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Brashear, R. (2013). *FIXED: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement*.

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FIXED: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement is a 60-minute documentary that aims to challenge the views of normalcy and disability. The film uses the lived experience and work of people who use and/or develop assistive devices. Overall, *FIXED* is a thought-provoking documentary that through an exploration of the intertwining of technology and humanity encourages its viewers to question their understanding of disability and what it means to be human.

A prominent theme in *FIXED* is transhumanism, a global movement that theorizes the technological enhancement of human experience. In the film, transhumanism is presented clearly in the first half where interviewees, often men, talk about their experience of disability, or greater ability, due to the type of adaptive devices they have access too. The optics of *FIXED*'s first act, and the diversity found in interviews of the second act, illustrate how transhumanism's fascination with the human cyborg, or general augmentation of the human body almost never includes varied perspective, even and including the perspectives of those living with disability.¹ Disabled embodiments are needed in the field of transhumanism because technological advancements and adaptive devices are central to the lived experience of many people with disabilities.

This tension between transhumanist ideas and the lived experience from within the disability community, found in *FIXED*, is part of disability's complex history. Transhumanist

¹ I have a preference for person first language in relation to disability. This is not everyone's preference and there are likely people or communities in disagreement with my choice. I wish to acknowledge that there is no agreement on how to address people with disabilities.

ideas around human alteration can get tangled with the histories of eugenics, racism, ableism, and other forms of oppression. These oppressions create an ever pressing need to conform to or surpass the ideal human, resulting in many people, especially people of colour, augmenting their appearance to fit this norm, or resulting in people with non-conforming bodies being segregated or killed. Thus, it is important for transhumanism theorists to address these concerns so that pursuing transhumanism's goals connects to the technological advancement of the human race in a way that minimizes the impact to marginalized communities.

Knowing the complex history of disability communities I feared that a documentary about transhumanism called *FIXED* would focus on technology as a solution to disability. And for the first 20 minutes of the documentary I thought that was what I was watching: a series of white men, some with visible disabilities and some viewed as able-bodied, talking about how technology can be used to enhance human experience. *FIXED* later shifts perspective away from transhumanism by showcasing the views of activists with disabilities on the topic of technology in the disability community. This shift makes *FIXED* seem like two different films, distinguished by the tone of the material and the speakers. For example, while initially absent, marginalized speakers (women and people of colour) are predominant in the second half of the film.

The editing choices in *FIXED* ensure that the viewer is aware of the tension between the two perspectives being presented in the film. As I mentioned above this means *FIXED* can feel as though it is two separate films. The director brings cohesion to *FIXED* by the incorporation of integrative dance clips throughout the film. The dance collectives filmed featured dancers with different types of bodies, especially dancers with disabilities. These excerpts are woven into and interspersed throughout the documentary, juxtaposed against expert interviews. The dances performed are stunning, moving, and interpretive representations of the themes of technology

and humanity. They are one of my personal highlights of *FIXED*, but they also allow for a sense of continuity when the documentary moves from one distinct perspective to another.

Shifts between these two perspectives allow for the complexity of using technological advancements to enhance humanity to be displayed. An example of this is when disability activists point out that the creation of new technologies for assistive devices, within the current social and economic structures, may only serve to benefit a portion of the population, and it is unlikely to be those who would benefit the most from the technology. This shifts the viewer away from thinking about the possibilities that transhumanism can create for our global society to the possible issues with implementation of transhumanist practices based on current social and political realities. This forces the viewer to consider how transhumanism can work within a complex intersectional world.

Because *FIXED* focuses on going in-depth with the tensions between transhumanism and the lived experience of those from the disability community there is little time to address other topics brought up in the film. An example is this is how pharmaceuticals are dealt with in the film. The use of pharmaceuticals is mentioned once in the first half. Thus, none of the experts from the disability community address the topic pharmaceuticals. Given the history of pharmaceuticals within disability community, particularly the history of forced people in the mad community to take medication, I wanted more time with this complex topic. I was left with the need for a sequel to *FIXED* that could address this topic more directly.

Overall, *FIXED* reached its goal. It will make you re-evaluate your assumption about normalcy and disability. It is not a perfect documentary, especially given the complexity of the topic it seeks to tackle in 60 minutes, but that does not mean it isn't worth viewing. *FIXED* wants

you to question your assumptions, so when you watch be prepared to question yourself, your ideas, and what *FIXED* presents to you.