

**Positive Portrayals for Shaping Public Opinion and Promoting Inclusion:
The Participation of Individuals with Disabilities in Hungarian Musical Practices**

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Abstract:

The purpose of this article is to help stimulate positive portrayals of individuals with disabilities. Sharing quality artworks on social media can be a powerful promotion of social inclusion. The author will discuss this issue based on the example of three distinct Hungarian musical projects that were published on YouTube in 2015. Positive media representations cannot be oversimplified one-dimensional stereotypes, but should express seemingly contradictory issues, showing but not emphasizing disabilities. In order to avoid negative images, this article will also discuss a number of stereotypes, media representations, and theoretical concepts regarding individuals with disabilities. The Community Music Therapy Approach provides a wider perspective to understand the connection between musicians, their audience, and the wider social context assuming that an ever-changing system of shared musical performance has a power to influence public opinion by promoting social inclusion.

Key Words:

community music therapy, disabilities, social inclusion

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Preamble and Context

The media reflects public opinions and attitudes, yet paradoxically shapes, creates, and influences them, which is a classic example of the chicken and egg scenario. Hence, it is not clear whether or not the media is the cause or effect of public opinions and attitudes. When it comes to individuals with disabilities, however, more positive portrayals by the media are warranted. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to help stimulate positive portrayals of individuals with disabilities through three distinct Hungarian musical projects that were published on YouTube in 2015. While these three projects represent diversified artistic concepts, aims, and purposes, all three promote a clear and positive message about inclusion. The first clip is entitled *Hungary is My Homeland* (Magyarország az én hazám) (Kóti, 2015), in which the protagonist is János Kóti, a 9-year-old boy with severe disabilities. The next clip is the official advertising video of the Ars Sacra Festival 2015 (Ars Sacra, 2015). This is a flash mob with the participation of Nádizumzum Orchestra, where musicians exhibit severe disabilities. The last clip is a flash mob rap video (Rap, 2013) made by first year Special Education students of Eötvös Lorand University to awaken public awareness for inclusion.

In addition, this article will also discuss a number of theoretical concepts regarding individuals with disabilities and how such individuals have been portrayed in popular culture. I will first start by discussing the Community Music Therapy Approach.

Community Music Therapy Approach

Community Music Therapy (CoMT) is a new and innovative approach within the field of music therapy. Even social workers and advocates for social justice have discovered the power of music in social inclusion via CoMT. Moreover, CoMT provides a strong

theoretical underpinning for the three aforementioned Hungarian musical projects that were published on YouTube in 2015. According Stige and Aarø's (2012) definition:

Community music therapy encourages musical participation and social inclusion, equitable access to resources, and collaborative efforts for health and wellbeing in contemporary societies. It could be characterized as solidarity in practice. In this way community music therapy can be quite different from individual treatment sometimes closer to practices such as community music, social work, and community work. (p. 5)

The CoMT approach considers the multiple role of performance on social inclusion. First, musicians (even with severe disabilities) learn to participate in a musical community, including musical skills and socially acceptable behavior. People with severe disabilities are often (a) excluded from the distribution of social goods, (b) deprived of the freedom to choose, and (c) excused from the normal obligations of society. In addition, they are usually considered as people who do not even desire to share these social goods and obligations. While benevolent acts of charity lead to unequal situations which reinforce the subordinate role that a person with a major need for support usually plays in all areas of their lives, music is a natural platform to experience equality, mutuality, respect, and community. According to Ansdell (2014), "musical relationship necessarily has intertwined aesthetic, ethical and spiritual dimensions. Being musical with the other is to be responsible, to be answerable to their voice" (p.186).

YouTube: A Platform with Increasing Influence for Shaping Public Opinion

Social media has established itself as an important vehicle for sharing of cultural practices. Specifically, YouTube has emerged as the giant of social media, particularly for teens and millennials. Thus, short and expressive films published on YouTube can be highly

influential in shaping the attitudes of youth. A short film fits better with the expectation of a digital native generation, especially when it is spectacular, humorous, and authentic, and it has an important message for the viewer/listener. As this generation is reported to be optimistic and altruistic, they are more open for the positive images presented by YouTube videos (Benjamin, 2008; Kraus & Sears, 2008; Pew Research Center, 2015; Roehling, Vander Kooi, Dykema, Quiseberry, & Vandlen, 2010; Skiba & Barton, 2006).

The aforementioned three Hungarian musical projects (as published on YouTube) are much more than social media video clips. In essence, they are sophisticated works of art that portray musicians with disabilities, rather than narratives about the nature of disabilities. These projects, therefore, challenge many stereotypes about disabilities. Previous media representations of disabilities mainly stem from a medical model (Drake, 1999). It is especially true for a wide range of plots about a cure or miracle to overcome a disability, such as the film *Heidi* (Dwan & Zanuck, 1937). These pathogenic views of disability have nothing to say about the role of social barriers. In these narratives, impediments are always “constructed as residing within the individual, and never as problems created by society such as interpersonal alienation, inaccessibility, job and housing discrimination, stigmatization, etc.” (Kama, 2004, p. 448).

Another frequently criticized issue is that the majority of disabled characters traditionally are played by actors without a disability (Seymour, Michael, Fiss & Gold 2013). Furthermore, many of these actors have won the Oscar for Best Actor (the highest accolade in the acting world) such as Dustin Hoffman (autism) in *Rain Man* (Johnson and Levinson, 1988); Daniel Day-Lewis (cerebral palsy) in *My Left Foot* (Pearson and Sheridan, 1989); Al Pacino (blindness) in *Scent of a Woman* (Brest, 1992); Tom Hanks (learning disability) in *Forrest Gump* (Finerman, Tisch, Starkey and Zemeckis, 1994); Jamie Foxx (blindness) in

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Ray (Hackford, Benjamin, Baldwin H., Baldwin, K. and Hackford, 2004); Colin Firth (stutter) in *The King's Speech* (Cannig, Sherman, McCarten and Hooper, 2010) and Eddie Redmayne (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis ALS) in *The Theory of Everything* (Bevan, Fellner, Bruce, Unwin and Marsh, 2014). These Oscar awarded films are even more well-known and influential in awakening public awareness and addressing misconceptions about a particular condition.

Video #1

Solemnity and Dignity: Hungary Is My Homeland

(Kóti, 2015)

In the first video, *Hungary is My Homeland* (Kóti, 2015), János Kóti a 9-year-old boy is the protagonist. The accompaniment for János' song is provided by the Budapest Unique Symphonic (with 75 members) as conducted by Sándor Balogh. Hungarian rock and classical music provides the musical backdrop for János.

This video intentionally shows the difference between János Kóti and the professional musicians. The solemn dignity of the Hungarian National Museum and the fellow musicians provides an artistic contrast with the simple, but beautiful, crystal clear vocal performance of the boy. While the visual appearance may suggest a difference between professional musicians and the protagonist, the serenity and solemnity of the co-performers complement each other giving a value for the song of the protagonist.

The makers of this video, Ádám Török and Tamás Aczél, were interviewed in May of 2012 and discussed their first encounter with János Kóti in an international festival called *The Healing Power of Music* in Balatonfüred, Hungary. They were so impressed by the song of János Kóti, that they asked conductor Sándor Balogh to compose an instrumental accompaniment for this song. As it is a folk song, they wanted to do something representing

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the national culture of Hungary, thus they asked prominent Hungarian musicians from different genres including opera singers, classical, rock, blues, and pop musicians. Furthermore, they asked permission to film the event in the National Museum of Hungary to express the connection of the song with the national cultural heritage. The end result was a video that disseminates a powerful transmission of Hungarian national culture, and a symbol of cooperation of musicians from different genres as well. As of June, 2017, the video is approaching 1.5 million views.

Video #2

Joy and Community: Folk Songs and Art Festival

(Ars Sacra, 2015)

The flash mob video is the official advertising video of the week-long Ars Sacra Festival made with the support of Ars Sacra Foundation. Nádizumzum is an orchestra from Ipolytölgyes, with adult members from a nursing home for people with severe disabilities. Their repertoire consists of approximately 100 Hungarian folk songs and they play with modified musical instruments. The flash mob was made in front of the Saint Stephan Basilique with the participation of all students of the Zoltán Kodály Hungarian Choir School (ZKHCS), and four professional musicians from the Hungarian State Opera. The ZKHCS is an elementary, middle, and music school in Budapest based on the music-centered concept of education inspired by the spirit of Zoltán Kodály. Professional musicians play Hungarian folk songs together with the Nádizumzum members. In fact, the Nádizumzum members portrayed similarly, as the viewer can only see their hands and the musical instruments.

In the next movement, children start to sing and dance. Finally, a whole crowd appreciates this common-shared music. While people with disabilities are frequently portrayed as socially isolated, the main message of this video is the unity of the musical

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community, regardless of abilities and disabilities. Hence, the message of inclusion is fundamentally imbued within this particular video.

Video #3

Rap, Humor and Disability Awareness

(Rap, 2013)

In 2015, a Hungarian flash mob video (Rap, 2013) was made as a school assignment for the first year Special Education students of Eötvös Lorand University. The students conducted research to understand the most important message of different groups with disabilities. Their aim was to make a hit song aimed at the younger generation awaking public awareness and promoting social inclusion. They used the text of a rap song already popular among the young Hungarian people. The students formulated their message with humour using a language of their target group to challenge the attitudes of mainstream society towards disability. For example:

If I'm autistic that bothers you
 Because I don't look like Rainman, that bothers you,
 Though you've seen it, so you know, right, that's the problem,
 The problem is that I haven't seen it, this must be the problem.

They chose artists with different disabilities to perform the transcript. The video makers reached their goal; the video had more than 100,000 views within a year. The main strength of this video is the brave humour and the use of the language and music of young people.

If I can't speak, that's really a problem
 And you think I don't understand you, that's the problem,
 You treat me like a vegetable, that's the problem
 Guess I'm glad you don't water me, that's the problem.

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This project resembles the description of Stige and Aaro (2012):

We cannot give people a voice, but we can contribute to the construction of conditions that allow for previously unheard voices to be heard. The metaphor links the interest in each individual with the community. It opens a space for a social agenda without neglecting the personal issues of the participants. It also opens a space for visions of a better world. (p. 5)

Stereotype Portraits of Disabilities in Media and Literature

As Harnet (2000) maintains, people with disabilities are “oversimplified and used not for their complexity as people but for their easily identifiable impairment which is exploited by scriptwriters for dramatic effect, for emotional appeal or for blatant symbolism” (p. 21). In the documentary of Salome Chasnoff (2011) entitled *Code of the Freaks*, Riva Lehrer, the American artist with a physical disability gives the following explanation of these symbolic characters:

I think that if you look at the story of a lot of movies about disability, they’re about relief of anxiety. The person encounters the disabled character as a worst-case scenario. In some ways, they’re all horror movies. They’re all set up as what would you do if this happened to you? How would you cope with this? Here’s one of your worst fears. We’re going to explore one of your worst fears. And then, at the end, either there’s a cure, relieving the anxiety of the viewer that, were this to happen to them, a cure would be in the offing, or the disabled person is killed. But usually the disabled person dies, because either they’re a monster, and they’re terrible, and they were killed off. Or, more likely, they’re killed because their life was so unbearable that they chose death.

While the documentary *Cinemability* (Seymour et al., 2013) explores the slow progress of moving from offensive and negative tropes towards a more realistic portrait, it is

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vital to understand the deeply rooted prejudgments, fears, or ancient cultural concepts behind this blatant symbolism.

Denial

From the perspective of severe disability denial, the lack of appearance in film or public media is the most prevalent case (Harnet, 2000). As Rimmerman (2013) mentions, “the rare visibility of characters with disabilities in the media gives the impression that people with disabilities have difficulty participating in society or that their appearance has to be avoided in order to protect them” (p. 64). However, the different appearance of other kinds of disability in media plays a crucial role in transforming values and norms towards disability in general, thus, affecting the life quality of people with severe disabilities as well.

Social Isolation

According to the documentary *Code of the Freaks* (Chasnoff, 2011), characters with mental or intellectual disabilities are often viewed as socially isolated. This is a reflection of the fact that social isolation is a central problem of people with disabilities that affects their family-members as well (Bass, 2009; Kálmán, 2004; Mencap, 2001; Schädler, Rohrmann, & Schür, 2008). Despite the fact that social inclusion is a fundamental principle of social policy, and any modern theory of human rights protection emphasizes the right of participation, this concept is rarely put into practice in everyday life experiences of these people.

All of these short videos show inclusive communities. The video *Hungary is My Homeland* (Kóti, 2015) carries the message of unity and cooperation. The Ars Sacra promotion video (Ars Sacra, 2015) shows a musical community with joy, togetherness, equality, mutuality, and friendship, and the power of this musical community in involving people to participate. The third video (Rap, 2013) is a bit different, but also shows an

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inclusive community involving different people to participate and listen to the message of people with different disabilities.

Stige and Aarø (2012) described CoMT as an ecological model, which works with “several interacting levels of activity in human life, such as individual, group, organization, locality, and various macrosystems” (p. 153). This view of interacting levels is based on Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological model. The term microsystem refers the closest personal relationships, including families or caregivers, friends, peer groups, neighbors, and school or daycare. The mesosystem contains the communities in which child, parent, and family live such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhood. Bronfenbrenner's next level (the exosystem) is a generalized level of larger social systems, which indirectly affect someone’s life by interacting with different structures in his/her microsystem. For example, parents' workplaces, extended family members, school and peers, family social networks and neighborhood community contexts, and local politics and industry. Macrosystem is the outermost layer of social and cultural context including national and international social norms, economic, educational and social policies, values, customs, and laws.

Shared performances have the power to influence all these levels because they “act as catalyst for social change through the transmission of values or ideas, altering the contexts in which they occur” (Crooke, 2015). In addition to the impact of the viewer, all of these videos are made with the aim and cooperation of different professionals and different institutions. The positive personal encounter is also spread throughout the microsystems and mesosystems of the participants, which ultimately could lead to changes in outer layers as well.

Ancient and Evergreen: Evils and Monsters

The openly negative representation of disabilities is prevented by different regulations of the public media. Horror and science fiction films still tend to reinforce the association of

physical appearance with moral character, such as the different criminals with visible disabilities in the James Bond films, such as *Dr. No* (Saltzman, Broccoli, and Hamilton 1962), Tee Hee Johnson in *Live and Let Die* (Saltzman, Broccoli, and Hamilton 1973) or Renard from *The World is not Enough* (Wilson, Broccoli and Apted, 1999). The well-known characters of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* by Victor Hugo (2012), *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (1998), or *King Richard III* by Shakespeare (2009) exemplify the twisted mind in the twisted body misconception that considers the outward appearance as a reflection of a person's inner character or morality. All of these characters have been appeared in wide range of movies from the very first motion pictures. There are other characters, such as *Dr Strangelove* (Kubrick, 1964), whose physical deformity is the “easily identifiable personifications of evil” (Harnet, 2000, p. 21). This is the shadow of the ancient claim of *mens sana in corpore sano* (a healthy mind in a healthy body). Although this negative presentation seems to be an ancient or childish misconception, research has proved that human beings have an inner disposition to choose the healthy and beautiful. A body of research proves that beauty matters: people seem to associate positive personal qualities with beauty or attractive physical features and vice versa (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972; Freingold, 1992; Langlois & Roggman, 1990; Lemay, Clark, & Greenberg, 2010; Townend, 2009).

The perfect body images and the cultivation of appearance and beauty presented in the mass media also reinforce this stereotypical view (Spettigue & Henderson, 2004, Dittmar & Howard, 2004). While these media-suggested sociocultural standards of beauty create body dissatisfaction in a lot of young women, it also hinders the acceptance of facial or bodily disfigurements.

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There is another deep-rooted fear behind this stereotype. Oaten, Stevenson, and Case (2011) describe the Disease Avoidance Model of rejection. According to this theory, facial lesions, dermatological disorders, abnormal movement or behavior, and changes to the physical structure of the body are signs of the most dangerous contagious diseases. Our nervous system is wired to avoid individuals with these characteristics. These so-called primary disease signs activate a disease-avoidance system, an evolutionary based protection against infection. Due to different socially inconsistent behavioral patterns, such as repetition of bizarre automatic hand movements, involuntary changes in facial expression, and semi-conscious vocalization, people with severe disabilities are usually associated with unpredictable and, thus, dangerous behavior (Stier & Hinshaw, 2007). There are films reinforcing the dangerousness of people with intellectual disabilities, such as *Of Mice and Men* (Sinise, 1992) or *Sling Blade* (1996).

Disability As An Unbearable Burden

The life of someone with a disability is also typified as an unbearable burden and, thus, these people usually murder or commit suicide or assisted suicide in film; for example, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Zaent and Douglas, 1975), *Million Dollar Baby* (Eastwood, Ruddy, Rosenberg, Haggis and Eastwood, 2004), *Whose Life is it Anyway* (Bachman and Badham, 1981) or *The Sea Inside* (Amenábar, Bovaria and Amenábar 2004).

There are two main manifestations of this stereotype: the first is the economic approach, which concentrates on the life-cost of a person with disabilities as compared to the productivity of this life. This utilitarian approach considers the life of someone with disability as a burden for the family and the entire society. The second is the so-called humanitarian argument, which is based on the misconception that a life with disabilities is an unbearable

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burden for the person. This way of thinking leads to the image of someone with a disability as pitiable, helpless, and dependent.

Historically, the Nazi Eugenics program used the terms *lebensunwertem Lebens* (life unworthy of living) and *Ballastexistenze* (burdensome existences) to express that the life of a person with a disability is burden for their families and society. This concept resulted in the Aktion T4 operational program, in which as many as 100,000 children and adults were murdered. In order to influence public opinion, this action was prepared with a propaganda campaign by posters, newspapers, magazines, radio, and film claiming that the elimination of these nonproductive “useless eaters” (Weiss, 2010, p. 297.) would lead to an increase of the economic productivity and well-being of the whole nation (Bock, 2004; Proctor, 1988). As a part of the eugenics program, the Nazi ideology introduced forced sterilization, which became a widespread practice even in the second half of the 20th century (Burleigh, 1995; Grekul, Krahn, & Odynak, 2004; McLaren, 1990).

While the majority of the society does not agree with this cruelty, the humanitarian argument still serves as a major argument of supporting abortion after a prenatal diagnosis of a disability, or assisted suicide. As Hauerwas (1998) bluntly points out, “our humanism entails we care for them once they are among us, once we are stuck with them; but the same humanism cannot help but think that, all things considered, it would be better if they did not exist” (p. 152). The continually developing diagnostic techniques proclaim treatment for different conditions such as Down syndrome. However, the only way to treat or prevent these conditions is by abortion, reinforcing the claim that life with a disability is not worth living. Schiltz (2012) sheds light on the discriminatory attitude of society by arguing that if a person without a disability decides to commit suicide, society considers that an irrational choice that should not be respected [...] However, if a person with a

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disability makes the same choice, it is seen as entirely rational and something that should be supported. (p. 45)

The videos based on the musical talent of János Kóti (Kóti, 2015) or those who successfully show the joy of an inclusive community may reframe this negative prejudice. Pointing social inconsistencies out with humour and sensitivity is doubtlessly one of the most powerful vehicles of social inclusion, such as the rap flash mob with funny but real criticism of social and environmental barriers. Videos, such as the film of the Special Education students, helps to break out the hidden effects of the tragedy model of disability, which manifests itself in presupposing contradiction between disability and humour.

However, it is vital to distinguish between making fun of disabled characters or criticizing the contradictory cultural practices towards disability with humour. In ancient times, people with unusual physical deformities were objects of curiosity like *The Elephant Man* (Sanger & Lynch, 1980). As Barnes (1992) points out that “such thoughtless behavior might be expected in earlier less enlightened times making fun of disabled people is as prevalent now as it was then. It is especially common among professional non-disabled comedians” (p. 149). See *No Evil, Hear No Evil* (Worth and Hiller, 1989), *Dr. Strangelove* (Kubrick, 1964), and *Bustin’ Loose* (Glick, Pryor and Schott, 1981) provide examples of this portrayal. Blind drivers are one of these comedic tropes, for example in *Scent of a Woman* (Brest, 1992), and even early cartoons for children such as *Mr. Magoo* (Kaufman, Hubley & Pyle, 1960).

Pitiable, Helpless, and Dependent

A negative role that is culturally associated with people with disabilities is the object of violence. These portrayals appear together with “helpless” images. In this case, characters of people with disabilities are shown as poor and defenseless or even victims of violent

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actions, in films such as *Wait Until Dark* (Ferrer and Young, 1967), *Blink* (Blocker, Risher, Shaye and Apted, 1994), or *Jennifer 8* (Lucchesi and Robinson, 1992). According to Barnes (1992), individuals with a disability were three times more likely to die by the end of TV shows or movies than characters without disabilities, half of the time as a victim of violent actions.

Another appearance of the helplessness is the pitiable and pathetic portrayals of disabilities with the aim of triggering sympathy. Thus, media uses disabilities to create heartbreaking stories about helpless people. As Kama (2004) argues “objects of pity are not normal human beings, but doomed creatures who, without pity, cannot survive. Their humanity is thus severely damaged” (p. 11). While the aim of these reports is to evoke public awareness, advertising campaigns of different charities usually represent their clients as pitiable dependent persons who require help and sympathy. For example, the brochure of Mencap (2001) entitled *No Ordinary Life* tends to instill the stereotype that disability is equal to “suffering and unhappiness” and taking care of an individual with disability is “synonymous with self-sacrifice and martyrdom” (Barnes, 1992, p. 15).

The general expectations towards an adult human person include being rational, autonomous, and economically productive, and to have a certain profession based on special knowledge and competence. An adult is expected to lead a life incorporated in the local community, adapting to its norms and values. People with a severe disability, especially those with an intellectual deficit, are unable to meet these criteria. As a result, they are associated with eternal childishness and an inability to take responsibility such as Warren in *There's Something About Mary* (Steinberg et al., 1998), and *Charly* (Nelson, Seligman, & Nelson, 1968).

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Clara and Daniel in *The Other Sister* (Iscovich, Rose and Marshall, 1999) provide examples for this eternal child cliché. The childlike innocence or paragon images attributes natural wisdom, innocence, holiness, or other positive qualities of children to these people. *Forrest Gump* (Finerman et al., 1994), Chance in the movie *Being There* (Nelson, 1979), or *I am Sam* (Braunsberg, Solomon, Zwick, Herskovitz and Ashby 2001) serve as examples of this representation.

This benevolent depiction of disability serves to strengthen the self-esteem of the nondisabled person, especially if the situation offers a role of some kind of expert or a power position. For example, the overbearing attitude that imposes and maintains control over someone with severe disability is typically a way to compensate among parents or family members caring for a person with a severe disability, but highly prevalent among professionals as well. This is the typical approach of the medical model.

From a perspective of Community Music Therapy, the inclusion of people with disabilities is a benevolent act that brings about positive changes in the atmosphere and value systems of different communities (Tiszai, 2016). Research conducted in the field of supported employment described positive changes in organizational culture caused by receiving a worker with intellectual disabilities. The presence of a less productive worker with intellectual disability increases creativity, humor, personal connectedness, and overall ambience of the workplace (Csányi, 2009). The Universal Design approach provides examples of the benefits of taking the perspective of people with severe disabilities into consideration. As Björk (2009) states, “When mainstream products are universally designed it means a larger market for manufacturers, less cost for adaptations, and reduced risks of misuse or accidents.” Thus, an individual with complex and extended support needs is not an exception with unique and special needs but a source for inspiring new and better solutions in

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designing more flexible and equitable sociopolitical systems and communities' physical or social environments. Furthermore, the social situation and quality of life for individuals with severe disabilities show the value system of the given community: to what extent they value the human life for its own merit and what extent they approach human dignity from a utilitarian perspective.

According to the Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; Greenberg, Schimel, & Martens, 2002; Mikulincer & Florian, 2002; Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991), individuals with visible signs of disability remind human beings of their own fragility and mortality, while social exclusion is to avoid facing our own vulnerability and, thus, mortality. In short, the closeness of someone with a severe disability challenges one's personal worldview to reframe personal value-systems and life expectations, and seek for intrinsic sources of self-esteem. As the documentary *Code of the Freaks* (Chasnoff, 2011) concludes, "Hollywood's disabled characters serves as vehicles for non-disabled protagonists to involve as human beings" (Chasnoff, 2011). The individual's self-esteem is also more stable when rooted in nonachievement-based sources (Arndt, Schimel, Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 2002; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, & Schimel, 2004; Schimel, Arndt, Banko, & Cook, 2004; Schimel, Arndt, Pyszczynski, & Greenberg, 2001).

The ecological perspective challenges the traditional concept of agency associated with self-dependence: sense of mastery, empowerment, and social recognition. Agency could be redefined as sense of mastery, empowerment, and social recognition by pursuing positive changes in the community.

Supercrip

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The complementary image of these representations is what the literature calls Supercrip. Supercrips are superior human beings. These images portray individuals with disabilities radically different from us. The supercrip is an extraordinary hero “who embodies the popular image of disability as something that one must successfully overcome” (Kama, 2004, p. 3). These images also provide inspiring examples of strength and power of mind and will over the body. For example, Brown, the protagonist of *My Left Foot* (Pearson and Sheridan, 1989), is able to overcome his impairment and become a famous artist. Another manifestation of this stereotype is when disability is associated with an unusual talent or ability. This conception has a long history from the ancient Greek tradition of blind musicians and prophets associated with supernatural abilities to films such as *Rain Man* (Johnson and Levinson, 1988) or *Daredevil* (Arad, Foster, Molchan, and Johnson, 2003).

The shadow of this image is the hidden message according to which, “all disabled people who cannot perform well in their daily endeavors seem to be lacking in willpower and self-discipline. In other words, supercrips eclipse their peers who are thus negatively judged” (Kama, 2004, p. 3).

From this perspective, *Hungary is My Homeland* (Kóti, 2015) is highly interesting. While the whole video is constructed to build a frame, or a background for the song of this young boy based on the song of János Kóti, in sharp contrast with plots and complex narratives, it is not accompanied with the supercrip myth. The video as an artwork simply impresses the audience without any discussion about normality and disability.

Contradictions and Expectations

The positive media representations cannot be oversimplified one-dimensional stereotypes but should show seemingly contradictory issues, such as the strength and abilities of the person together with the need of financial, environmental, and social support to live a

fulfilling life. Harnett (2000) mentioned that the majority of characters with disability are, “more commonly portrayed in dramatic, dangerous or challenging situations” (p. 22).

While it is an important principle to present people with a disability as ordinary or normal, the impairment itself is a part of the person’s life. Showing but not emphasizing the disability is difficult because many aspects of a disability are hyper visible by its nature. Artistic narratives approach a disability through a multitude of transitions and transformations of this by reframing their judgments and value-systems. The message of different portrayals of disability not only depend on the artistic concept of its maker, but is influenced by the preconceptions, prejudgments, or previous experience of its viewer, as it can be seen in different criticisms and comments of these artworks. For example, the comments about *Hungary is My Homeland* (Kóti, 2015) are ranging from admiration to blaming the authors for using this boy for their own popularity. However, the positive comments and likes far outweigh the negative comments and dislikes (as of September 23, 2016, the stats are: 8,387 likes, 321 dislikes, and 1,235,169 views.)

Conclusion

Building an inclusive society is a continual process of learning from human diversity. Individuals with severe disabilities question our social and political systems, conceptions of humanity, well-being, and human fulfillment. Social media is a platform for the next generation; thus, it provides a unique opportunity to spread out positive messages of inclusion. YouTube and social media play an increasingly important role on the lives of the younger generation, thus, opening new pathways for shaping public opinion.

Disability has been stereotyped from different aspects associated with pathology, weakness, hopelessness, and pity, or on the other extreme: the inspiring hero who is able to overcome his or her disability. The common element of these stereotypes is that they

emphasize the difference between us and them, thus, reinforcing the normality of nondisabled people, reinforcing the social isolation of someone with a disability. These stereotype portrayals of disability are highly prevalent in media and films.

Individuals with severe disabilities are rarely seen in media. Thus, the two short videos with the participation of musicians with severe disabilities, and a disability awareness video with performers with different disabilities may be precursors of similar positive artworks. While the purpose of these videos is different and they use diverse artistic tools, they all provide a positive example of breaking down stereotype concepts and portrayals about disabilities showing also musically talented individuals with severe disabilities as respected members of the community.

Community Music Therapy is a reflective approach in which wider social context of a musical project is taken into consideration. Working on a musical project, participants experience equality, mutuality, and respect. Furthermore, the participants and the viewers of these projects experience the unique joy of inclusive communities.

Building an inclusive society is a continual process of learning from human diversity. Individuals with severe disabilities question our social and political systems, conceptions of humanity, well-being, and human fulfillment. Social media is a platform for the next generation; thus, it provides a unique opportunity to spread positive messages of inclusion. YouTube and social media play an increasingly important role on the lives of the younger generation; thus, they open new pathways for shaping public opinion.

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