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Challenging the Notions of Disability: A Study of James Marsh's The Theory of Everything

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ABSTRACT: The British romantic biographical drama film "The Theory of Everything" was released in 2014; it primarily takes place at Cambridge University and explores the life of theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking. James Marsh is the director of the movie. Eddie Redmayne, who plays Eddie, and Felicity Jones are the movie's leads, and it focuses on the incredible narrative of Stephen Hawking, one of the brightest and most creative people alive today, who finally develops a passionate love for Jane Wilde, a fellow Cambridge student. At the age of 21, Stephen Hawking, who had formerly been a healthy and energetic man, was given a diagnosis that would change his life forever. Jane battled tenaciously beside Hawking, inspiring him to work on his most challenging scientific projects.

KEYWORDS: Stephen Hawking, Love, Ambition, Romance, Infidelity, Conflict, Black hole, Disease, Motor neurone, Disability, Destiny, Biography, Loyalty, Intelligence, Human weakness, Challenges, Science, Cambridge, Dream.

I. INTRODUCTION OF THE AUTHOR

James Marsh, a British film and documentary maker, was born on April 30, 1963. He is most known for his work on *Man on Wire*, which won the 2008 Academy Award for most Documentary Feature, and *The Theory of Everything*, the multi-award-winning Stephen Hawking biography that was released in 2014. Marsh was reared in Woolwich, a neighbourhood in southeast London, and Sennen, a settlement in Cornwall, after being born in Truro, Cornwall. He and his family resided in a "miserable public flat" in Woolwich. Marsh received an Oxford University scholarship. He completed his undergraduate studies at St Catherine's College in Oxford and received an English degree. Marsh's early directorial career included a number of documentaries produced for the BBC. His first television film was the 90-minute *Trouble man: The Last Years of Marvin Gaye*, which was followed by the 1990 film *The Animator of Prague*, which featured Jan Vankmajer and his creations and ran for 26 minutes. Later followed the 1995 film *The Burger and the King: The Life and Cuisine of Elvis Presley*, which was published in 1996, and the 1998 film *John Cale*, which was published in 1999. His association with the BBC persisted as he served as producer and director for three episodes of the *Arena* series, including the well-known movie *Wisconsin Death Trip*.

II. AN OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGING THE NOTIONS OF DISABILITY, A STUDY OF JAMES MARSH'S THEORY OF EVERYTHING

Stephen Hawking's biography "The Theory of Everything," directed by James Marsh, makes a valiant effort to live up to its subtitle: It aims to present a great guy in all of his complexity, examining his beliefs, his emotional state, and his battle with sickness.

The content is quite rich. In addition to being a notable physicist, Mr. Hawking is a familiar figure in society. He is the author of top-selling books that attempt to explain ideas that are best understood by experts. He discovered he had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's illness or, as the movie prefers to call it, a motor neurone ailment, in his 20s while still a PhD student at Cambridge.

The fundamental basis for the movie (the script is by Anthony McCarten) is Jane Hawking's autobiography, "Travelling to Infinity: My Life With Stephen," and "The Theory of Everything" is first a marital picture. Early in the 1960s, Jane (Felicity Jones), who is portrayed with admirable grit and gravity, falls in love with Stephen (Eddie Redmayne), who exudes a wonderful blend of goofy diffidence and great intellectual self-confidence. He embarks on a quest to understand the beginnings of the cosmos and find the beginning of time while supported by friends and a forgiving mentor (David Thewlis).

But "The Theory of Everything" falls into an abyss of biographical mediocrity when it demonstrates how such intellect is applied.

Storytelling has the right to exaggerate the truth.

The end of their relationship is shown in the film as a tender, tear-filled, polite discourse. Of course, neither of those things really transpired. In Jane's book, a lengthy breakup is described that culminates in a loud argument while on



vacation. She also talked about how devastated she was when Hawking wrote her informing her that he was marrying Elaine Mason, his second wife. Prior to their marriage to Mason disintegrating, he and Jane were married for ten years. Which, it just so happens, the film fudges as well. The attempt is made to have the reconciliation coincide with Hawking's selection as a Companion of Honour in 1989, although in reality, that occurred before the couple's breakup. The tale behind "The Theory of Everything" is one of love, faith, and belief. This inspiring tale of overcoming insurmountable challenges was made possible by the fact that it truly took place.

The inspiration for "The Theory of Everything" comes from a variety of sources, not just Stephen Hawking's will to work through his illness. Felicity Jones' portrayal of Jane Hawking serves as the movie's true lighthouse. The importance of Stephen's first wife in the ups and downs of his life is so well depicted in this movie. On the one hand, Jane Hawking stands for unwavering love; she is a courageous woman who is prepared to stick with the guy she adores no matter what challenges come their way.

In the movie, logical academic study is contrasted with ethereal spiritual doctrines and the illogical, personal, and attraction of love.

In this poignant clip, Professor Hawking delivers an overview on his work while battling his illness. He has a fleeting vision about having the ability to pick up a pen that a beautiful female student has dropped while he responds to inquiries about how he views his research via the prism of a specific faith.

The actual biography of Stephen Hawking, a renowned astronomer and one of the greatest brains in history, served as the inspiration for the movie *The Theory of Everything*. Thanks to Eddie Red mayne and Felicity Jones' touching and compelling performances, by the time the movie is through, we feel particularly close to Stephen and Jane. They provide each other with protection from the storm that Bob Dylan sung about for a considerable amount of time.

III. THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING - Discovering a Genius:

We have a tendency to romanticise renowned persons. In particular, we can believe that their lifestyles are totally unlike from our own, that they never experience pain, and that they are immaculate. The Theory of Everything reveals the human being who is the genius as well as the positive and negative aspects of his everyday life. It demonstrates his adversity.

Much has been said regarding Hawking's life and contributions to science after his passing. Without a question, though, the world will never forget him as one of the greatest minds of the 20th and 21st century. The Theory of Everything paid tribute to and painted a stunning image of that well-known figure. Additionally, it was a present to all of the spectators and a dedication to his spouse and kids.

The beginning of the brilliant person who became famous is shown in *The Theory of Everything*. But it also serves as a reminder that society doesn't tend to honour many geniuses, unlike rock stars or top sportsmen. In actuality, the majority don't become well-known until they are old. A career in research is frequently not a guarantee of achievement or acclaim.

The movie serves as a reminder of what's truly essential and the principles we must uphold. Additionally, it serves as a reminder of the need of having a goal in order to have a positive attitude in the face of difficulty. It encourages us to cherish our relationships with family, friends, and life in general since we never know when it will all end.

IV. CHALLENGING THE CONCEPT OF DISABILITY

In terms of legal, social, and medical language, the concept of "disability" is challenging to define, understand, or apply. Additionally, language issues may arise when the phrases "disabled person" and "person with disability" are used interchangeably. This is because disabilities can take many different forms and are thus difficult to define accurately and concisely (Golinowska, 2012). Furthermore, there is no solitary, accepted definition of impairment. In national and international law, public administration, and diverse research, there are several terminologies used to refer to disability and a variety of criteria that may be used to classify someone as handicapped.

It is important to note that the group is not uniform. People who are physically, cognitively, sensorially, or intellectually challenged are discussed in specialist studies. Disability may be inherited or acquired at any age, even during childhood and adulthood, such as when studying or working full-time.

In contrast to its earlier connotations, the term "disability" has developed and now refers to a far larger range of people who experience various types of dysfunction. As it suggests partial fitness, which allows for searching out and utilising a retained portion of fitness, it may lessen the marginalisation of such persons. Thus, in contrast to terminology previously used to describe people with disabilities, the concept of "disability" does not preclude the potential of personal growth and is not just tied to loss of fitness owing to medical issues.

Stephen Hawking was a person who overcame all odds. He was a scientist who altered not just how people perceived the cosmos but also disabilities. He had a degenerative illness that caused him to gradually lose control over how his



body moved, but he still utilised his intellect to grab everyone's attention. A modern-day hero, Stephen Hawking has worked tirelessly to dispel the stigma associated with neurological disorders. He demonstrated to everyone that everything is feasible with scientific advances. Let's examine how he accomplished this and what it means for present-day society and future generations.

Hawking made the decision to enrol in a doctoral programme in cosmology at the University of Cambridge in 1962. But tragically, he was only given a motor neurone disease diagnosis a year later, in 1963.

The term "motor neurone disease" (MND) covers a wide range of neurological diseases. One of the most prevalent types of MND is amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Since Stephen Hawking's illness progressed over time, it eventually started to impair the brain's nerve cells. People who have MND or ALS may undergo physical degeneration, including loss of speech and muscular movement. He first experienced depression after learning he had ALS, yet he was still able to experience joy.

Despite receiving a difficult ALS diagnosis, Stephen Hawking continued to be a significant pioneer in scientific advancements. Despite having a disability, Hawking was renowned for his outstanding contributions to the study of the cosmos. His innate curiosity for black holes inspired him to lay the groundwork for our understanding of them. In addition to learning that black holes have an unavoidable gravitational attraction, he also learned that they emit radiation and have a temperature. These discoveries revolutionised physics and continue to do so. For this reason, black hole radiation from Hawking was given his name. His breakthrough came in the form of books, which immediately elevated him to stardom.

The accomplishments of Stephen are even more remarkable in light of his sickness. In this endearing scene where he and Jane are watching their family play, it is evident that he survived, prospered, and achieved success both individually and for the sake of humanity.

Stephen Hawking authored a comprehensive article about living with ALS and how people with impairments may still enjoy life in the *Annals of Neuroscience* in 2009. When asked regularly how he thinks about ALS, Hawking always said that he didn't feel anything particularly remarkable about it.

Hawking attempted to lead as normal a life as he could, not concentrating on his illness or fretting about whatever he couldn't accomplish. He believed that spending his limited time on earth worrying about things that were beyond of his reach was a waste.

Hawking counselled other individuals with disabilities to enjoy life to the fullest without focusing on their impairment. Adversities and barriers are a part of life. But we must always remember that we get to decide how we respond to them. We have the freedom to decide how we wish to navigate this life path.

Time was working against Stephen and Jane, and they thought Stephen's life would expire at any moment. They opted to live in the knowledge that their existence was short and began a family as quickly as they could. In light of this, they made the decision to savour each moment, even though the path wasn't always simple. Despite the fact that they ultimately parted ways, they did so out of love.

In the end, it can be argued that the movie "The Theory of Everything" has been a real depiction of how a person with his efforts, drive, and courage defy all expectations, overcome his own shortcomings, and truly come out triumphant. The film genuinely explains to everyone how perseverance and hard work lead to success.

The younger generation, which has a tendency to give up hope too easily, might look to Stephen Hawking as an example. They bemoan the things they lack and whine about them. The movie "The Theory of Everything" can inspire young people and teach them a few valuable lessons.

V. CHANGING THE OPINIONS OF DISABILITY

Back in 1963, Stephen Hawking and handicap were inextricably linked. He was only given a limited number of years to live. Hawking, however, defied all expectations and lived to be 76 years old. That is an astounding 50 years of enduring motor neurone illness.

But in the life narrative of this one man, it's not just the years that matter. He didn't let his impairment define him; instead, he was an amazing person in other ways. Stephen Hawking was able to live his life to the fullest because to advancements in technology. Despite being permanently immobile and in a wheelchair, he followed the job he desired. He used a synthetic voice to communicate and rose to become one of the most well-known scientists in the entire globe. Stephen Hawking summed it up perfectly, saying that:

I would advise other handicapped persons to focus on things that their condition does not limit them from doing well and not to be sorry for the things that it interferes with. Avoid becoming physically and spiritually handicapped.



He offered them comfort. Of seeing a life that went well beyond the confines of their impairment. Stephen Hawking was an author, theoretical physicist, and cosmologist who urged people with disabilities to live happy lives and not let their limitations define them.

He increased possibilities for thousands of people with impairments in the same way that he enlarged our understanding of the cosmos.

VI. CONCLUSION

Disability has not always been as visible as race, class, gender, or caste, mostly because prejudice and discrimination against those with impairments are ubiquitous across all cultures (Davis 2006: xv). Even though it has existed from the beginning of human sapiens, impairment has gone unnoticed until lately. Physical and intellectual deficiencies in humans, however, gained societal meanings with the spread of Darwinian theories on evolution and the theory of survival of the fittest, giving rise to medical interventions. Medical experts defined differences as inadequacies and "defective bodies and minds as "dangerous" and "threatening" to the rest of society," objectifying the "body."

What is the meaning and definition of disability? Disability is commonly defined by dictionaries as a disadvantage or deficit, particularly a bodily or mental impediment that limits one's capacity to do routine tasks; something that prevents, incapacitates, or disqualifies. Disability is a phrase used to describe a physical or mental ailment that is thought to have a significant medical impact. For persons with disabilities, the medicalisation of disability has had a wide range of negative effects. Though they still have an impact on conventional thinking, for a very long time, the only ways to describe disability were through medical criteria.

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