

Disability on the Shelf

Going beyond Large Print | MLA 2017

Title Slide

Hello, welcome to our panel, "Disability on the Shelf: going beyond Large Print!"

Our goal in this panel is to share the challenges and opportunities in finding positive representation, and take a look at tropes and stereotypes, controversy over lauded titles, ableism in the library, and helping patrons of all ages and abilities find characters and stories they can connect to.

Panelists

Tegan Mannino, Circulation Supervisor, Monson Free Library

Theo Hull, Young Adult Librarian, Lilly Library

Stephanie Legg, Children's Librarian, Kingston Public Library

Why Disability Representation?

Representation Matters

Our impressions and assumptions of the world around us are shaped by our interactions, and misrepresentation or lack of any representation contributes to misconceptions and exclusion.

Going forward we're going to be working with the assumption that importance of diversity and inclusion is a given, otherwise this may be an odd panel to attend.

A book shouldn't be special just because a patron can see themselves in it. The comic here, used with permission from the author for this purpose, actually relates to finding Trans* characters within stories, but it's not even a stretch to substitute words for other minority populations.

Image: A mother and a daughter talking about a book.

Mother: Look at this book I found: it has a [blank] character in it.

Daughter: What makes it special?

Mother: Well... there aren't many books with [blank] characters in them.

Daughter: We don't know. If I don't tell people that I'm [blank], they wouldn't guess. Sometimes I don't feel like telling people, so it must be the same for characters in books. When I read a book I just imagine a character is [blank] and it makes it special. Otherwise, it would mean that every character that the [blank] isn't mentioned would be [blank]. Wouldn't that be [blank]?

Mother: I love you!

A quick word from the ALA

On the slide I've put a snippet of ALA policy:

The American Library Association recognizes that people with disabilities are a large and neglected minority in the community and are severely under-represented in the library profession. Disabilities cause many personal challenges. In addition, many people with disabilities face economic inequity, illiteracy, cultural isolation, and discrimination in education, employment and the broad range of societal activities.

Libraries play a catalytic role in the lives of people with disabilities by facilitating their full participation in society. Libraries should use strategies based upon the principles of universal design to ensure that library policy, resources and services meet the needs of all people.

ALA Policy B.9.3.2 Library Services for People with Disabilities

People with disabilities make up the largest minority group in the world, and they share many challenges faced by other minorities.

As librarians we all strive to provide accessible materials to our patrons, from accessible buildings to Large Print books. But the contents of the media we circulate, the programs we schedule, and the unintentional messages they may send, often stays under the radar when it comes to disability.

What is Disability? A very short and incomplete list.

Disability is a huge and complex category, one that cannot simply be tagged with a wheelchair or white cane. It includes developmental disorders, mental health, impaired vision, hearing, or mobility, as well as chronic injury and illness. And the definition of 'disability' changes and not all disabilities are visible.

In many ways, disability is often used to indicate as differing from a cultural concept of "normal." For example, how many people here wear glasses... and do you consider this a disability? Generally many of the room answers yes to wearing glasses, and no to considering it a disability. And out of everyone who doesn't need glasses... many reasonably expect to need them in the foreseeable future. A range of visual impairment is normalized in our culture to the point of not only being unnoteworthy, but to become its own fashion industry.

Social vs Medical Model of Disability

When talking about disability, representation, and ever-shifting definitions was also need to look at how disability is framed.

The Medical Model of Disability holds that disability is a problem to be fixed through medical intervention.

The Social Model of Disability presents disability as a mismatch between a person and the environment they are in.

This has some dramatic inherent differences in the approach to disability, and how we interact with people we encounter. Are we treating a disability as something to be cured, or as just a different way of existing? Are we assuming that a person or a group of persons think there is anything wrong with how they are and/or wants to be cured?

It affects our patrons and it affects us, be it visible or invisible.

Disability in Fiction Primer: a quick introduction (and why this all matters)

Popular Narrative, Coding & Metaphor, Erasure, & Inspiration Porn. It's worth noting that all of these apply to other groups when looking at diversity in any collection.

I'm about to introduce a whole bunch of concepts, I'll try to keep it concise!

Coding

Image One: Tumblr post, "You know parents make such a big deal about explaining homosexuality to their children but when I was a kid I watched a show where one of the villains was a satanic cross-dressing lobster and never once questioned it." Followed by a picture of said villain in the bath with leg held pointing up. [PowerPuff Girls]

The concept of coding is nothing new, such as queer coding of villains, particularly in film. It wasn't considered OK to be queer, so the characters we were given were dangerous, subversive, and, often mentally ill. Of course, until the early 70's, homosexuality was listed in the DSM as a mental illness.

Batman works well to provide examples of coding, almost everyone is at least passingly familiar with the characters and it is full of "deranged" or "disfigured" villains who all end up in Arkham Asylum by default, and "vulnerable" heroes.

Image Two: Two-Face flipping a coin.

Two-Face actually manages to check both "deranged" and "disfigured," and he's not alone Gotham, joined but the Joker, Penguin, and others.

Image Three: Oracle, in her wheelchair, surrounded by computers, wearing a headset, speech bubble saying "Hello Mister President, I am Oracle."

Oracle herself is not a particularly vulnerable character as examples go, but the transition for Barbara Gordon from Batgirl to Oracle involves violation and trauma, and her impaired mobility is used to highlight her vulnerability, especially compared to her caped crusader days. Of course, depending on which continuity you read, she's also eventually "cured."

Metaphor

Image One: Book cover, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, featuring a black and white image of an older man with a long beard on the right, and in the lower left corner a color image of the sun through trees.

Image Two: Book cover, *The Country of the Blind* by H. G. Wells, featuring an image of a river winding through wooded canyons.

Disability as metaphor can range from the subtle to the blatant, but it's all over the place, and including in very highly regarded books and in turns of phrase we often use without thinking. In this case, both *The Giver* and *The Country of the Blind* are highly lauded and considered classics, but they also both revolve around a central idea of blindness as a metaphor for ignorance that is important to be aware of.

Popular Narrative

Image: Image of a man split in half, left half is black & white, looks well-groomed with a collared shirt, right half is black and red, face lined and hair wild, wearing top hat and cape.

Popular Narrative are the story arcs we all know and see again and again. Miraculous last minute healing. The “shocking twist” of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde, wherein the hero and the monster are two personalities within the same body. We commonly encounter Cure Narratives where the entire narrative arc of the disabled character revolves around finding a Cure that erases their disability, or Narratives that focus on the Otherness of the disabled, framing them as somehow Other, alien, and/or dangerous.

Erasure

Image: Three stills from Star Wars: Luke Skywalker with his hand just cut off, Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader crossing lightsabers, and Luke Skywalker's mechanical hand.

Erasure, as one might extrapolate from the word, involves the erasing of disability *and* disability experience. Hopefully this isn't a spoiler, but in *The Empire Strikes Back*, Luke Skywalker suffers a traumatic amputation, but is quickly replaced with a robotic hand that is otherwise indistinguishable from the real thing, including (or so it seems) little to no time needed to adapt to this new hand. So while Luke is missing a limb, the experience of disability is erased.

Inspiration Porn

Image: In large text the word 'Spectators.' A frustrated man popping a wheelie to get down a stair while a standing crowd cheers and claps. One woman is crying while holding up a sign that says “handicapible” while a man snaps a photo with his phone while saying “Yo, I gotta post this #noexcuses.”

Sorry, I'm not about to discuss pornography or erotica. That would be a different panel. But I AM going to talk about objectification. Specifically the objectification of disabled people into objects of inspiration for existing. The phrase was coined by Stella Young in 2012 to talk about being called an

“inspiration” for having a life and to talk about the trend of “inspirational” images and quotes focusing on people with disabilities. A popular image is one of a child running with prosthetics and “the only disability in life is a bad attitude,” or a young girl with no hands drawing by holding a pencil in her mouth and the text “what’s your excuse?”

It sends the message that disability is a bad thing, and allows non-disabled people to feel good about themselves for their empathy or because things “could be worse.”

Ok, so now what?

I’m not telling you that you can’t like specific books and movies. But it gives us another critical lense with which to look out our collections and collection development and look for gaps, as well as additional opportunities to share ideas and work with our patrons.

Intersectionality

What is intersectionality & why it’s important

Term coined by lawyer & activist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989 to describe the experiences of Black Women in her essay *“Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color”*

Intersectionality is the idea that multiple identities overlap to create a whole that is different from the individual identities. It is about the experience of people who belong to more than one oppressed group. This includes but is not limited to: race, sex, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual identity, and disability. Mia Mingus an activist who self-identifies as a queer physically disabled Korean woman transracial and transnational adoptee explains: “we aren’t queer OR people of color; queer OR white; queer OR able bodied; queer OR working class. We can’t just decide to come together as queer people and expect that we are all going to be united and work together—or that we’ll even feel comfortable.” from her blog post *“Intersectionality” is a Big Fancy Word for My Life*; <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2010/02/25/%E2%80%9Cintersectionality%E2%80%9D-is-a-big-fancy-word-for-my-life/>

Why is intersectionality important?

Because you cannot separate a person’s identities from one another, every experience is informed by the whole, not the sum. A black woman who uses a wheelchair faces not just sexism, or racism, or ableism, but a complex combination of all three.

Intersectionality Statistics (disability)

Statistics:

2015 Unemployment rate as a whole: 5.1%

2015 Unemployment rate for white people: 4.4%

2015 Unemployment rate of people with a disability: 10.7%

2015 Unemployment rate for white people with a disability: 9.6%

2015 Unemployment rate of Black people with a disability: 17.4%

Bureau of Labor Statistics (<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm>)

Intersectionality Statistics (trans)

2015 Unemployment rate of transgender people: 15%

2015 Unemployment rate of white transgender people: 12%

2015 Unemployment rate of black transgender people: 20%

2015 Unemployment rate of transgender people with a disability: 24%

2015 U.S. Transgender Survey Report by the National Center for Transgender Equality
(<http://www.ustranssurvey.org/report>)

//Open Discussion Ideas: Coding (Tegan)

Childrens' Lit & Programming

//Steph

A good place to begin for libraries looking to plan inclusionary programs for children is the Association for Library Services to Children's (ALSC) Library Service to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers (LSSPCC) Committee. The Committee's mission is:

- to advocate for special populations children and their caregivers;
- to offer leadership in discovering, developing, and disseminating information about library materials, programs, and facilities for special population children and their caregivers;
- to develop and maintain guidelines for selection of useful and relevant materials; and
- to discuss, develop, and suggest ways in which library education programs can prepare librarians to serve these children and their caregivers.

This committee formed in 1964. In 1975, Congress passed the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (now called IDEA—Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), which ended the exclusion of children with certain physical and cognitive disabilities from public schools. As of 2014, about 6.5 million children received services under IDEA which is about 13% of public school attendees between the ages of 3-21) (National Center for Education Statistics https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgg.asp , May 16, 2017).

So, back to public libraries...

Through the LSSPCC blog, I discovered Renee Grassi. Renee Grassi is an excellent resource for a public library in search of ways to assist and reach children with disabilities. Renee offers webinars for library staff on this subject. Her blog post, [Serving Children with Disabilities in Libraries: a Beginner's Guide](#), is a professional and helpful starting point for children's librarians looking for a primer on planning.

Through a couple of LSTA STEM/STEAM grants we have been able to offer STEM/STEAM programs to a pretty diverse ability population of PreK through 10-year olds. Last year, through the assistance of Wendy Ward, a retired children's librarian (Ventress Library from Marshfield), held several sensory storytimes for me. Her skills evolved through her years as a special education teacher and children's librarian.

//Open discussion topic: small things, like coloring pages. Ex. Wizard School coloring pages with mermaid in a wheelchair, since then started to have more representation in the coloring pages we put out.

Popular Media & Representation

Disability in Children's Books, Movies & Television

Image: Purple-marbled cover with two children, a girl and a boy (the girl taller than the boy) standing over a stuffed bear on a blue blanket. The girl has a stethoscope in her ears and the boy is holding the other end of the stethoscope on the bear. They appear engaged in play and content. They are indoors.

Sometimes by Rebecca Elliott is a picture book about Toby and his older sister Clemmie. Told from Toby's point-of-view, Toby lets us know that Clemmie always looks after him, even when her (undefined) illness/disability means that she has to go to the hospital again. Toby lets us know that in or out of the hospital, they still find ways to have fun together. Their story will encourage children facing a similar situation, whether due to their own illness or to visit a relative or friend.

Image: Daniel, a tiger dressed as a child in a red hoodie and sneakers is lifting his right hand and arm in a wave hello with his left arm reached behind his new friend, Chrissie, who is dressed in pink, has brown hair and is sporting a pair of orthopedic crutches. They are in a preschool setting.

Daniel's New Friend by Rebecca Friedman tells the story of Daniel's introduction to Princess Wednesday's cousin Chrissie. Making new friends is fun because they share and like to play together. Chrissie explains to Daniel that she needs crutches to help her walk.

Next slide:

Image: An 11-year old boy dressed in baseball uniform stretching out his mitted right arm to catch the baseball that is flying towards him. Part of his left arm is out of the picture. He is outside on a baseball field--the sky is blue with a few white clouds and the grass is green.

One-Handed Catch by MJ Auch tells the story of Norm, an 11-year old who loses his left hand in an accident at his family's store. Amputation is a hard story to tell, and what Norm endures is told in a matter-of-fact way through his own words is an overview of the first year of the life of an amputee. This story is based on the life of her husband, Herm.

Image: A goldfish is leaping out of a fishbowl. The background is blue.

Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper is the story of Melody, an 11-year old born with cerebral palsy. Considered by many in her life to be mentally impaired, she is instead a brilliant fifth-grader with a photographic memory. Her story unfolds as the adults in her life discover her abilities, and she is finally given the technology allows her voice to be heard. There is much more to this story, and I recommend visiting both these author's websites.

Next Slide:

Image: A cartoon bunny wearing child's clothing (white t-shirt, blue shorts, red super-hero cape, hearing aid box on her chest with two tubes leading into her ears), is flying through the air with her left arm stretched out.

El Deafo by Cece Bell is Ms. Bell's autobiographical graphic novel that tells her story from the onset of deafness from illness (age 4) through her fifth-grade year. Towards the end of the story, Cece is forced to take a signing course with her mother. She explains in the afterward section, that she has

not completely integrated into the deaf community, and she feels that this partially because she was not always deaf and did not hang around with other deaf children. All the characters are bunnies.

Image: A drawing of a child's white face with one right eye, black short hair, and two differently shaped ears against a blue background.

Wonder by R.J. Palacio (Raquel Jaramillo) is the story of Auggie, a ten-year boy old born with TCS . Up until fourth-grade, he had been home-schooled and is now beginning private school. The story is told from his point-of-view, his classmates' and his sister.

Next Slide:

Image: An orange clownfish with white stripes and black trim swimming in a blue sea. His right pectoral fin is not as formed as the left.

Nemo in *Finding Nemo* has a stunted fin. Through the assistance of Gil, an adult fish who lost his right fin trying to escape the fish tank), Nemo is able to adapt his disability and learn what he can do (which is quite a bit, but just in a different way), and find his way home.

Image: Five teen/adult-sized people wearing metal suits in different colors (pink, blue red, silver, yellow) stand on an other-worldly outcropping of rock. In the background are two dino-machines, one in blue, one in red.)

The new *Power Rangers* movie will feature Bill the Blue Power Ranger who is described as being born with autism.

Next Slide:

Image: A young boy bunny, wearing glasses, is playing with a puzzle in a classroom. George, a young moose, looks on

Arthur: **When Carl Met George** Carl and George make their way through becoming friends. Carl is overwhelmed when George brings in his puppet. Carl is autistic.

Image: A smiling yellow muppet with red hair wearing a pink dress and waving

Sesame Street: **Meet Julia!** Sesame Street introduces Julia, a character with autism.

Image: A girl with blond hair leans on Clifford's paw and talks to Mary, a girl about the same age in a wheelchair.

Clifford the Big Red Dog: **Stage Struck** Mary is nervous about performing on stage in a wheelchair.

Disability in Young Adult Books & Movies

Theo:

***The Fault in Our Stars* - John Green**

Image 1: Book Cover: black cloud with the title *A Fault in Our Stars* over a white cloud with John Green in it.

"All of his characters react to their cancer in fundamentally the same way and share the same opinions about everything related to Life and Cancer. . . . Most saliently, all of Green's characters

have lives that revolve entirely around their cancers. This is the most troubling aspect of the book for me. Despite their proclamations to the contrary—"don't tell me you're one of those people who becomes their disease"—the characters are shown to have nothing in their lives that isn't about their cancer. " - S. L Huang, two-time cancer survivor, childhood and adult

<http://disabilityinkidlit.com/2015/07/17/review-the-fault-in-our-stars-by-john-green/>

Vs.

"I thought it was phenomenal," [Allison Cisz] said. "Especially for the author not having cancer. He was spot on with how you're feeling." - Allison Cisz, childhood brain cancer survivor

<https://www.fredhutch.org/en/news/center-news/2014/06/teen-patients-fault-in-our-stars.html>

Even bad depictions of disability can be used a starting point for connecting with people and opening dialogue.

***Harry Potter* by J. K. Rowling**

Image 2: Book Cover for *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*: Harry Potter on a broomstick, flying through an arch, hand outstretched to catch a snitch

Does not address disability head-on, though there are disabled adults: Alastor Moody (missing an eye, leg, part of nose), Peter Pettigrew (missing his finger), Alice & Frank Longbottom ("insane" due to torture)

Rowling wrote Lupin's lycanthropy as a "conscious reference to blood-borne diseases such as the HIV infection, with the attendant stigma".

<https://www.pottermore.com/writing-by-jk-rowling/illness-and-disability>

None of the main characters or other young people are portrayed as disabled

***Marcelo in the Real World* by Francisco X. Stork**

Image 3: Book Cover: silhouette of two people walking and holding hands against a starlit sky

Main character Marcelo is likely autistic, though we are never explicitly told that; first person perspective we get his experiences and thoughts and are able to *live* his experience with him (S. E. Smith, review at Disability in KidLit; <http://disabilityinkidlit.com/2013/07/01/s-e-smith-reviews-marcelo-in-the-real-world/>)

Text is critical of society, challenging definitions & redefining terms

E.g. Marcelo questioning his father Arturo's definition of normal: "Arturo is basically asking me to pretend that I am normal, according to his definition, for three months. This is an impossible task, as far as I can tell, especially since it's very difficult for me to feel that I am *not* normal."

Even the title *in the Real World* is a criticism of the idea that the school for disabled children Marcelo was attending is *not* part of the "real world"

Marcelo and his family are Latino, making this book one of the few portrayals of an autistic man of color, an important point when men of color with autism are un- and misdiagnosed to the point that autism is viewed as a white, middle class, male problem.

Story is not about Marcelo's disability, but Marcelo's autism is an integral part of him, never ignored or brushed over

Downsides: Marcelo's autism or cognitive impairment is portrayed as what is called high functioning autism (though there is a lot of pushback against the idea of "functioning" labels; some people are promoting the idea of needed support levels, in which case Marcelo is low-support), which means the audience is interacting with a verbal, able-bodied person with autism who is able to navigate many social situations (though not without difficulty and confusion). There are very few books about low-functioning or high-support people with autism.

***Percy Jackson* by Rick Riordan - ADHD & dyslexia**

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2010/feb/08/percy-jackson-rick-riordan>

Created Percy Jackson (and all demigod characters in the story) with ADHD & dyslexia to give representation to his son who has ADHD & dyslexia

<http://disabilityinkidlit.com/2016/03/23/discussion-magical-disabilities/>

Explanation “wired to read Greek” creates dyslexia doesn’t make a lot of sense in execution, though ADHD as expression of demigod-hood creating too much energy he needs to burn off works better

//Open Discussion Ideas: they can REGROW BONES but not fix astigmatism

//Also, SQUIBS. Nothing wrong with them... disabled in cultural context but not by our standards of normal

//Problems with Percy Jackson - magical disabled

Disability in Adult Media

The Problematic

I’m going to start off by picking on some incredibly popular books and films. I apologize for the incoming spoilers.

I’m not sure what it is, but it seems like YA and Children’s lit is doing a better job with how it handles disability.

Image: book cover, *Me Before You*, silhouette of a woman watching a bird fly away.

Me Before You spent months on the NY Times Bestseller lists (Hardcover and Paperback) and according to IMDB grossed \$56,228,651 in the US. It’s a love story fantasy and an emotional tear-jerker. It’s also a pretty significant example of Inspiration Porn and makes heavy use of coding.

In *It Will* goes from an active and athletic young man to a quadriplegic seeking to end his own life, and Louisa is at loose ends until she becomes, without any previous experience, Will’s Personal Care Assistant. The two fall in love, Will encourages Louisa to live her life in the fullest, while Louise tries to convince Will that her love should be enough for him to keep on living. In the end Will ends his life at the Digita center and leaves Louisa his fortune so she can, as the promotional tagline goes “live boldly”.

The emotional pull of the movie centers around sympathy for Will’s plight. While there is a romance, it follows trope and is largely chaste. Will’s role is to promote Louisa to discover the possibility of life, while he plans his death to “free” those close to him.

Image: *Avatar* movie poster, featuring a face half blue alien and half man. Below that a blue alien leaping onto an overhang.

Avatar, which grossed \$760,505,847 in the US according to IMDB, also features a once active and athletic man now in a wheelchair, who joins a mission to explore an alien planet and infiltrate the natives in an ‘avatar’ body. We get a dichotomy for Jake, as himself in his body and in the body of his avatar. As a paraplegic he is presented as non-sexual and an object of sympathy (as well as not wanted on the mission), but in his avatar he is not only “magically” cured, but explores a romantic and

sexual relationship. In the end he is permanently bonded into his avatar body, receiving a permanent cure.

Image: *Split* movie poster, fractured glass effect over image of a man's face staring intently forward. "Kevin has 23 distinct personalities. The 24th is about to be unleashed."

Split comes in at \$138,120,085 gross according to IMDB, and is newly out on DVD. This thriller is just one of the most recent, and perhaps one of the more excessive, examples of the dangerous multiple personalities. It focuses on the Otherness of disability and codes mental illness as dangerous. And the Dangerous Multiple is incredibly overdone. To name a few examples, *Hide & Seek* with Robert DiNiro and Dakota Fanning, *Fight Club* as much as I love both that book and movie, with Norman Bates in *Pyscho*, in *Secret Window* starring Johnny Depp and based on a story by Steven King, the mother/camp owner in *Friday the 13th*, and many others including *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the perhaps unintentional progenitor of the antagonist and protagonist in the same body.

The Positive

I read a lot of Science Fiction and Fantasy, so I have significantly more genre examples than I do from general fiction.

Lock-in by John Scalzi

Image: Lock-in book cover, white background with small human shaped figures, mostly white with a handful of red mixed in.

Science Fiction police procedural with accessibility, disability rights, and accessible technology at its core. The narrator, Chris, interacts with the world through an android or via a virtual reality. Or, as it was described to by someone to me, "a less offensive version of Surrogates." For those less familiar with the Bruce Willis movie, *Surrogates* features a society where everyone essentially lives in isolation and experiences the world through android bodies and it's all tied up in a deadly conspiracy of a disabled man.

Spellwright by Blake Charleton

Image: Spellwright bookcover, night sky with two moons, a gargoyle looks over a man in robes and long hair with a glowing ball of light between his hands and a magically floating book in front of him.

Spellwright by Blake Charleton kicks off a phenomenal high fantasy trilogy, following Nicodemus Weal, a young man once thought to be "the chosen one" - now facing dangers from a counter prophecy of an anti-savior. The magic system involves *literal* spelling to cast magic, and while Nicodemus is a powerful magician, his casting is hampered by his "cacography" (which, by the way, is a real word meaning messy handwriting)... or as we know it, his dyslexia.

One thing about this that stands out is that he's not the *only* cacographer, so we don't have the standard trope of the disabled with powers no-one else has nor is he special because he's the only disabled character. I also have to give major props to the author for writing and publishing a novel while going through med school.

***The Core of the Sun* by Johanna Sinisalo**

Image: The Core of the Sun bookcover, title in the center of the title with a chili hot pepper in the middle of the text. Above the title are two lines of little girls, all identical with blond hair, white dress, and holding a blue swaddled babydoll, except the first girl who has red hair and holds a toy fire engine. Under the title are two lines of grown women, all with blond hair, white dresses, and holding a blue swaddled baby, except the last woman who has red hair and holds a large chili pepper.

The Core of the Sun is a must-read for fans of *The Handmaid's Tale*, set in an alternate historical present Finland 'eusistocracy' that revolves around public health and social stability, and where women are bred for beauty and subservience. Women who meet the beauty and subservience standards are allowed to breed and known as 'eloi' or 'femiwoman' while women outside their beauty standards or who display intelligence are sterilized and labeled 'morlocks.' The narrator passes as an eloi and has an addiction to capsaicin, an illegal substance under the 'eusistocracy.' About three-quarters of the way through the book we learn that she is synesthetic. I've read the book a few times, and on second read through her descriptions are noticeable as hints of her synesthesia rather than just artful writing style, and it's well handled.

And we're starting to see improvements on film and screen. Miraculous cure aside, Netflix's *The OA* features assistive technology and a blind character moving independently in the world. R.J. Mitte starred as Walter White, Jr. in *Breaking Bad*, and Gaten Matarazzo as Dustin in *Stranger Things*.

//Open Discussion Ideas: handling of disability in YA/Children's Lit vs Adult Lit.

Reader's Advisory & Collection Development

//Search terms

Theo>>

On Twitter & Tumblr: **#criplit**. found via Disability Visibility Project (<https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/tag/crip-lit/>); they run regular live chats, but you can use the search terms later to find the conversations and reviews

//You won't always KNOW you're doing RA for a person with disabilities, how do you recommend without assuming: having diverse representation in collections, displays, suggestions

Theo>>

have diverse representation in collections, displays, suggestions because it is important not only for people with disabilities to be able to find works they see themselves in, but also for the able bodied and neurotypical people to read, interact with, experience people with disabilities

//RA for pre-readers/learning readers

//PERKINS

//E-readers

//Parents vs children]

//Review sources, like Disability in Kidlit, Diversity in YA, We Need Diverse Books; tools for judging a book; how to judge a book's representation based on a blurb & review??

Theo:

Go online and follow people: blogs, tumblr, twitter, instagram and whatever the next social media star is. Follow their recommendations and suggested readings and their followers to new information. And find the indie publishers. The Big 5 will only go so far in their representation even as we push them to change and do better with We Need Diverse Books. Especially look for writings and reviews by people with disabilities.

Tegan:

On the bright side, some major reviewers such as Kirkus are actively looking at the language they're using and how to best highlight diversity without objectification or relying on jargon.

Starting points:

Disability in Kidlit (<http://disabilityinkidlit.com/>) for Middle Grade & YA [*going on hiatus, continuing to update their honor-roll (recommended books)*] or even better-- Disability in Kidlit Tumblr (<http://disabilityinkidlit.tumblr.com/>) because you get posts and shares and questions from the tumblr community as a whole and can follow tags and users to more information and ideas

Schneider Family Award to honor an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences. One book for YA, Middle Grade, and Young Child annually.

<http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/schneider-family-book-award>

Disability Visibility Project: mentioned earlier, runs #criplit live chats for book recommendations on specific topics <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/tag/crip-lit/>, including one on April 9 that focused on YA and children's literature

Mightier Than the Sword <http://diversireads.tumblr.com/>: a blog of book reviews that focuses primarily on racial and cultural representation, but also has tags & reviews for disability and mental illness, primarily adult, some YA content

Autonomous Press and **NeuroQueer Books:** <http://autpress.com/> independent publisher focusing on works about neurodivergence, queerness, and the various ways they can intersect with each other and with other aspects of identity and lived experience. For adults or advanced teens. Parenting & teaching materials, nonfiction, poetry, fiction

Stephanie:

Common Sense Media <http://www.commonsensemedia.org> offers ratings, reviews and a search feature. Find ratings on movies, games, apps, TV shows, websites, books, and music.

Words of Realms <https://wordsofrealms.wordpress.com/> This blog contains reviews and discussion of media and diversity, concentrating on disability, gender and ethnicity.

WAVE <http://wave.webaim.org/> Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool

W3C Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools List <https://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/tools/>