

The design of this research has been decided because of the limitations on cost as this is a self-funded research thesis, working to a restricted time frame, as the only researcher and taking into consideration of the impact of Covid-19. The challenges as a deaf researcher had to also be considered so to mitigate this, I recorded each interview with the consent of each participant for transcription purposes. I then used the Microsoft Word software to transcribe the recordings using the dictate function and this generated a digital document of each transcript. This allowed me to review each recording with the transcription and make any corrections as needed as differences in accents and/or phrases within the Word dictate function was not always accurate. Once the document was corrected, having the functionality within the Microsoft Word software allowed for specific word searches within the transcribed data and this assisted with the overall analysis as well as searching for patterns on emerging themes. The methods of data collection that are used are a questionnaire to gain a broad view of the themes and interviews to expand on any themes or oddities. Retrospective textual analysis of two clips is used rather than live observations as the comments on the case studies have already happened and there is no researcher influence on what has been said. Convenience sampling is used as participants are contacted online and easy to access but from the data collected it will not be representative of the population. Focus groups would have been beneficial to this research but not practical due to the Covid-19 restrictions that were in place at the time of this study. The advantages of these methods are that during times of Covid-19 I can keep all research, contacts and have access to participants wholly online

therefore obeying restrictions and keeping all involved safe. This also keeps the cost to a minimum and data set manageable for analyses within the time frame for a single researcher. The methods employed for this study are textual analysis, questionnaire and interviews.

In preparation for this study and to ensure good research practices, I sought the approval of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education Ethics Panel. This allowed for scrutiny of the documentation that would be provided to the participants, the methods of the data collection, obtaining consent and how data protection would be managed. I did not undertake any data collection until the Ethics Panel officially approved the ethics application for this research thesis. I also implemented an additional measure for the recorded interviews by reaffirming that personal and/or identifiable information should not be visible during the interview. Within the thesis I anonymised the interviewee's names to allow direct statements from the interview data to be used.

Textual Analysis

Discourse analysis is a method in which language, text and film are examined as evidence of a social phenomenon (Taylor 2013). "Through the analysis of language and language use, the researcher therefore builds up a picture of society and how it functions" (Taylor 2013 p.3). The advantage of this method is that it will allow me to look at the wider context of the clips and in turn provide a fuller description of what is being portrayed. This method is also unobtrusive to others as the clip is already on the social media platform and allows for repeated access if needed as it is in a public space. The disadvantage of this method is that it is a limited data source and consistency of the method of analysis and repeatability that can effect the validity of analysis. Another main disadvantage of this method is researcher objectivity because if there are biases then this can effect what content is included or disregarded in the final analysis. The application of discourse analysis to both the visual and audio elements of the two clips chosen for textual analysis will allow for understanding of how Inspiration Porn is understood as a concept and how they function as a digital text on the social media platform. The clips that have been chosen for this research are both representation of deaf individuals, clip 1 being an example of Inspiration Porn according to the definition and the second an example of Deaf culture. I will also use this method to examine the comments posted on these clips to look further at any similarities and/or differences between how people have responded to them.

Questionnaire

Questionnaires are a standardised set of questions to gather relevant information from multiple participants. The advantages of this form of data collection are that a broad collection of views and the diversity of people that can be included in a time effective manner. Participants can preserve their anonymity and there is less pressure because there is no immediate time constraint. The disadvantages of these methods are that the answers could potentially be dishonest, this could be because of differences in understanding or interpretation of the questions as well as the risk of self censorship by the participant. Issues in analysing the qualitative answers could arise as they are harder to quantify compared to numerical data. In using this method, the data collected will be a mix of qualitative and quantative in response to the questions provided, the qualitative data will come from the open-ended questions where the participants have the opportunity to describe their thoughts and feelings on this subject. The quantative data from the closed questions will provide the demographic information of participants. By using this method, I designed a short questionnaire with both open and closed questions and released it on social media within deaf and HoH groups I am part of. This allowed for cost to remain low and for the questionnaire to be shared multiple times aiming at the Deaf and HoH demographic. The draw back to this was that where this questionnaire was shared was limited and depended on the connections linked to my personal social media. In this particular instance the responses to the questionnaire are disproportionate between male and female respondents, and many of the hearing participants had some experience and interaction with D/deaf people at varying levels, so this is not an accurate reflection of the general population.

Sample Data

Despite setting a target of 1000 respondents, the 125 achieved still constitutes a useful data set, given the demographic diversity and emphasis on the qualitative insight.

Participants 125 participants in total Age range from 18 to 66 plus.

95 female, 24 male, one nonbinary, five prefer not to say.

Questionnaire Participant's Gender
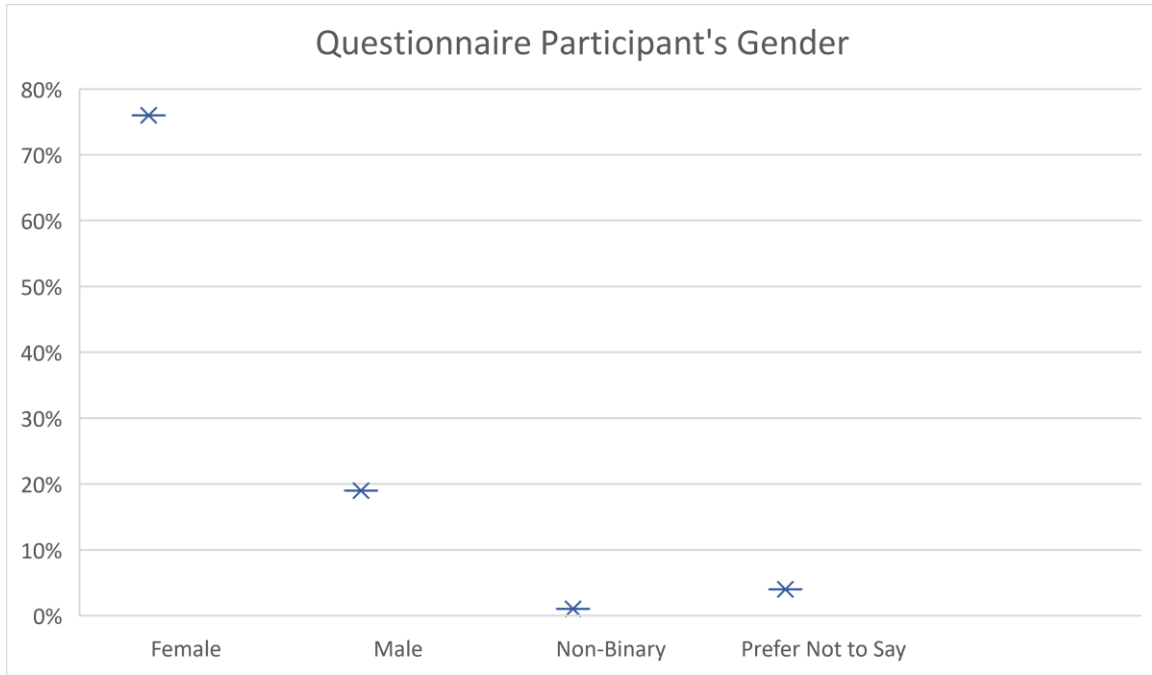
66% participants indicated hearing/ culture status as 30 hearing, 23 Culturally Deaf, 23 hard of hearing or deaf, and 2 identified as 2 e.g., hard of hearing and Deaf. 5 indicated that they identified as disabled unrelated to hearing loss but did not stipulate that they were hearing or not.

Questionnaire Participant's Hearing Status
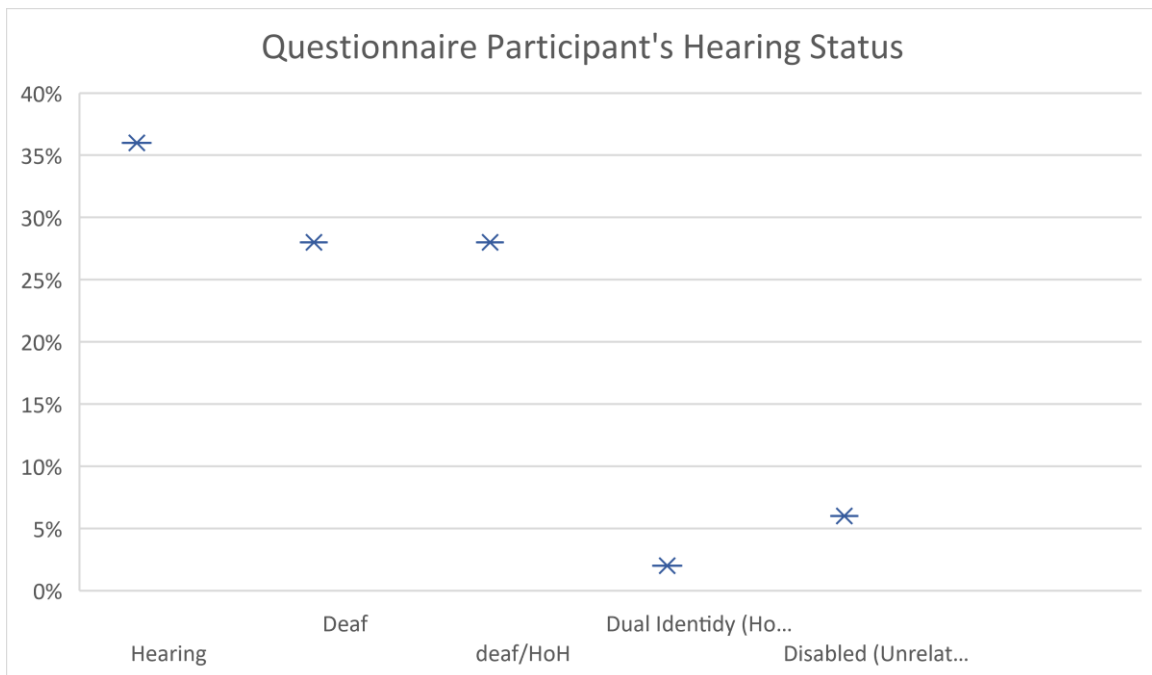
Age range of participants from questionnaire 13 18-24, 25 25-31, 14 32-38, 21 39-45, 12 46-52, 20 53-59, 10 60-65, 10 66+.
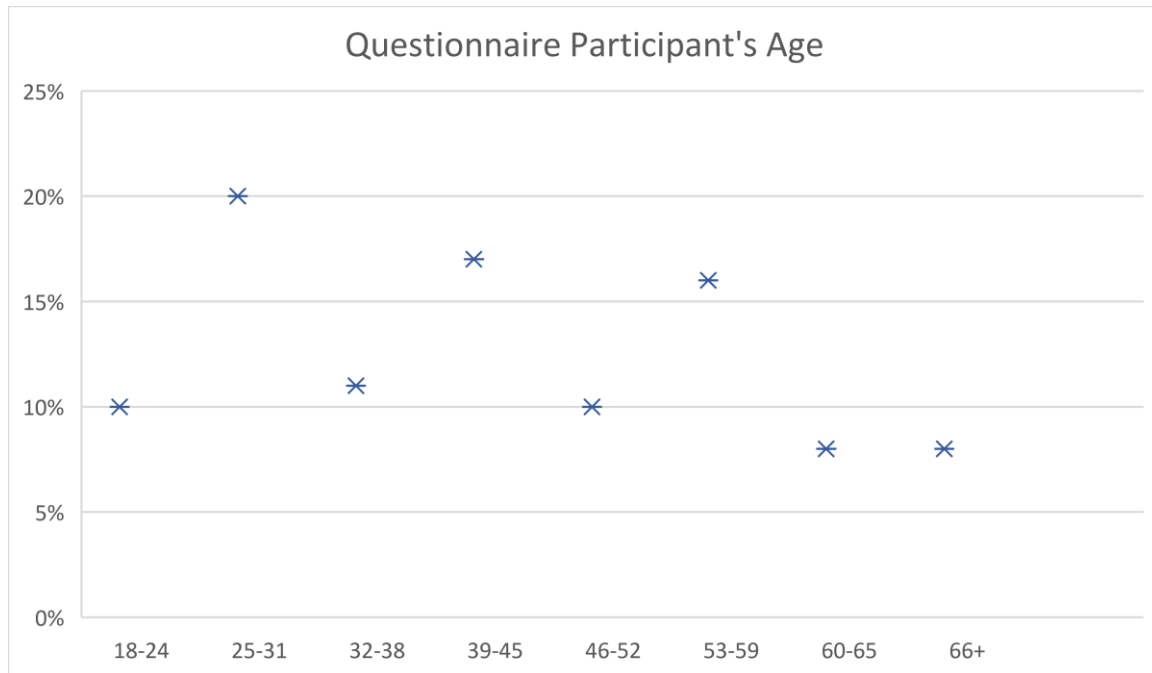
Country of origin 76 from UK, 35 from USA, 1 from South Africa, 2 from Guam, 1 unknown, 3 Nigeria, 6 Zambia and 1 from Philippines.
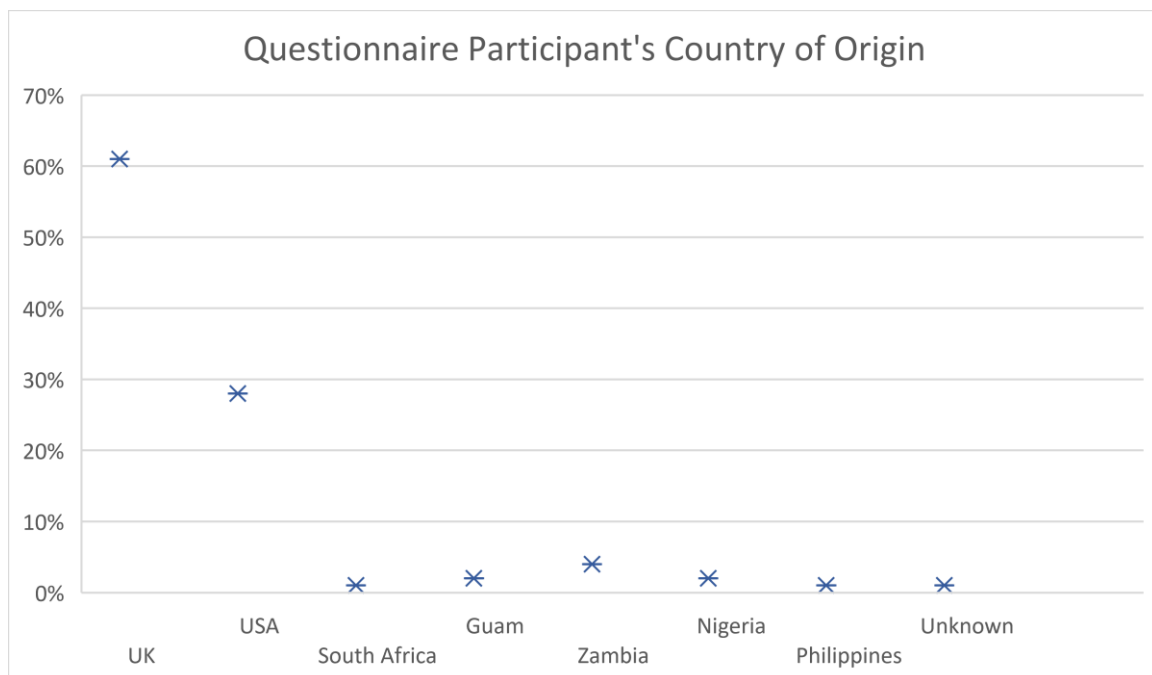
Sample Data

Six participants were interviewed (5% of questionnaire sample size), three hearing and three D/deaf. Two identified as culturally Deaf, one born into deaf culture, and one born to hearing parents and joining the culture later. The 3rd deaf person was born deaf to hearing parents and raised in hearing culture. Both Deaf participants use American Sign Language (ASL) as their first language the hearing participants had previous experience with deaf people, and one also identified as disabled unrelated to hearing loss. All 3 hearing participants have all had experience of D/deaf people to varying degrees.

Interviews allow for the data to be collected to be more in depth on a particular topic or themes and encourages the participants to elaborate on answers and the researcher an opportunity to follow other potential lines of inquiry relevant to the study. The advantages to the interview method were that further questions could be used to explore meanings behind the experiences of the participants allowing greater flexibility when necessary. Interviews also provide an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of non-verbal behaviour and well as nuances which is vital when communicating with someone who uses sign language as their preferred method of communication. The disadvantage of this method is that it is time consuming, not only the process of the interview itself but in recruiting participants to be interviewed as well as ensuring quality data from this method as direct comparisons of qualitative answers cannot be done there is also the risk that participants may self-censor when answering questions. The objective of this method was to interview members of the relevant demographics (hearing, HoH/deaf and Deaf) to gain greater insight on this subject by collecting data on lived experiences. To undertake a semi structed approach to the interview process allowed the participant to lead the conversation but the researcher to still maintain control of the direction of the interview. For this research I designed a semi structured interview based on the questions developed for the questionnaire, I requested that all interviewees completed the questionnaire prior to the interview as the clips used within the questionnaire were to be part of the discussions. Other themes that arose from the interviews allowed for an opportunity to explore the association to the area of study, for instance a political theme was emerging, and this allowed me to build on the themes that came from the questionnaire data and elaborate on the context of the qualitative data from all sources. The participants were recruited through social media contacts linked to my Facebook

profile but then the interviews were carried out on a platform of the participants choice. I looked to my social media contacts that were associated with the Deaf community for interview participants, I had a contact that was rooted within American Deaf culture so that is where I recruited my Deaf participants from. As the research was done via social media (Facebook) all the interviewees are connected to my network in one way or another which limits the potential variations of opinions and life experiences. Each interview was held on the Zoom platform except one which was face to face, all of which were recorded. Accommodations were made for the participants preferred communication method, availability and different time zones. The Deaf participants both used American Sign Language (ASL) as their preferred method of communication, so I was able to retain an ASL interpreter for their interviews. The biases that could have affected this research have been anticipated and mitigated by using a combination of methods as no one method would have produced an accurate data source.

Findings

Within this section the findings will be presented as follows, an introduction to the case study and how it potentially functions as a digital text. An overview of each clip will then be provided with analysis of the elements within the texts. For consistency both texts will be analysed focusing on the research questions of how Inspiration Porn is understood and changes in attitudes towards deafness in relation to the individual clips. The section will then lead into the impact of social media and Inspiration Porn in a broader context, throughout the data will be incorporated from the interview and questionnaire findings on specific themes as well as those that emerged through the interview data.

Clip 1: Baby Hears for the 1st time

When selecting an example for this study, the search term used was 'Baby hears for first time', the title of the clip selected is "Watch this Baby who was born deaf hear her Mom's voice" posted by NowThis on their Facebook platform. Using this title tells the audience instantly what the narrative of the clip is by being concise and provoking an emotional response. By setting the title this way not only informs the audience of what they are watching but also improves search engine optimisation (SEO) and in turn potentially increasing the visibility of the clip associated with those particular words. The issue of SEO

is that who has control of this system and if they are really in a position to judge diversity. This clip was selected because it meets the criteria of being a 'typical' example of deaf Inspiration Porn, but it also went viral, and many news platforms then reported on this story as well as pages within Facebook repackaging and reposting this clip. The language within the short title of 'Baby hears for first time" is very audio centric and gives an impression to the audience not only what to expect within the clip but invites judgements on the baby's life and marginalise the baby and their disability, based on just those five words. If the clip was to be renamed, it would effect views as a longer title could potentially detract audience from viewing as well as losing that emotive 'hook' which leads to the sharing and tagging of others to view such content.

Overview of clip 1

Clip 1 was posted on 6th December 2019 on NowThis' Facebook page, it is 1:02 minutes long and accumulated 1k comments, 3.9k shares, 564k views and 'liked' 19k times. In frame is a white baby girl of 4 months laying down wearing two hearing aids, facing the camera pulling facial expressions and squealing every so often during the duration of the clip. Three seconds into the clip a pop-up box appears in the top left corner with text that says to 'turn sound on'. The audio that can be heard is the baby cooing and music that has been added to the video. The text that appears is white but the words in bold are yellow as the clip plays.

"Should we say hello?"

This baby just had her **new hearing aids** turned on.

Look how **excited** she is.

Georgina Addison was born severely deaf.

The **4-month-old** received two hearing aids when she was **a few weeks old**.

Her father Paul says **she smiles** whenever he turns her aids on.

Watch how **excited** she gets.

When she hears **her mom's voice**.

Paul shared the cute moment **on Twitter** on Dec 5,

And it **went viral**.

"You use these hearing aids and it's like the lights have been switched on" **Paul Addison** to BBC.

End credits from NowThis

The words in bold were presented in a different colour text (yellow) compared to the rest of the text which was white.

This clip has a 'turn on sound' pop up indicating that the audio element of the clip is necessary giving the impression that D/deaf people are not the intended audience of this clip. It has also highlighted certain words of text in yellow as the clip plays indicating importance to those bits of information. In the context of the text that is shown by highlighting certain words may assist in triggering an emotional response from the audience. Emphasis on the fact that the baby received the hearing aids at a few weeks old and implying that the baby is excited or smiling when she hears infers that the parents are trying to 'rectify' the issue of severe deafness that the baby has. The motivation of Paul (the baby's father) could also be questioned as the clip went viral when it was posted by him on Twitter and the subsequent interviews with news platforms and how he describes the journey with his daughter's deafness. The use of language such as "You use these hearing aids and it's like the lights have been switched on" could be considered as negative connotation towards the experience of deafness. Using the child in this way could be considered as a form of exploitation elevating the potential message that if you give your deaf baby hearing aids, they will be happy when they hear.

This clip could be considered as a classic example of inspiration porn where the focus is entirely centred on the baby's "positive" reaction to "hearing". This clip went viral and appeared on several media outlets and the family also gave interviews with news platforms. Around 100 comments were tags inviting others to view the clip. On this particular thread the comments were positive towards the clip, the majority of the comments were laden with religious references and the word "cute" is used excessively. There were comments that could be construed as subtle microaggressions or audism for example one viewer commented "She's enjoying hearing herself, which she couldn't do without the hearing aids".

How Inspiration Porn is understood is dependent on the audience's perception of deafness in the context of this clip as positive and negative responses came from all groups regardless of hearing status and/or identity. 30% of the questionnaire respondents did not know of the term or concept of Inspiration Porn and within this group half of the participants identified as Deaf or deaf/HoH. The hearing respondents that indicated that they worked or socialised with deaf people and communities seemed to show a deeper understanding of Inspiration Porn ironically more so than many D/deaf people that completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire required the participants to provide a definition for the concept of Inspiration

Porn and the responses ranged from "clips in the form of pictures or videos showing how the disabled can positively cope with real life situations" (Deaf participant 94) to "microaggression disguised as a feel-good message to the majority group" (Deaf participant 40). Hearing participant 97 seems to think that Inspiration Porn is "a means of educating others" which is interesting because while Inspiration Porn can potentially give greater awareness on the disability and/or assistive technology, it is still a moment taken out of the context it was filmed in. When asked how the participants felt about this clip 43% of the questionnaire participants indicated a positive response to this clip, the reasoning from many of the participants focused on the technology and how the child will 'lead a normal life'. Comments such as "she will have a more enjoyable life with the hearing aids" (participant 52 Deaf) and "she should now be able to have a normal life" (HoH participant 98) appear to be speaking from personal experience and placing emphasis on the quality of life. Whereas other comments such as "worthwhile to have hearing aids at that age" (participant 24) and "pleased that we now have technology to accomplish that" (participant 81) from Hearing participants that are focused on the technology.

Whilst all 3 hearing interview participants object to these types of Inspiration Porn videos, all 3 admitted to seeing them and initially thinking that the videos were "sweet" but displayed a level of discomfort with the content even though they were unsure of the concept until participating in this study. From participant I, discomfort was the main emotion initially "When I first watched one for a little second, I thought aww. But it left me feeling uncomfortable". To sadness from participant A "the thing that really makes me sad although very endearing and very touching, it can give the impression that you're only special if you can hear, and I know that not to be true". To anger from participant T "they are nice to watch but at the same time I don't think people think about struggles that people have, and it just annoys me". The D/deaf interview participants indicated a greater knowledge of the concept of Inspiration Porn and the type of content it relates to more so from their personal experience of it, as participant R states that "you take advantage of someone's experience to inspire". In the context of this clip a comment from L was "you're kind of saying they achieve something from hearing their mum's voice and they haven't". Both hearing and D/deaf interviewees indicated that Inspiration Porn acts like an advert for fixing the disability. R empathises the idea of promoting the technology as tools to fix the 'problem', "We can use that tool, and that tool will solve everything. So, I guess like it's pity in terms of they're deaf, but there's a tool" and I echoes this sentiment "It's sold as a plus, if it's

advertised right". A hints at who may be the intended audiences of these clips "I think the videos usually are of babies. So, I think the pressure there is that parents need to act and without all the information".

If we compare attitudes with those of the 1800's onwards outwardly it would appear that there has been a shift in the issues that Deaf and deaf people face, but if the sentiment of 'Baby hears for first time' is explored it looks increasingly similar to the idea of the deaf baby needs to be saved from or 'cured' of their affliction. Even in the quote from the baby's father is echoing terminology that Deaf people have fought to move away from. Deaf participant 101 states "The "lights switched on" comment from the father really bothers me, too. It's reminiscent of lightbulb metaphors that imply intellect and understanding". The concept of eugenics whilst it has horrifyingly negative associations has become well established in medicine in response to disabilities and as technology has developed that is where the focus lies. Baby hears for first time clips are tethered to this notion of eugenics because their parents are trying to make them less deaf with the help of medical professionals by portraying the technology as a cure rather than as an assistive device. The following comments are from Deaf participants in response to how they felt about this clip. Participant 35 stated that the clip made them feel "uncomfortable and annoyed, because it sends out the wrong message that hearing aids fix deafness for once and all" but participant 7 stated that it "feels like I should be fixed in some way". Participant 80 elaborates further that "the video is selling technology and coupling with the oralist approach to communication as a solution for deafness". Hearing Participant 32 reinforces the link between Inspiration Porn with the medical model and said, "I don't like these videos because it really reinforces a "rehabilitation or medical" model of disability". L raises an important issue that "I feel the problem as well, is most of these videos have been from filmed from like a hearing persons perspective rather than a deaf person's perspective" which would indicate that there is an agenda when posting these types of clips and a bias in what is being promoted and/or 'advertised'. T highlights that even with changes that have happened there is still a huge gap in societal knowledge and states that the "Lack of understanding and a lack of awareness about what a deaf person life is like, even in this day and age".

Clip 2: Deaf baby learns sign language

When searching for a clip that would be considered as an opposite to Inspiration Porn and not audio centric compared to clip 1, the search term used initially was 'baby learns sign language' but the results were focused on the how to teach sign language to babies/children. The search term was then widened to 'deaf baby learns sign language' and the results of this returned were clips with interactions with babies using sign language including the clip selected for this study. The results of this search term were not as substantial as the term for the 1st clip which would indicate a slanted SEO system or that this content is just not as popular and/or as widely available. The title assigned to clip 2 is 'Grandma teaches Granddaughter sign language' and while the search term may potentially marginalise the baby or their life, the title assigned does not. The title is concise in terms of the content within the clip but the context of why the Grandma is teaching sign language to the baby is fairly unknown till the clip starts, so the 'hook' to gain an audience is lost because the emotive link is not featured in the title.

Overview of clip 2

Clip 2 was posted on 21st April 2017 on Good Housekeeping's Facebook page, it is 1:39 minutes long and accumulated 166 comments, no shares, 253k views and 'liked' 6.2k times. In frame is a white baby girl being held by her grandmother in her left arm while the grandmother uses her right hand to sign to the baby. The baby is watching the grandmother intently and looks as though she may try to mimic the sign that the grandmother is doing, the Grandmother then moves the baby's hand to emulate the action. The sign is American Sign Language (ASL) for Grandma. The audio that can be heard is the baby cooing and music that has been added to the video. The text that appears on screen is all in white,

Watch this grandmother teach sign language to her grandchild.

Watch the baby try herself. (This is when the grandmother moves the baby's hand)

"Yes, all my five grandchildren are deaf" Pamela wrote on Facebook

Her granddaughter, Aria, was probably just one of several grandchildren Pamela

Has had the privilege to bond with through sign language.

End credits from Good Housekeeping.

The text on clip 2 while also in white is less imposing on the clip compared to clip 1. The text in clip 2 focuses on sign language and how the baby is bonding as well as responding to the

grandmother. The quantity of text is far less than what is shown on clip 1 which indicates that the focus should be on the subjects of the clip, rather than on the text and the information given. There is no reference to the experience of being deaf other than what is stated in the text within clip 2 but more on the natural relationship between grandparent and grandchild.

In the context of how Inspiration Porn is understood as per the definition this clip would not be considered as Inspiration Porn as the baby is not being objectified in the overcoming of said 'disability'. This is echoed in the questionnaire data as 84% of the participants had a positive response to this clip mainly due to the representation of communication. Deaf participant 2 and 35 state that this is "a positive view of deaf people" and "doesn't show there is a need to fix the deafness. It shows alternative forms of communication". This continues with HoH participant 103 said that clip 2 made them feel "very happy because the focus is on communication via sign language and not trying to make the baby hearing by fixing the deafness" and Hearing Participant 29 stated "communication access from an early age is so important".

In comparing attitudes towards Deaf people this clip has a more positive way of representing deafness and sign language, when society has proactively tried to eliminate Deaf culture by stifling sign language. This clip has the ability to actually raise awareness on alternative ways of being D/deaf rather than the audio centricity of clip 1 focusing solely on hearing ability. Deaf interviewee R comments on this "the sign language one people probably haven't seen that before and don't really understand that babies can respond, I think it's more of like an awareness raising type of thing". The issue remains that if this clip is not as widespread as clip 1 then the awareness remains limited but there is an indication that people do not understand or care to learn about what it is that they are watching. As A states "the second one given the data of the number of people that have observed it. That says that people didn't think that was important enough to spend their time on" which leads to the question of why this clip is not as important as the 'baby hears for first time' clip. T also hints at this "I don't feel like that would get enough recognition or for people to actually sit back and think about how wonderful that is" but neither interviewee could specify why they thought the data showed this other than their personal experiences of deafness has broadened their views.

Not all participants were positive about this clip as 4% of responses had negative undertones to their comments coupled with why this clip is better for awareness about deafness. As HoH

participant 31 who says that they are "glad that there is a representation of sign language however unimpressed that it needs to be represented in such a way. Society would not feel the same if the grandma was speaking a different language as opposed to signing it". Participant 80 who identifies as Deaf commented "I am equally annoyed with this video because children shouldn't be portrayed on social media in this way. I am more likely to support this because the child will develop free from the strains of day-to-day communication through oralist means". Whilst these participants objected to this clip, they would support these clips more so than the audio focused examples of Inspiration Porn.

In doing this study it has been found that clip 1 was immensely more popular than clip 2, just by looking at the numbers of views and 'likes' each clip has. Clip 1 was also posted two years after clip 2 and still managed to surpass the numbers of views and 'likes' by more than double. Clip 1 was also shared 3.9K times from NowThis' Facebook page while clip 2 received no shares from Good Housekeeping's Facebook page, but it could be argued that this is dependent on the followers of these pages as NowThis has in excess of 15million followers whereas Good Housekeeping has just under 5 million followers just on Facebook. The potential reason for Clip 1's popularity is that it had already gone viral and was topical as it spread across several media platforms and as way of increasing engagement it is not unusual for pages to repackage viral, feel-good stories as their own content. Interviewee participant I made a reference to the asylum tours that occurred and made the comparison between those and Inspiration Porn on social media "They used to do tours to asylums, I think it's just a modern version of that, it's just click bait". C also comments on the tactics of social media "They're trying to grab people. It's all about Fish bait, right? So, they're using algorithms and they're taking advantage of the D/deaf community and finding a way to exploit them" and follows with "It has such power and people don't realize how powerful it is, but it can be so damaging".

When the interviewees were asked if they responded to or how they felt about some of the comments made the responses were of exasperation as they recalled personal experiences. L comments "I just roll my eyes, honestly. They are very condescending as well. They have all these views and things and they've never actually met anyone that's deaf, I feel like some people are just so stuck in their own mindset before learning". Most of the interviewees indicated that they have responded to comments on Inspiration Porn clips but are often met with hostility as I states, "it's amazing how many people who aren't deaf then take offence at

being told that this is ableist content". R comments on how people interact within social media "if people would have a discussion, that's fine, but on social media people aren't trying to have a discussion. Their debates are actually bullying, and they just are oppressive. If they want to understand, that's one thing. But people don't want to do that on social media and it's not the way to really connect and elevate the process".

L clearly states that the impact of Inspiration Porn is "a bigger issue than it's made out to be" and it does appear that that is the case in this context, as the impact can be felt in different ways by different communities. Facebook users are global, so the diversity of background and religions was evident in the comments, also comments made on clip 1 showed a distinct lack knowledge of D/deaf issues and how technology can aid deaf people. This could be due to many reasons one of which could be lack of access to the technology and support for deafness, or even how different cultures outside of the UK and US still view deafness or disability in general. C hints at this by stating that "Inspiration Porn can dangerously impact people globally even at the remotest parts of the world".

Even in western society and cultures, education of what Inspiration Porn is would benefit many individuals not just D/deaf people to learn why certain views of D/deaf people and the assistive technology are still held in society. T indicates that there are still 'old' views held of deafness "I do think people have perceptions of deaf people that they can't hear like regardless of anything, they can't speak and that they're stupid because of those things, and I think that is a blanket thought process for a lot of people". Inspiration Porn in itself is not educating able-bodied/hearing people about the disability, the technology or the culture, whilst it gives an awareness about deafness it is not positive across the spectrum of what it means to be deaf. As many D/deaf individuals use a range of communication methods and technology the danger lies in feeding the misconceptions of deafness. As Inspiration Porn rarely makes the distinction between the disability and the culture, the biggest objection to deaf Inspiration Porn is that it puts out the "wrong message", and it is just a case of "switching on". This could be considered as the consequence of misrepresentation as L says from experience that it seems that "it stops people wanting to learn more cause they feel like they got all the information they needed from that video, even though its warped".

The history of how D/deaf people have been treated has led to this point as C highlights the importance of this "I think there is this pressure on the D/deaf people to fix themselves. I

think it is deeper than that though and it comes from the history behind it and the history of oppression". Inspiration Porn is the consequence of the oppressive history combined with social media and this particular digital content. When hearing participant T was asked do you think that inspiration porn is basically a consequence of how society treats deaf people? The response was "definitely. And I wouldn't even just say it just applies to deaf people. I think it applies to every single disability. But yeah, it is, 100%". C elaborates on the impact of Inspiration Porn towards Deaf communities "Inspiration Porn is more negative than positive. It hurts the Deaf community because language is what we have as a community. And once that's gone, that's gone, so really, we are fighting to protect our language and without that, we don't exist, and that's the ultimate struggle because the public doesn't really view it that way. We can't let hearing people the public view our community as just these people who get technology and services and they can hear. Just plug them in and then they can hear because that actually damages us so much more than does good". R follows with "it has a huge impact because when we have to continue this narrative to show people that you just provide some little technology and then it's fixed. You can hear then everyone can hear and it's like no, no, no, that's a huge impact. In fact, it's a huge impact because it makes every focus on the ear which is audist. Deaf culture has so much richness, communication modalities, visual modalities, but it's not all about the ability to speak and the ability to hear".

The impact of Inspiration Porn on a community level will in turn effect people individually and how they perceive Deaf people and deafness as a whole. When asked in the questionnaire if either clip changes how the participant views deaf people, hearing Participant 48 says "no. just about hearing parents" and Deaf participant 51 said "Of course, the 1st one makes me think of hearies and their power to control us, dismiss us, silence us. 2nd clip made me so happy and at relief knowing there are people out there that signs to our Deaf children". These statements indicate more so on how they view the hearing as a response to this question but also gives the impression that D/deaf people have low expectations on how they are likely to be treated by society. There were comments specifically referring to the sign language element of clip 2, as HoH Participant 103 elaborates "Yes because as a deaf person raised in hearing culture, I perceived those who sign as more disabled, but as I develop my knowledge about Deaf culture, I have found that it is I that is more disabled". One comment showed a potential rethink of deafness. Hearing Participant 99 says "Yes – never considered the simple thing of teaching language by sign. First vid is misleading as though deafness is just a case of switching on". The sheer amount of Inspiration Porn content can be influential when the

'dominant' view is always promoted as Deaf Participant 82 simply comments "there isn't enough of clip 2 and to much of clip 1". With this reiterates the main issue of Inspiration Porn as Deaf Participant 16 states "I think the main problem with inspiration porn is that it treats disabled people as something that exists only to inspire non-disabled people". There was a reference to potential divides within the Deaf community regarding assistive devices as hearing Participant 24 comments that "those 2 are deaf correct, unlike cochlear implants which is very hard for deaf people to accept". In answering this question this hinges on the participants to be honest with themselves and their perception, like the potentially problematic comment such as one from hearing participant 116 "They are people with challenges. The clips showed smiling babies", this statement indicates a perception that D/deaf people are those with challenges but focuses on the 'positive' snapshot that the clips provide.

Other issues have been touched upon that effect D/deaf communities that fall outside the purpose of this study but within the issues that impact individuals and communities such as Participant 80 who identifies as Deaf states "I reject the notion of D/deaf…This is a false duality". Yet a comment made by HoH participant 68 states "my experience of deafness is very different to that of someone born Deaf and raised into the Deaf community. Personally, I don't think we should lump deaf and Deaf together. I mean no disrespect to either but there are such huge differences". From the data, an element of distrust between communities can be seen, from how deafness has been and continues to be treated, as A says "there are fads in the way we treat people with deafness. And they're not all good". To how researchers explore these questions as HoH participant 64 asks "is this designed to encourage the fight between hearing aid users and those who sign as their first language?".

Discussion

This research is going to clarify and give a better understanding of these issues within wider society and increase the awareness of why the concept of Inspiration Porn is inappropriate in contemporary times, by shedding light on the risks of conflating all D/deaf people and communities and the risks of retaining outdated D/deaf stereotypes. From the brief history outlined it is clear to see that society as a whole has 'dealt' with the issue surrounding deafness in very inconsistent ways, from the very violent form of eugenics of physically

sterilising, experimentation and segregation of D/deaf people to the more benevolent forms of audism that still exist in more palatable forms, in this instance the 'inspirational' clips that circulate on social media. These extremes of the spectrum, from the violent to the benevolent, both feed from the same ethos of eugenics and ultimately dictate that if an individual is not 'normal' they need to be 'fixed' so that they will be accepted in society, and yet for all the obstacles presented, Deaf people and communities still exist and continue to fight to be heard by those who refuse to listen.

My research was to distinguish between Inspiration Porn from other forms of inspirational videos and look at the effect Inspiration Porn can potentially have on D/deaf individuals and communities. To explore the issues that had risen from cases of Inspiration Porn and why they are considered offensive to certain people and/or communities and how these can manifest. Investigating the language surrounding deafness such as microaggressions or even blatant audism and how this can be facilitated and/or tolerated by social media. The point of this research was to delve into the concept of Inspiration Porn and look at the themes that arise from it, and how people (hearing and D/deaf) respond to it both individually and collectively.

There are papers on Inspiration Porn focusing on disabilities generally and the involvement of social media and memes. There are also papers discussing the use of this sort of material to advance marketing and advertising brands and charities. I have found nothing specific to the impact of D/deaf Inspiration Porn on Deaf culture and communities or on D/deaf people in general. There is a need for this research to highlight the impact that Inspiration Porn can have on people with this hidden disability as well as on a cultural level. Papers on Inspiration Porn talk of the problems that emerge generally for disabled people in terms of the result of disability representation, but no other disability has a cultural branch of it and so some issues could have a far greater repercussion.

The objective of this study was to determine what Inspiration Porn is and how it effects D/deaf people and communities. In trying to answer this question the research questions posed in the introduction remain as the areas of focus and are.
• How is Inspiration Porn understood?
• Has there been a change in attitudes towards D/deaf people and issues they face?
• What is the impact of social media?

- What is the impact of Inspiration Porn on D/deaf and hearing communities?
In answering these research questions this will allow exploration of specific elements and broader analysis to answer the title question.

How is Inspiration Porn understood?

Inspiration Porn as defined by Young (TED 2014) and Liddiard (2014) is not a new concept as Shakespeare (1994) refers to examples of Inspiration Porn before this label came into being. The definition of Inspiration Porn relating to objectification of disabled and/or Deaf people has not changed other than the platform for viewing this type of content, from the 'freak shows' in the 18thC and 19thC to social media clips in 21stC. The definition remains true to this concept, and it now has a name rather than ambiguous references to the objectification and fetishism that occurs, it is also apparent that the cultural representation of disabled and Deaf people changes with the ideology of the time of depiction.

Inspiration Porn appears to be a concept that is met with extreme negativity or with ignorance. 30% of questionnaire respondents and two interview participants where not sure of the term Inspiration Porn, these were a mixture of hearing, Deaf and deaf/HoH individuals. This is an issue in itself because if people in general do not know what makes Inspiration Porn problematic to all communities irrespective of whether or not they themselves have a disability it would be harder to educate others. Disabled interviewee I, who elaborates on their personal experience believes that Inspiration Porn to be "very negative and very damaging to the disabled". In direct opposition to this point of view a comment from Hearing Participant 79 seems to think that the term Inspiration Porn is an "unfair criticism to some inspirational videos!". In relation to this specific question of how Inspiration Porn is understood it appears that the term Inspiration Porn is not understood by all individuals and communities and the potentially harmful messaging is not considered when viewing these clips. Yet, many hearing individuals who are part of disabled or Deaf communities are far more understanding about what Inspiration Porn is. An example of this from Hearing participant 29 who states that they work with Deaf people says, "the crap online the people think is inspirational but is really demeaning, like the videos of CI activations and people "hearing" for the first time". Deaf interviewee R states that "you are taking advantage of someone's experience to inspire others" hinting at exploiting deaf subjects for the

entertainment of hearing audiences. Echoing this sentiment was deaf interviewee L, stating that "it's a bigger issue than it's made out to be". In response to the two clips within this study regardless of the positive reaction they gained, there is emphasis on the exploitation and representation of the deaf babies involved. In clip 1 this is more evident because of the focus on the ears and the aids but in clip 2 it appears to be more subtle. Whilst not classed as a typical example of Inspiration Porn in the sense of fixing the disability there are nuanced feelings towards clip 2. The cultural element of being Deaf is not elaborated on within clip 2 and participant 31 mentions that "society would not feel the same if the grandma was speaking a different language as opposed to signing it". Which leads into the potential issue of sign language being seen and treated as something of a novelty. This can be seen in other clips that have been put out on social media such as song signing, these are problematic as using incorrect signs for the context of the song as many people that make these types of clips are hearing, which only adds to misinformation about sign language as well as deafness. Even understanding that there are differences between sign systems and sign language e.g., Makaton is not the same as BSL and American Sign Language is a different language to BSL. This would lessen the misinformation surrounding sign language but again if hearing people are not open to learning from Deaf communities and continue to misappropriate Deaf culture for social media attention this is an extension to Inspiration Porn. "Deaf people might feel that their culture is being appropriated if a hearing person who doesn't have links to the Deaf community uses Deaf culture for personal gain – for example, by performing signed songs on TikTok for 'likes' (NDCS.org.uk).

As Inspiration Porn is considered to be a consequence of how society seeks to reinforce the medical model towards deafness, the lack of choice for the D/deaf individual is highlighted. Throughout history there is evidence of most decision making for the deaf is done by the hearing in medical, educational and Governmental forums as well as in fiction. The overwhelming message being that the D/deaf are dependant and need to be looked after as they can not look after themselves.

Has there been a change in attitudes towards D/deaf people and issues they face?

Depending on who is asked there are different answers to if there has been a change in attitudes towards D/deaf people, as 'normal' society may disagree with D/deaf communities.

There has been development in assistive technology and the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 in the UK to protect disabled people from discrimination. Unfortunately, these particular developments have not changed how deaf people have been historically stereotyped and how these have been maintained into modern times. Offensive stereotypes and representations of D/deaf people are still used even if not within mainstream media, they are still very embedded within Western culture with old jokes, connotations of certain phrases and myths surrounding the disability of deafness. Hearing people that work or socialise within Deaf environments are far more positive about the community and aware of the issues that arise for Deaf and deaf/HoH individuals. The focus of integration for D/deaf people into 'normal' society is still a huge pressure on the D/deaf individual and can still be seen within medical and educational settings. The overt actions towards D/deaf people during the eugenics movement have since ceased but still exist in other ways. Within the educational context the closure of Deaf schools and focus on teaching D/deaf children to listen and speak rather than using sign language, by diminishing the use of sign language is considered to be damaging Deaf culture. As C states "we are fighting to protect our language; without it we don't exist".

This issue surrounding Oralism has been continuous since 1880 and has influenced how society has treated their D/deaf children to integrate or segregate them, as those who cannot be integrated are considered to be "too far gone" as deaf interviewee L stated from their experience of how other D/deaf people are treated. Deaf interviewee R echos this sentiment as a generational Deaf person that "some people spend years learning to speak in an intelligible way, so with people that are profoundly deaf, they're like they can't, they're never going to learn, so they let them off the hook". The Oralism method has now evolved into Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) to develop listening and speaking for deaf children. As the majority of deaf children are born to hearing parents, hearing Interviewee participant A states, "I think the pressure there is that the parents need to act without all the information" and indicated that the medical profession maybe potentially "making decisions for parents who are in shock".

The medical model focuses on 'curing' or minimising the impact of disability coupled with advancement within the medical profession again rooted firmly in the ethos of eugenics. Deaf parents undergoing IVF in the UK are not allowed to select embryos that carry deaf genes as the embryo is considered defective and it is considered unethical to implant, this presents the

idea that "the life as a deaf person is not one worth living" (Murphy 2008) an echo of the Nazi mantra. During the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK it came to light that Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (DNAR) orders were put in place for patients that lacked English or were D/deaf with the reasoning of communication difficulties (DeafAction 2021). Many D/deaf people and their families were unaware of the subjective decisions made by doctors, this highlights the perception that D/deaf people clearly do not have the same right to life, and this is happening now not just historically. Ultimately Parents of deaf children are making choices for their child without full knowledge of what that means for the child in the long term, as the focus is the deficit the child had and how to repair it as to integrate the child without consideration for the child's wellbeing. This continuation of lack of choice for the D/deaf individual is made worse by the fact that the Deaf community is a found community. By removing the choice from the deaf individual and making decisions for them to appear more hearing and not giving any opportunities for exposure to Deaf culture and Deaf spaces means less chance and more difficulty to join the Deaf community. Hearing parents need to also be mindful that isolating their deaf child from Deaf culture can influence how the deaf child sees their disability and how they fit into 'normal' society and in turn how they view other deaf people.

A big part of the problem is society does not seem to be able to distinguish the difference between the disability and the culture and seems to hang on to generalisations of all D/deaf people. Educating both hearing and D/deaf people on the topic of Inspiration Porn is important as everyone should be aware of the misinformation on this disability and culture and the wider implications that impact society as a whole. It could be difficult to change attitudes because certain events and even blatant discrimination are very recent in history for deaf communities but in order to gain the trust needed from D/deaf communities, wider society needs to acknowledge the diversity that we have in all communities and removing the huge amounts of pressure still on deaf communities to conform to hearing standards, as this is the legacy of the history of oppression of D/deaf people as a whole. The opinion of the D/deaf interview participants is that the responsibility to be "more like hearing people" is put on the deaf person or the parents of the deaf child, as society will not adapt or even refuse to accommodate to the communication needs of deaf people, but the individual has to adapt to societal "norms". Within Deaf culture there appears to be less pressure to speak or use assistive devices, so a deaf child raised within a hearing family is more likely to experience pressure to function just as well as a hearing person. The ability for society to be able to

involve Deaf people is severely lacking, historically the perception of D/deaf people is that hearing ability is linked to mental capacity hence 'deaf AND dumb' a fact that has been proven vastly incorrect. Culturally Deaf people feel left out of the conversation as hearing society continues to not include them on the wider issues that impact them personally and hearing people are still making decisions for them based on what their perception of deafness is. As R states "we have this cultural knowledge that we share with each other, so why don't they ask us?", again highlighting the lack of autonomy that D/deaf people have. As previously stated, these are not new problems, but a resistance to inclusivity. All of the D/deaf interview participants have indicated that there is a fear towards the idea towards being deaf or towards sign language users. This could be the 'us and them' mentality especially if society does not have much interaction with D/deaf people or with sign language. The fear could be towards the disability itself as how would a hearing person adjust to the loss of one of their senses or a fear of the inability to communicate with sign language users. Ironically it appears D/deaf also have the fear of not being able to communicate in 'normal' society because of the lack of willingness and/or frustration they receive from able-bodied people.

What is the impact of social media?

Social media platforms whilst they can bring isolated communities together seem to enable divisions between 'normal' society and D/deaf people with content deemed to be Inspiration Porn. The hostility that arises when an individual tries to educate others on Inspiration Porn within the comments on these clips makes the ignorance even more apparent, as all the D/deaf interview participants all stated that they avoid the comments section as they do not want to get into a confrontational argument, as many people have made up their minds about deafness and do not want to be educated on this topic.

This highlights the fact that able-bodied people consume and enjoy this material but do not want to be informed that the D/deaf experience is vastly different to what is portrayed within these clips and is not as positive as able-bodied people would like to believe. The reoccurring statement that is most offensive is that D/deaf people are being oversensitive to these clips and representations, which belittles not just the individual's experience with the culture and/or disability but the spectrum of deafness and communication needs that differ from

person to person as being D/deaf is more than just getting a hearing aid and learning to speak. Inspiration Porn on social media facilitates a space for ableism and audism by disregarding the comments from D/deaf individuals. In doing this able-bodied people do not learn about what it means to be D/deaf or why Inspiration Porn is harmful in this context and continues to maintain and spread incorrect ideas about what being D/deaf actually entails. As Inspiration Porn content is repacked and spread on a global scale for "likes", consideration is not given to the fact that this content promotes the medical model style of dealing with deafness, the very model that society needs to move away from. Culturally Deaf people quite often do not see themselves as disabled and yet they have to contend with the fact that wider society only sees the disability and not the culture or even acknowledges sign language as a language in its own right. This lack of knowledge and awareness has significant repercussions for the whole of society as able-bodied society cannot seem to accept the social change to be able to meet the needs of D/deaf people and still reverts to historical stereotypes and attitudes when confronted with a situation with D/deaf people involved. Those who are deaf but not part of the Deaf culture face an inordinate amount of pressure to mask and appear hearing to avoid discrimination because of audist comments received both in reality and online.

The power and reach of social media are concerning as it does not just impact communities but also individuals and their sense of self and what it means to be D/deaf. The algorithms that social media platforms employ also potentially feed Inspiration Porn content to specific demographics but also as recommendation to view similar content if a user views a clip, so this forces the content onto audiences whether or not they want to view them. This normalises the promoted message of Inspiration Porn as well as the misinformation that spreads because of this content. This also feeds into the song signing clips as well because while there is no objection to hearing people learning sign language, there is a huge amount of damage that can and has been done because of the misrepresentation and lack of knowledge surrounding deafness, Deaf culture and the variety of different communication methods and signed languages.

What is the impact of Inspiration Porn on D/deaf and hearing communities?

Inspiration Porn is one of many ways to normalise and promote the "nicer form of eugenics" also known as Newgenics, by promoting hearing ability. Inspiration Porn is not the cause but

an extension to how D/deaf people have been treated over recent history. With methods of deconstructing Deaf networks societally and promoting oralism, social policies that influence the abilities of D/deaf people in a political sphere. Then adding technology to improve hearing ability to try and make deafness in all forms obsolete elevating a fear of being or becoming deaf. This is the medical model in action in response to the disability by enforcing the idea that deafness is inherently bad which unfortunately make stereotypes of deafness cling harder within society, which are also portrayed in film and media alongside certain use of language and in turn amplifies the negativity surrounding deafness.

Inspiration Porn on social media is designed in a very particular way with the focus on gaining views with popular content, in this context promoting the audio centric way as the 'right' way. This does not come with the appropriate message or information that would help D/deaf awareness hence why Inspiration Porn is considered to promote the wrong message. A stated that "I'm not sure that it's awareness of deafness. It's awareness of a surgical procedure or the technology as opposed to its ok to be deaf without this". The 'repacking' of clips for brand engagement is not unusual but in the context of Inspiration Porn is deeply inappropriate and consideration is not given to the wider influence of the message portrayed. The fact that this content can be repackaged by multiple brands and platforms by many people indicates that they do not consider this content as harmful. The agenda of hearing people posting these clips can be called into question because of the apparent exploitation of the deaf subjects in the clips as well as the lack of consideration given to D/deaf people in general. For example, while sign language in mainstream society would be beneficial the objection comes when it is appropriated as a tool for more 'likes'. L stated that "usually baby hears for the first-time videos are filmed from a hearing person's perspective" this shows that audiences of this particular Inspiration Porn content is not for D/deaf people as a 'hearing gaze' has been applied to the staging of such content. Inspiration Porn is not solely responsible for the impact on D/deaf communities, but it maintains the "old view" of deafness and by being on social media Inspiration Porn has the ability to spread further across the globe potentially effecting people that would have otherwise been untouched. As social media has access to parts of the world where deafness is still considered a curse in places like Haiti, and there would be no qualms about murdering a D/deaf person for being deaf and/or using sign language, these communities of D/deaf people are in danger because of the lack of knowledge and technology that they do not have access to compared to those D/deaf people

in the UK and US. These cultures still maintain an entrenched "old view" of deafness that desperately needs to change.

The impact on D/deaf communities overall is negative as it will effect the individuals in different ways. The negativity felt by D/deaf communities is by society's inability to recognise or even ignore Deaf culture and language and focus on the disability even though many Deaf people do not consider themselves as disabled. This effects society as a whole from the individual not seeing themselves represented to Inspiration Porn using white deaf people as sources of inspiration or the only group of deaf people that have access to the technology and support. Inspiration Porn and the comments on the clips potentially normalise the medical model and need to be "fixed" and the subtle audist comments that go with it. It has been suggested that Inspiration Porn is an advert for new parents of deaf children as more often the subject of these clips are babies fitted with a device to "cure" them of deafness. The demographic for these videos is not D/deaf people but able-bodied/hearing people to give them "hope" and "inspiration" and a "cure" to "fix" their deaf baby so they can be "normal" in society. It appears that cochlear implants are more of a contentious issue within the Deaf community than hearing aids, but the issues lie in how they are presented as "fixing/curing" deafness rather than as assistive technology as many people commenting on these clips do not seem to realise that the D/deaf individual either with or without this technology is still D/deaf.

Change Needed

This study was designed to see how Inspiration Porn coupled with social media effects D/deaf people and the wider society. Ultimately the impact is negative as the concept of Inspiration Porn is the objectification of disabled predominantly for hearing/able-bodied audiences. Unless an individual is aware of this concept, audiences that consume this material seem to be unconcerned with why Inspiration Porn may offend D/deaf people and disabled people in general. The reduction of the D/deaf experience to a series of moments taken out of context, displayed within a minute long clip based on one individual does not benefit any community.

This study is relevant to disability and Deaf studies as well as social and media studies because it focuses on how interpretation of this media in a social context actually hinders the progression of D/deaf people in wider society especially when the history of oppression that D/deaf people have faced has also been considered. This study has proven that Inspiration Porn is not a viable tool for awareness of deafness both the disability and culture and instead promotes the ethos of eugenics, by emphasising the medical model in response to deafness and disregarding the cultural aspects completely, or even turning it into a novelty item.

Inspiration Porn should not be the method in which to distribute awareness and can be seen as a form of ableist, specifically audist propaganda. The medical model needs to cease being the default response to deafness as the wider impact to the D/deaf individual is not considered as quite often those in the medical profession are not best placed to help D/deaf people or their parents outside of the medical model. Assistive technology coupled with the oralist method does not work for all D/deaf people and can come at a far greater cost to the D/deaf individual (mental health and identity). The focus within medical and educational settings should be child led, rather than obsessing over their speech and hearing capability as the success of a D/deaf person should never be measured on how well they 'pass' as hearing. Even the progression of equality laws surrounding disability do not protect D/deaf people and their rights enough let alone disabled people in the wider context. D/deaf people are rarely involved in conversations that effect all aspects of their lives even after battling for accessibility e.g., the UK Government was recently taken to court over the lack of accessibility of Covid-19 briefings and while the Government lost the case there is a blatant refusal to provide such. British Sign Language (BSL) is still not protected as a language legally, so provisions do not have to be made for BSL users trying to access services and leaves Deaf people at the wayside. The Equality Act 2010, designed to protect people from discrimination within the UK, has now been in force for over a decade so the simple thing of making things fair and accessible should be ingrained in how society thinks and acts towards all disabilities. Unfortunately, if the UK Government is seen to disregard the accessibility rights of a minority group of people publicly, with no repercussion in any way this encourages others to also disregard this law. Accessibility for D/deaf people should not be done in a benevolent way, these are their rights, not something that could be thought of as optional or 'doing them a favour'.

Hearing Interview participant A made a poignant remark that "It's life altering, but it's not life threatening to be deaf". Society after all this time and all the events that have happened in recent history appears to still be resistant in adapting to accommodate and include D/deaf people. By not being inclusive for the range of communities that are D/deaf or even sensitive to Deaf culture and Deaf pride, hearing society has inadvertently ostracised us thus maintaining the status quo. There are also divides within D/deaf communities that are relating to race, gender and class divides, as representation is still predominantly white so many D/deaf people can and do experience multiple forms of discrimination because these strands of a person's identity cannot be separated. Unfortunately, D/deaf people in positions of power cannot afford to become complacent because while they maybe in a privileged position other D/deaf people are not, and do not even have basic access needs met. It is not the responsibility of those D/deaf individuals to further the Deaf cause, but it is sorely needed as those are the D/deaf people that have platforms to rectify the misinformation within hearing society. Even more so when considering Ladd's suggestion on how academics study Deaf culture as it should be focused on the cultural elements rather than the medical elements.

In order to instigate change within society surrounding deafness and Deaf culture, social media platforms need to look at how they are facilitating spaces that allow these problems to thrive. Inspiration Porn material either needs to be more informative by changing the language and giving more context on the specifics of the situation shown within the clip and what assistive technology can actually achieve rather than framing it as a 'cure' or removed completely. There is also an inadequate level of accountability across social media platforms, but this also applies to those who are commenting and/or sharing this content. If social media platforms can fact check for misinformation, why is it not done for posts considered to be Inspiration Porn. Social media platforms promoting Inspiration Porn is another way to influence society with a very ableist agenda. Inspiration Porn does not help the obvious mistrust that D/deaf people have about hearing people as quite often the hearing person has been woefully ill-informed.

The risk of Covid-19 when collecting the data for this research was considered at every stage and was a deciding factor for the methods chosen and even how they would be implemented. I decided against many ethnographic methods because I could not ensure the safety of the participants as well as myself but by doing this there is data that has been unobtainable. I would have included focus group interviews and pursued field work in order to establish

myself within the local Deaf community thus earning the trust in order to gain interview participants located in the UK.

This study is very limited as all participants were connected to my Facebook social media network in some way, as I do not have access to all communities on social media and I am aware that the algorithms that Facebook use may have restricted my scope initially. This study would have benefitted from ethnographic field research to garner freer discussion surrounding the concept of Inspiration Porn and could have highlighted other issues that specifically impact D/deaf communities at a local or national level rather than just on just an individual level. As this is a concept that resonates with me on a personal level, bias is something I have had to contend with throughout to ensure that the data collected was done as objectively as possible as to not influence the participants in any way. Any further research in this specific area surrounding D/deaf people would improve our understanding of these factors that still hinder D/deaf individuals in contemporary times.

The questionnaire data could have been improved to ensure specific data was collected as not all participants stipulated their 'hearing identity' which could not be definitively indicated from the respondent's answers. This in turn means that a true breakdown of the groups of how they identify cannot be included. As over 70% of the questionnaire participants were female a more balanced mix of genders would have indicated if gender coupled with deafness was also a factor in how they view other D/deaf people as well as experiencing different treatment.

I was not prepared for the response my research would get worldwide, I found because I am not a British Sign Language (BSL) user as my first language British Deaf people were sceptical of me and I found it difficult to gain access wholly online. It was difficult to instigate researcher/participant relationships as an outsider whilst the response I received online was positive, there was an issue of mistrust, and I did not want to seem unappreciative of the data I did manage to gain through the questionnaire method. I did however gain access to culturally Deaf people from the USA as my cousin is an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter and Lecturer in the US and was able to help me gain access to culturally Deaf participants. I was unaware of the complexity of holding an interview in three different time zones within a platform that could be used by all attendees. The interview process had to be adapted slightly as with an interpreter, as the usual dynamic was different to what I am used

to within an interview situation. Some of the questions had to be adapted to ensure clarity for the participant as even subtle differences between UK and US English could be misinterpreted in their understanding as well as then translating into sign language. As holding interviews was also a new process for me to develop, practising my developing interview technique would have been beneficial as I would have been more conscious of what areas or topics needed further probing.

Further exploration should focus within D/deaf communities from different ethnic backgrounds as culture surrounding disability differs from place to place, the impact of class divisions as those from working class backgrounds would experience their deafness differently to those in middle and upper classes and even looking specifically at how gender can also be a factor in how an individual is treated. This would lead to a greater understanding in how these issues are faced by the individual and how other factors can influence these experiences. This study has shown that D/deaf people from the UK and US have had similar experiences but from the data collected it is harder to specify where the changes have occurred or still needing to progress because of differences in the areas of law, education and medicine in both countries. As a result, this study has been very general but if this research was done within a specific country or community then there could be recommendations that could be instrumental for D/deaf people that could be modified and replicated.

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Appendix

Questionnaire Questions

1. How do you identify?

2. What does inspiration porn mean to you?

3. How does clip 1 make you feel?

4. How does clip 2 make you feel?

5. Does either clip alter how you perceive D/deaf people?

Interview Schedule

Date and Time of Interview	Participant	Description/Special arrangements made.
2nd April 2021 1pm	L (deaf)	Online interview and allowed time for clarification as participant relied on speech for communication.
21st April 2021 1am	R (Deaf)	Online interview with an Interpreter, as participant relied on ASL for communication. As both parties are based in the US, I had to arrange interview that both could attend.
17th May 2021 2pm	C (Deaf)	Online interview with an Interpreter, as participant relied on ASL for communication. As both parties are based in the US, I had to arrange interview that both could attend.
20th May 2021 10:30am	T (Hearing)	Online interview.
1st June 2021 6pm	A (Hearing)	Online interview.
1st June 2021 9pm	I (Disabled but Hearing)	Participant preferred a face-to-face interview because the online format was inaccessible to them. I arranged to meet them in an environment that was best suited for them to access but also private enough for them to speak freely.

I informed all participants and the interpreter I am deaf so I would have to record the interviews for transcription purposes, and all gave consent prior to the interviews starting.

What is "Inspiration Porn" and how does it affect D/deaf communities?

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Alicia Beels.

Please refer to our Research Privacy Notice for more information on how we will use and store your personal data.

Background

What is Inspiration Porn and if social media and inspirational videos can influence behaviour towards deaf people and if deaf people face an increase or decrease in negative language/treatment.

This is a self-funded research study.

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be required to participate in an interview and/or questionnaire.

To participate in this research you must:

Be over 18

Use social media

Procedures

You will be asked to participate in an interview at an agreed time and on an agreed preferred online platform for no longer than an hour. Any adjustment to the interview format can be arranged on request of the participant e.g. If the participant uses BSL (British Sign Language) the interview can be conducted in sign if this is preferred by the participant or if a deaf person uses speech to text software to allow additional time for questions as there will be a delay for the technology to translate.

To complete an online questionnaire.

Feedback

You will be able to view the answers before submitting the online questionnaire and/or request to view the transcript of the interview.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The following categories of personal data (as defined by the [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR)) will be processed:

- The personal data that will be used is disability, specifically deafness and cultural background.
- Personal experiences and opinions.

We have identified that the public interest in processing the personal data is:

- This necessary to be able to analyse the data fully. Personal data will be used for statistical analyses and for comparison of demographics.

Data can only be accessed by, or shared with:

- Canterbury Christ Church University; Supervision, Chair and examiners of my research.

The identified period for the retention of personal data for this project:

- Data will be stored for the duration of my research and examination.

If you would like to obtain further information related to how your personal data is processed for this project please contact Alicia Beels via email ab1068@canterbury.ac.uk

You can read further information regarding how the University processes your personal data for research purposes at the following link: Research Privacy Notice - https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/university-solicitors-office/data-protection/privacy-notices/privacy-notices.aspx

Dissemination of results

The results of the research will be published in the form of a Master's thesis which Canterbury Christ Church will hold a copy in their library.

Process for withdrawing consent to participate

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in this research project at any time without having to give a reason. To do this email your request to Alicia Beels at ab1068@canterbury.ac.uk.

You may read further information on your rights relating to your personal data at the following link: Research Privacy Notice - https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/university-solicitors-office/data-protection/privacy-notices/privacy-notices.aspx

Any questions?

Please contact Alicia Beels on;
Tel: 01227 922419
Email: ab1068@canterbury.ac.uk

School of Creative Arts and Industries,
Canterbury Christ Church University,
North Holmes Road,
Canterbury CT1 1QU

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:	What is "Inspiration Porn" and how does it affect D/deaf communities?
Name of Researcher:	Alicia Beels

Contact details:

Address:	School of Creative Arts and Industries Canterbury Christ Church University North Holmes Road Canterbury Kent CT1 1QU
Tel:	01227 922419
Email:	ab1068@canterbury.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. (If applicable) I confirm that I agree to any audio and/or visual recordings.

3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential and in line with the University Research Privacy Notice

4. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time, without giving a reason.

5. I agree to take part in the above project.

Name of Participant:	Date:	Signature:
Researcher:	Date:	Signature:

Copies: 1 for participant
            1 for researcher

Ethics Approval Documentation

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

Miss Alicia Beels

School of Creative Arts And Industries

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education

1st March 2021

Dear Alicia

Confirmation of ethics approval: Doctoral Research Project

Your ethics application complies fully with the requirements for ethical and governance review, as set out in this University's Research Ethics and Governance Procedures, and has been approved.

You are reminded that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the Research Governance Framework and any relevant academic or professional guidelines.

Any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course will require an amendment application, and may require a new application for ethics approval.

It is a condition of approval that you **must** inform ethics@canterbury.ac.uk once your research has completed.

Wishing you every success with your research.

On behalf of

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education Ethics Panel

FAHE.ethics@canterbury.ac.uk