SJDR Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research
Established by the Nordic Network on Disability Research

Sexuality on Screen: A Feminist Disability Studies Reading of Izzy Armstrong in *Coronation Street*

RESEARCH

BEV ENION

STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY PRESS

ABSTRACT

This paper employs textual analysis of long-form storyline arcs, informed by Feminist Disability Studies, to explore how *Coronation Street*, a long-standing UK soap opera, represents disabled women's sexuality through the character of Izzy Armstrong**.** By examining Izzy's sexuality-related storylines, this paper contributes to addressing a gap in disability, sexuality, and soap opera scholarship. The analysis exposes a series of tensions and contradictions. Izzy's early romantic storylines disrupt normative understandings of sexuality, yet her pregnancy and subsequent miscarriage frame disability and pregnancy through discourses of medical risk. Her route to motherhood via surrogacy is simultaneously empowering and constrained, while her co-parenting arc offers a scarce portrayal of disabled motherhood as capable and conventional. Through this, it is argued that *Coronation Street* challenges and reproduces ableist assumptions, highlighting the complexities and tensions involved in representing disabled women's sexuality within a mainstream soap opera.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:
Bev Enion
University of Sheffield, UK
baenion1@sheffield.ac.uk

KEYWORDS:
Feminist Disability Studies; Disability Representation; Soap Opera; Sexuality; Parenthood

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:
Enion, Bev. 2026. "Sexuality on Screen: A Feminist Disability Studies Reading of Izzy Armstrong in *Coronation Street*." *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* 28(1): 551–563. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16993/sjdr.1412

DOI: 10.16993/sjdr.1412

INTRODUCTION

Disability activism has effectively challenged exclusion in public areas such as education, housing, healthcare, and employment. Despite marked progress in these areas, disabled women's sexuality remains one of the most underrepresented and misunderstood aspects of identity, particularly within contemporary media and the soap opera genre (Malinowska 2018). Existing scholarship has largely centred disability representations in television more broadly; there has been little attention paid to how soap operas represent disabled women's sexuality across sustained, long-form storyline arcs. This is significant for two reasons. First, on occasion when disabled women's sexuality is present onscreen more generally, media portrayals frame their bodies as abnormal, deviant, or desexualised (Sancho 2003). Second, soap operas uniquely shape societal attitudes alongside viewers' experiences and understandings (Bignell 2008). Exploring this under-examined intersection responds to Ellcessor, Hagood and Kirkpatrick's (2017) call for both disability studies and media studies to unite in critical enquiry.

This paper addresses this gap by drawing on textual storyline analysis informed by a Feminist Disability Studies (FDS) framework to critically explore how *Coronation Street* (1960–present), one of the UK's longest-running soap operas, represents disabled women's sexuality. The character Izzy Armstrong, played by disabled actor Cherylee Houston, provides a particularly useful site to analyse representations of disabled women's sexuality as her storylines have included related matters such as romantic relationships, pregnancy, surrogacy, and parenthood. Through these storyline arcs, this paper explores whether and how *Coronation Street* challenges and/or reproduces ableist assumptions concerning disabled women's sexuality, reproduction, and motherhood.

To do so, this paper begins by exploring representations of disabled women's sexuality within UK media and soap opera scholarship. Discussion then proceeds to explore the usefulness of FDS in framing a critical textual analysis of Izzy's storylines in *Coronation Street*. The paper concludes by summarising *Coronation Street's* key contributions and constraints regarding onscreen representations of disabled women's sexuality. Before progressing, it is important to note that identity-first language – disabled women – is adopted throughout this paper. This reflects an understanding that disability is a socially constructed, political identity (see Grech, Koller and Olley 2023; Janiszewski et al. 2025). As *Coronation Street* is produced within the United Kingdom, this terminology choice aligns with this political commitment whilst simultaneously reflecting UK disability studies scholarship and cultural conventions (see Liddiard and Slater 2018).

DISABILITY, SEXUALITY, AND UK MEDIA

Historically, representations of disability in UK media have often been shaped by stereotypes rooted in ableism, medicalisation, and paternalism, though these vary across genres and periods. Disabled people, and disabled women in particular, have a legacy of being portrayed through reductive and stigmatising tropes: as passive, dependent, asexual, or as inspirational figures overcoming adversity (Barnes 1992; Sancho 2003). These representations are not just erroneous; they function as ideological tools that reinforce ableist social hierarchies (Haller 2010) and contribute towards shaping how disability is governed in society (Ellis and Goggin 2015). Disabled individuals were often positioned as either pitiable or exceptional, but rarely as ordinary or autonomous (see Bolt 2014). Tepper (2000, 285) argues that this extends to sexuality and that 'Sex is portrayed as a privilege of the white, heterosexual, young, single and non-disabled', thereby marginalising disabled women within cultural understandings of sexuality. For disabled women, this marginalisation has long intersected with dominant gender norms that equate femininity with physical attractiveness, sexual desirability, and functional, reproductive capacity (Garland-Thomson 2005; Thomas 2007). As a result, media representations have tended to marginalise disabled women as neither fully social nor fully sexual beings, often reinforcing their cultural erasure and/or diminishing their sexual agency.

One of the most persistent myths in mainstream UK media has been that of the asexual disabled woman (Chambers 2023), a stereotype which erases sexual agency by portraying disabled women as devoid of desire, disinterested in intimacy, or incapable of sexual expression. As Christian et al. (2020) explain, this leads to what they term *sexual invisibility* – a

consequence rooted in ableist assumptions that equate ability with both sexual desirability and sexual competence. Such cultural beliefs marginalise disabled women by positioning them outside the norms of sexual intimacy and desire. However, recent years have seen a noticeable shift in how disabled women's sexuality and agency are portrayed in UK media, an encouraging sign of change (see Haller 2010; Wilde 2020). Disabled women are becoming increasingly visible on television, in film, and on digital platforms (Hill 2024; Wilde 2020). Shows such as *The Undateables, Hen Party,* and *We Might Regret This* have begun to challenge old tropes by incorporating romantic and sexual storylines. Similarly, public figures like Rosie Jones, Cerrie Burnell, and Samantha Renke have helped normalise disability in the television industry through their onscreen presence. These developments mark inclusion, realism, and an emerging cultural expectation of seeing disabled women on our screens (Wilde 2022).

While this increasing visibility symbolises meaningful change, Goggin and Meekosha (2021) caution that it is not without its complexities. Visibility does not necessarily equal authenticity, and historically, the employment rate among disabled adults has been low (Kaye, Lita Jans, and Jones 2011). This extends to being employed in television, either in front of or behind the camera (O'Hara 2015). Wilde (2020) argues that when a disabled woman appears on our screens, it is not unreasonable to expect a disabled actor to play them, especially in light of the historical underemployment of disabled people. However, the risk of tokenism remains high, with disabled characters sometimes being included as narrative devices rather than fully developed figures – what Mitchell and Snyder (2000) term *narrative prosthesis* – where disability functions more as a plot mechanism.

Despite representational improvements, academic analyses suggest that the core stereotypes about disability persist on screen. As Wilde (2020) observes, disabled women are, at times, still portrayed through reductive tropes such as the tragic figure, the heroic overcomer, or the burdensome presence. Even when their sexual or romantic lives are represented, they often rely on gendered, heteronormative, able-bodied assumptions that distort or erase the complexities of disabled women's lived experiences (Parsons, Reichl, and Pedersen 2017). This remains particularly problematic given television's function as a key site for the production and circulation of dominant cultural norms (Ellis and Goggin 2015). As Titchkosky (2009) and Sumiala (2013) argue, media representations contribute significantly to shaping how we imagine disabled women's sexuality. Through a FDS reading of Izzy, this paper extends this debate by examining whether *Coronation Street's* representation of disabled women's sexuality challenges or risks contributing to the reproduction of dominant dis/ableist ideologies.

WHY SOAP OPERAS, AND *CORONATION STREET* MORE SPECIFICALLY?

Television's influence on cultural attitudes towards disability is well documented, with Ellis and Goggin (2015) emphasising its role in framing how disability is understood and represented. Over 91.5% of UK households own a television set (Ofcom 2023), and the average television viewer consumes 2 hours and 17 minutes of television per day (Office for National Statistics 2023). *Coronation Street* commanded weekly viewing figures of almost 3.9 million in September 2026 (Broadcasters' Audience Research Board 2026), underscoring the deep embedding of television and soap operas in everyday life. Bignell (2008, 210) argues that television reflects and interacts with the culture and society it exists within, conferring 'some meanings and not others' which are then applied in 'complex ways' to shape viewers' experiences and understandings. When this sentiment is applied to *Coronation Street's* popularity and significant cultural footprint, it confers considerable power to shape public discourse. Importantly, for Bignell (2008), soap operas like *Coronation Street* are more than mere entertainment; in many contexts, they act as cultural texts that can reflect, reinforce, or challenge societal attitudes and norms.

Blose (2020, 34) argues, 'television in particular, among other media, influences millions of viewers daily, including the way women see themselves and how they construct their identities'. The routine and serialised format of *Coronation Street* enables sustained engagement with characters and storylines and builds on Brunsdon's (1997) earlier observation that soap operas are routinely associated with female audiences. 'By allowing us to share in the lives of others, entertainment can excite and educate us, can make us imagine, think and feel in ways we may not otherwise have a chance to experience' (Cohen 2006, 183, quoted in Blose 2020, 34). *Coronation Street* provides a unique space where complex social issues – including intersections such as gender, sexuality, class, and family – can be negotiated and contested.

DOI: 10.16993/sjdr.1412

Given the cultural power of soap operas in shaping public attitudes and countering ableist attitudes (Jenkins and Cabas-Mijares 2025), *Coronation Street* provides a critical case study for exploring representations of disabled women's sexuality. Since *Coronation Street's* debut in 1960, it has tackled a wide range of social issues – from domestic abuse to mental health – establishing itself as one of the most culturally significant and influential programmes in the British soap opera genre. The programme's use of social realism (Livingstone 1989), depicting the routines and relationships of everyday life in a working-class Northern community, cultivates a sense of familiarity and trust in viewers. This positions *Coronation Street* as a powerful cultural medium through which audiences engage with and make sense of complex social issues, including disabled women's sexuality.

Contrary to a legacy of progressive storytelling, *Coronation Street* has historically fallen short in representing disabled characters, particularly disabled women, in sexual or romantic roles. The inclusion of Izzy marked a notable departure from this trend, and Houston's casting in 2010 signalled a watershed moment for disability representation on mainstream British television, as she was the first disabled actor to be cast in *Coronation Street* and remains on-screen to this day. Her continued presence, therefore, affords an unparalleled opportunity to critically explore the ways in which disabled women's sexuality is represented. In this way, *Coronation Street* provides a valuable case through which to examine how the representation of disabled women's sexuality is evolving within the soap opera genre while advancing the field of disability and sexuality studies by foregrounding soap operas as a crucial site of disability representation.

FEMINIST DISABILITY STUDIES

FDS emerges from the intersection of feminist theory and disability studies, responding to the limitations of both disciplines when considered in isolation. Traditional disability studies, especially the dominant social model, shifted focus from individual impairments to societal barriers. While this model was pivotal in resisting medicalisation and promoting structural change (Oliver 2013; Shakespeare 2017), it has been critiqued for its inability to engage meaningfully with issues of sexuality, embodiment, and desire (Shildrick 2007). Feminist theory, on the other hand, has historically privileged the experiences of non-disabled women and often overlooked disability altogether (Wendell 1989). FDS addresses these omissions, with Wilde and Fish (2024) arguing that it offers a framework that centres the lived experiences of disabled women while attending to the entanglement of gender, sexuality, and embodiment.

Resisting essentialist assumptions about both femininity and disability, FDS questions the ableist logic that aligns womanhood with reproductive capacity and positions disabled women's bodies as inherently deviant or deficient (Garland-Thomson 2002; Garland-Thomson 2005). In doing so, FDS draws attention to how dominant cultural narratives regulate which bodies are recognised as sexually viable or socially valuable, while marginalising those who fall outside normative ideals (Kafer 2013). FDS critiques cultural assumptions that equate femininity with motherhood, passivity, or physical attractiveness, and challenges constructions of disability as a fixed biological deficit rather than a socially and culturally produced difference (Wendell 1996). Instead, FDS highlights the diverse ways in which disabled women experience and express gendered identities, recognising that these are socially constructed and deeply shaped by cultural, political, and institutional forces (Meekosha 2004). FDS also pushes back against narratives that desexualise or pathologise disabled women, or which frame them as asexual, dependent, or incapable of sexual agency (Liddiard 2018; Shildrick 2007).

Expanding beyond critiques of cultural narratives, FDS also offers a vital framework for understanding how disabled women's bodies are materially lived and socially interpreted, particularly through its insistence on the personal as political. Drawing from feminist traditions that foreground the body as a site of social regulation and resistance, FDS emphasises the materiality of disabled women's bodies to acknowledge their presence, agency, and complexity. Garland-Thomson (2002; 2005) argues that disability should be understood as a cultural interpretation of human variation, demanding that bodies be recognised as material sites of meaning rather than pathologised as deficits. Building on this, Rice et al. (2021) contend that FDS enables a rethinking of functionality, not as a medical or moral category, but as a cultural and relational one. This rethinking is particularly crucial in the context of soap opera storylines, where value and desirability can often be conflated with normative functioning and aesthetic

standards. FDS proves especially valuable as it centres disabled women's lived experiences to interrogate the intersections of ableism and sexism within cultural texts like soap operas. When applied to the storylines of Izzy in *Coronation Street*, FDS facilitates an increasingly nuanced textual analysis of the ways in which disabled women's sexuality is portrayed, negotiated, and mediated within soap opera long-form arcs.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a textual analysis of long-form storyline arcs to critically explore how *Coronation Street* represents disabled women's sexuality through the character of Izzy Armstrong. This approach is fitting, as according to Krippendorff (2019), soap operas are cultural texts produced with the intention of creating meanings for others. This builds on McKee's (2001, 8) earlier observation that 'Because there is no simple, single, correct interpretation of reality, it becomes very important to understand how media texts might be used in order to make sense of the world we live in'. More importantly, Snyder and Mitchell (2006) claim that texts such as soap operas can reveal socio-cultural attitudes towards disability. When taken together, *Coronation Street* can be recognised as more than mere entertainment; it can be (re)positioned as a cultural text through which understandings of disabled women's sexuality are constructed, negotiated, and produced. Consequently, textual analysis of Izzy Armstrong's long-form storyline arcs offers a suitable method for examining the representations of Izzy's disability, sexuality, pregnancy, and parenthood.

For the textual analysis, only Izzy's long-form storylines related to her sexuality – including romantic relationships, pregnancy, surrogacy, and parenthood – that were broadcast from her introduction in 2010 to the present day were included. Rather than analysing individual episodes or scenes, long-form storyline arcs were selected because they offer sustained engagement with the representation of disabled women's sexuality over an extended period. Analysis was based on publicly broadcast storylines, an approach that allowed for public exploration of how representations of Izzy's sexuality emerged, evolved, and shifted over time across narrative spaces, relationships, gender roles, and storyline lifespans. Maintaining this broader analytical focus also avoided reducing analysis to isolated or fragmented moments.

To conduct the analysis, particular attention was paid to the overarching storylines and, to some extent, character interactions throughout them. The relevant storylines were reviewed and revisited iteratively throughout the analysis. This repeated engagement enabled the identification of recurring representational patterns, which were then interpreted via an FDS lens. Whilst acknowledging that individual episodes or scenes were relevant as they contributed to and informed the overarching storylines and representations, the primary analytical focus remained on representational patterns across the storyline arcs as a whole. This allowed representations of sexuality, pregnancy, surrogacy, and parenthood across interconnecting storylines to be considered, and key themes interpreted through an FDS lens.

Critical attention was also given to how disability was positioned in relation to pregnancy and medical authority, caregiving, and reproductive legitimacy to increase the depth of understanding. This enabled attention to how disability, sexuality, pregnancy, surrogacy, and parenthood were narratively connected across time and storyline arcs and not just what was being represented in that scene or episode. By virtue of this paper critically exploring the representation of disabled women's sexuality, any storylines beyond these aspects were not perceived to hold direct relevance and therefore were excluded from analysis. To critically frame the textual storyline analysis, FDS was used as an interpretive framework as it facilitated analysis of how disability and gender intersect within cultural representation in soap operas, with particular reference to sexuality, motherhood, dependency, and bodily legitimacy (Garland-Thomson 2005; Kafer 2013). This created an analytical space to explore how disabled women's sexuality is represented, negotiated, and mediated within soap opera long-form arcs.

A FEMINIST READING OF IZZY ARMSTRONG IN *CORONATION STREET*

The introduction of Izzy Armstrong marked a pivotal moment in the inclusion of disabled women in *Coronation Street* and UK soap operas. While disabled characters had appeared on UK soap

DOI: 10.16993/sjdr.1412

operas before Izzy's arrival – Lisa Hammond on *Grange Hill*, Jacqui Dixon on *Brookside* and Maud Grimes on *Coronation Street*, for example – what makes Izzy's role particularly significant for long-form textual storyline analysis is that she was the first disabled actor to have her sexuality explored in long-form arcs. Using textual storyline analysis, underpinned by FDS, this paper critically explores these long-form arcs to examine whether Izzy's representations challenge ableist assumptions or risk their (re)production.

DESTABILISING ASEXUALITY AND INVISIBILITY

Early in her storyline, Izzy was portrayed as a confident, flirtatious, and romantically desirable woman, initially appearing as Kirk Sutherland's love interest, who later developed a romantic relationship with Gary Windass. It was during this long-term relationship with Gary, a non-disabled man, that audiences were presented with a rare portrayal of a disabled woman as both sexually active and emotionally complex. For example, these early scenes focused on Gary and Izzy's mutual attraction, dating, and plans for a future together rather than defining her character through her disability. Through this, Izzy directly challenged reductive stereotypes and media myths about asexuality and sexual invisibility (Christian et al. 2020; Liddiard 2018) by positioning her within the ordinary emotional landscape of soap opera life – a disruption of representational norms (Brunsdon 1997). Izzy became located within conventions of romance, intimacy, conflict, and reconciliation in a manner that normalised disabled women's participation in romantic and sexual relationships. In this way, this arc challenged Tepper's (2000) observation that the media privileges non-disabled representations of sexuality.

This disruption, however, is not without tension. Jenkins and Cabas-Mijares (2025, 251) argue that 'sexualized visual representations of disabled people in media attempt to fit disabled bodies into hegemonic understandings of desirability. In doing so, they reinforce hierarchies of disability, as the disabled bodies that can be more easily assimilated into ableist notions of beauty receive more visibility and, thus, more sociocultural value'. This visibility was not secured by rejecting dominant ideals of attractiveness but rather by aligning Izzy's representation with normative ideals of femininity, romance, and desirability. For example, her early storyline scenes with Gary foregrounded their mutual attraction, emotional intimacy, and sexual relationships, which were largely normalised and presented in much the same way as romantic storylines involving non-disabled characters. It was through these conventions that Izzy's sexuality became legible. In this way, *Coronation Street* integrated Izzy's romantic life into its broader romantic framework, offering a more inclusive and realistic portrayal of disabled women's sexuality. By resisting the common pathologisation of disabled women, this initial framing affirmed the capacity for disabled women to experience loving, emotionally intimate, and reciprocal sexual relationships.

Yet when situated in conversation with Jenkins and Cabas-Mijares' (2025) earlier argument, Izzy's representation appears less disruptive than initially perceived. Textual analysis reveals that through storylines which positioned her within familiar conventions of heterosexual romance, coupledom, domesticity, and motherhood, Izzy's sexuality was represented in a culturally acceptable way for soap opera audiences. Consequently, Izzy's sexuality and desirability were framed through what Jenkins and Cabas-Mijares (2025) argued are hegemonic understandings, and as such, the limits of ostensibly progressive representation are revealed.

MEDICALISATION: PREGNANCY AND MISCARRIAGE

Izzy's early-onset departure from dominant media tropes is significant but short-lived. As her storylines developed over time, particularly with the introduction of her pregnancy, familiar cultural misunderstandings around disability and reproductive capacity risked being introduced. While Izzy's pregnancy and miscarriage offered further complexity to her character by portraying her as a disabled woman with reproductive and maternal desires, textual analysis reveals that the framing of this arc raises representational challenges as disability and pregnancy were not considered separately. Rather, they were co-constituted through recurring discussions of medical risk and uncertainty. For example, the storyline centred on consultations with healthcare professionals in which there were discussions about Izzy's disability and the associated risk of carrying a child. This repeatedly foregrounded medical concerns about danger and uncertainty, rather than the everyday experiences of pregnancy. In her influential

work on feminist and disabled motherhood, Carol Thomas (1997, 627) argues that if medical discourse believes 'there is a risk of abnormality, or the risk of worsening an already abnormal bodily condition, then steps must be taken to avoid it'. This discourse was seen within Izzy's early pregnancy and scenes with medical consultants and in this way, contributed to the pathologisation of disabled women's motherhood onscreen.

Izzy's pregnancy arc culminated in her experiencing a miscarriage, a decision which then positioned reproductive loss as the principal outcome of disabled pregnancy. Medically, women with conditions such as Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, like Izzy, do face increased risks during pregnancy (Kang et al. 2020), and in this sense, the plot remains grounded in realism and aligns with the programme's social-realist ontology. Nevertheless, the miscarriage storyline – focusing heavily on medical risk and culminating in a miscarriage – shaped a portrayal in which disabled pregnancy appeared especially fraught. In this way, the issue is not the miscarriage itself, but the framing of disabled pregnancy through risk and loss, which speaks to Garland-Thomson's (2005, 1567) observation that disabled women are 'often stereotypically considered undesirable, asexual, and unsuitable as parents'.

Yet, rather than developing a long-term storyline around successful pregnancy and disability, *Coronation Street* resolves Izzy's maternal storyline through miscarriage and surrogacy. This shift is significant because the possibility of disabled motherhood through a successful pregnancy was, instead, replaced by a storyline centring risk and loss and one which led to an alternative route to parenthood. In this way, this resolution foreclosed the possibility of representing Izzy as a biological mother. Rather than depicting motherhood as a negotiable or an ongoing aspect of disabled women's lives, this scripting decision echoed biomedical discourses which associate disabled motherhood with risk and vulnerability. Thomas (1997, 632) argues that such risk is not neutral but based on 'social assumptions about the quality of life and intrinsic value of children and adults with impairments'. In this way, pregnancy was not presented as a viable reproductive experience, and with surrogacy as the only resolution, it reflects not only medical realism but also wider cultural assumptions concerning the value of disabled motherhood.

While acknowledging that the storyline was sensitively performed, Izzy's miscarriage emphasised loss and grief, with little attention comparatively given to reproductive agency. In this way, the miscarriage's emotional arc can be seen as drifting towards sentimentality, inviting a reading of pity rather than a portrayal grounded in resilience, complexity, or agency. This shift in representation reflects cultural understanding in which disabled women's reproductive experiences are situated within frameworks of loss, risk, and tragedy, rather than as sites of nuanced subjectivity or resistance to normative femininity. This constrains cultural imaginations and limits how disabled women's reproductive agency is understood and represented. While characters like Toyah Battersby and DeDe Bailey on *Coronation Street* – both non-disabled – have also experienced miscarriage or infertility, their storylines are more often situated within arcs of recovery and hope. In contrast, Izzy's miscarriage remained tethered to impairment and medical risk, meaning that her experiences of pregnancy loss were read in conjunction with cultural assumptions concerning disability and reproductive incapability. In this way, representations of loss, risk, and tragedy can reinforce ableist assumptions unless carefully contextualised and ultimately do little to disrupt the normative, able-bodied ideals that FDS seeks to critique.

REPRODUCTIVE AGENCY AND SURROGACY: TENSION, LIMITATIONS, AND CONSTRAINTS

Following the miscarriage, Izzy and Gary's decision to pursue surrogacy marked a further significant storyline turn as it disrupted conventional reproductive norms and the affirmative reframing of disabled women's agency. While surrogacy positioned motherhood as achievable for Izzy, storyline attention shifted away from grief and loss associated with miscarriage and instead, towards the emotions and practicalities associated with navigating surrogacy. From the outset, the surrogacy arc challenged dominant cultural ideologies that equate womanhood with biological motherhood and reproductive ability; core assumptions that FDS scholars Garland-Thomson (2005) and Kafer (2013) explicitly critique. By presenting surrogacy as a viable and legitimate route to parenthood for Izzy, *Coronation Street* gestured towards

DOI: 10.16993/sjdr.1412

a more inclusive vision of reproductive possibility, pushing back – at least in part – at deficit-based narratives that often depict disabled women's reproductive desires as inappropriate or unrealistic and thus problematic (Liddiard 2018).

However, textual analysis suggests that this gesture towards autonomy and empowerment was complicated by the storyline's framing, which spanned several months. Although presented as Izzy's choice, over these months, there were recurrent discussions of risk and medical intervention using fertility specialists. This foregrounding risked invoking a familiar trope: the disabled woman as a passive patient rather than an autonomous subject (Liddiard 2018). In doing so, *Coronation Street* complicates the very agency it appears to affirm, inviting audiences to interpret surrogacy as shaped more by clinical intervention than by Izzy's autonomy. Thus, even as the storyline contributed towards disrupting certain norms, it continued to reproduce others, highlighting the complexities of representing disabled women's reproductive agency within soap opera long-form arcs.

Moreover, this tension reflects broader critiques within FDS, which address not only representational tropes but also the structural and ideological barriers that restrict disabled women's access to reproductive justice, leaving them to 'battle to claim motherhood' (Garland-Thomson 2005, 1572). Representing surrogacy as a deliberate and autonomous choice made by Izzy and Gary allows *Coronation Street* to challenge ableist and heteronormative definitions of family and positions disabled motherhood as legitimately possible. However, this gesture towards empowerment is complicated by the storyline's reliance on medical intervention, which both centres and privileges the recommendations of healthcare professionals, implying that disabled motherhood is only viable through their recommendations. By positioning doctors and medical technology as mediators of viability, the storyline risks perpetuating ableist assumptions that Izzy's body is insufficient on its own and that medical expertise is required to validate her capacity for motherhood. This also risks constructing disabled bodies as diminished (Goodley 2017) and aligns with Garland-Thomson's (2005) observation that disabled women are routinely marked as subordinate in cultural and representational frameworks.

This framing also resonates with longstanding FDS critiques of the ways medical discourse often positions disabled women as passive recipients of care, rather than as active agents and decision-makers in their reproductive lives (Garland-Thomson 2002; Wendell 1996). Within such discourse, medical authority routinely overrides and displaces disabled women's embodied knowledge and lived experience, operating through (mis)assumptions of vulnerability and the need to control their reproductive capabilities (Jenkins and Cabas-Mijares 2025). Reproductive decisions are thereby constructed as matters to be determined *for* disabled women rather than *with* them, reinforcing their dependence on expert oversight.

These discursive effects operate simultaneously, demonstrating how long-form soap opera storylines that appear empowering can, nonetheless, risk reproducing and embedding ableist ideologies – resonating with Lappeteläinen, Sevón and Vehkakoski's (2017, 140) argument that disabled women are 'seen as disabled first and mothers second'. On one hand, soap operas like *Coronation Street* can offer representations that challenge dominant assumptions by portraying disabled motherhood as possible and legitimate, offering valuable counter-narratives to stereotypes of asexuality or incapacity. Yet, conversely, these representations are often bound up within medical authority and heteronormative ideals of family, which risk reinscribing ableist assumptions despite appearing progressive. The result is a contradictory representation where motions towards empowerment coexist with the reproduction of cultural narratives that constrain disabled women's reproductive agency.

Building on these representational tensions, it is also important to consider what the surrogacy storyline leaves unspoken – specifically, the broader structural and material realities that shape disabled women's reproductive lives. In practice, access to fertility services is often limited by prohibitive costs, with IVF (In vitro fertilization) and surrogacy remaining inaccessible to many disabled women who already face disproportionate levels of poverty (see Caballero Pérez and Guzmán Rincón 2025; Kim, Parish, and Skinner 2019). There are also geographic disparities in terms of access to reproductive healthcare for all women, not just disabled women (Fertility Network UK n.d.). Taken together, these socio-economic constraints risk obscuring the material inequalities that continue to shape disabled women's reproductive lives off-screen as they shape who can realistically access reproductive technologies and under what conditions.

DOI: 10.16993/sjdr.1412

After ruling out the possibility of Izzy carrying a pregnancy herself, the storyline presented a simplified resolution in which non-disabled neighbour, Tina McIntyre, agreed to act as a surrogate in exchange for a predetermined financial arrangement. This decision sidestepped the complexities of bodily autonomy, medical access, class privilege, and systemic exclusion. Instead, surrogacy was portrayed as a straightforward, neighbourly solution, which was problematic in that it obscured the structural inequalities noted above. Little attention was afforded to the legal and institutional barriers that frequently shape surrogacy arrangements; instead, the storyline centred on the emotional tensions between Izzy, Gary, and Tina. Despite this, the surrogacy arc is particularly significant because it risks positioning disabled embodiment as incompatible with pregnancy and risks validating disablist assumptions that disabled women cannot or should not carry pregnancies themselves. Thomas (1997, 636) argues that 'disabled women are often assumed by professionals and lay people (often including close relatives) to be incapable unless they can prove otherwise: guilty until proven innocent'. Thomas's claim remains pertinent to Izzy's surrogacy as it reproduces a cultural representation of disability as a barrier to biological reproduction.

Nevertheless, despite such limitations, the surrogacy storyline achieved something rare: a mainstream portrayal of disabled women's sexuality and reproductive agency. This enacted resistance to normative embodiment, affirmed sexual and parental autonomy, and ultimately expanded the range of bodies that constitute a viable family structure.

DISABLED WOMEN AS MOTHERS

Significantly, Izzy's motherhood role extended beyond the surrogacy arc into a co-parenting storyline with Gary, which remains ongoing at the time of writing. Through this sustained, long-form arc of disabled motherhood, her co-parenting enabled her to fulfil the everyday responsibilities of motherhood and represented one of the earliest soap-opera portrayals of a disabled woman successfully navigating parenthood within a complex family structure (Wilde 2021). Noting that 'motherhood remains an area of social life through which disabled women are at best excluded and at worst abused' (Liddiard 2018, 52) and that 'motherhood denotes caregiving while disability suggests a woman in need of care herself, and thus unfit to assume the caring role for another' (Vaidya 2015, 519), representing Izzy in this way challenges dominant framings that disabled women are inherently unfit for parenthood.

Moreover, through this representation, disabled women are (re)configured as parents with caregiving capacity and authority in a way which is congruent with the everyday realities of motherhood. This allows viewers to observe the mundane aspects of disabled motherhood while challenging dominant ideologies associated with the nuclear, able-bodied parenting model (see McRuer 2006). It affirms that parenting is not contingent on able-bodiedness but is rooted in a broader, more inclusive understanding of care, competence, and interdependence. For example, Izzy's co-parenting relationship with Gary normalises interdependence through shared responsibilities and decision-making as their child develops. However, when Gary has left the soap for a sustained period of time – for work, or prison – Izzy is positioned as the primary parent reliably present to navigate mundane family life by taking responsibility for their son's day-to-day care and schooling. This challenges (mis)assumptions that disabled women are dependent on others (Liddiard 2018) through a representation of dependability and capability.

Izzy's co-parenting arc also reconfigures cultural assumptions about parental fitness, caregiving, and gendered responsibility as she becomes increasingly associated with emotional competence, relational care, and the everyday complexities of parenting. This challenges what Malacrida (2009, 113) identifies as a 'distinct cultural ambivalence to the idea that women with disabilities are capable, and perhaps even entitled, to perform ideal mothering'. In this sense, Izzy's motherhood arc contributes to a broader reimagining of how disabled motherhood can be represented onscreen. Taken together, these storylines illuminate the legitimacy of disabled motherhood.

Through enduring aspects of Izzy's motherhood that have unfolded and been repeatedly revisited over the years, *Coronation Street* has offered a vision of disabled parenting that is ordinary, competent, and emotionally rich. Textual storyline analysis suggests that long-term visibility is important, as sustained representations of disabled women in familial roles can resist disablist constructs of deficiency, dependency, and maternal unfitness. Izzy's sustained representation as a mother reflects a move towards more complex, humanising, and experientially grounded representations of disability – an outcome essential for challenging the

DOI: 10.16993/sjdr.1412

simplification, marginalisation, and storyline erasure of disabled women in media, and, more specifically, soap operas.

Yet while Izzy's sustained onscreen presence as a co-parent marks significant progress in challenging reductive portrayals of disabled women, Izzy's expansion into motherhood and co-parenting came at a representational cost: her sexuality was sidelined in favour of a caregiving/motherhood storyline. For example, Gary has subsequently entered several romantic relationships with Alya Nazir, Sarah Platt, Nicola Rubinstein, and married Maria Connor. Izzy's desirability has not been foregrounded in the same manner as when she entered the show with no notable romances since Gary. Textual analysis suggests that, following the birth of their son, Izzy's parenting was framed in terms of sacrifice, selflessness, and maternal responsibility, with a long-form storyline centring her maternal responsibilities and navigating her co-parenting relationship with Gary. Her co-parenting role has been visible across the years; however, her romantic relationships are comparatively infrequent. Through this narrative shift, motherhood emerged as the primary framework through which Izzy's sexuality was represented. Contextualised, Izzy's parental legitimacy comes at the expense of sustained expressions of sexual identity or desire.

Consequently, by treating disabled women's sexuality as plot-driven rather than embedding it as ongoing, *Coronation Street* normalises disabled motherhood but at a cost of sustained representations of sexuality within long-form character arcs. The result is a representational tension in which Izzy is a caregiver and mother, but only partially recognised as a sexual being.

CONCLUSION

This paper has applied textual storyline analysis, theoretically underpinned by FDS, to critically explore Izzy Armstrong's long-form storyline arcs in *Coronation Street*, a long-running UK soap opera. Through this, it has been revealed that representations of disabled women's sexuality and reproductive agency are sites of both significant strides and enduring limitations, positioning Izzy as both a landmark and contested figure. Her storylines challenged normative assumptions of disabled women's emotional depth, maternal legitimacy, and sexual agency. Yet the conditional nature of her sexual representation – particularly the sidelining of her sexuality post-surrogacy – underscores a struggle to present disabled women as fully embodied, desiring, and relational sexual subjects across time within soap opera storylines.

Indeed, this critical reading of Izzy's storyline suggests that even seemingly affirmative representations risk reverting to familiar disablist tropes of medicalisation, dependency, and asexuality. This tension echoes Brunsdon's (1997) observation of the problems of negotiating plausibility and challenges within a character's storylines. While such dynamics undeniably persist in the lived realities of many disabled women offscreen, the genre of soap opera has the cultural reach and arguably, the responsibility, to challenge rather than replicate these patterns, opening up space for more progressive and empowering forms of representation.

Textual storyline analysis has demonstrated that Izzy's early romantic storylines destabilised disablist assumptions of undesirability and asexuality, and her co-parenting storyline framed motherhood as achievable. This offered new representational possibilities for disabled women to be seen as mothers. Contrary to these significant strides, Izzy's pregnancy and surrogacy storylines remained tethered to medical discourses of risk and intervention. Moreover, Izzy's romantic and sexual life was sidelined onscreen following motherhood, which risks reinforcing a binary in which disabled women are allowed to be either caregivers or sexual beings, but not both. Opportunities to depict Izzy's relational intimacy, pleasure, and long-term desire have subsequently been overlooked. The analysis suggests that disabled women's sexuality is not embedded as a sustained and evolving aspect of character development.

Ultimately, *Coronation Street* holds a unique place in British culture. Its long-standing commitment to social realism creates an influential platform within public discussions of social issues. Representations of disabled women – particularly around sexuality, reproduction, and relational intimacy – carry cultural and political weight. While *Coronation Street* has made commendable progress in representing disabled women in a UK soap opera and in providing insight into their sexual identities through the unfolding of various storylines, at times its narratives remain constrained by biomedical tropes and lack intersectional depth. This finding

reflects Hogg's (2020) claim that *Coronation Street* still has progress to make in tackling inequalities and exclusion.

More broadly, this paper demonstrates the value of applying FDS to long-form soap opera narratives. By examining how disability and sexuality evolve across interconnected storyline arcs, FDS reveals how representations simultaneously make significant strides to challenge dominant cultural assumptions while also being shaped by enduring limitations that risk reproducing them. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that disability and sexuality are co-constructed within the soap opera genre, and that storyline strategies and cultural discourses jointly shape representations. Consequently, this methodological approach yields insights that advance the fields of disability studies, television studies, and sexuality studies.

Embedding principles from an FDS framework into long-form storylines would enable *Coronation Street* to more authentically reflect its audience's lives and address palpable gaps in media representation. By challenging ableist, heteronormative, and gendered assumptions embedded in *Coronation Street's* storylines, FDS helps us see how disabled women's sexuality on UK soap operas can be more than episodic or symbolic; it can be sustained, relational, and recognised in all its complexity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Dr Kirsty Liddiard for reviewing earlier drafts and providing valuable, constructive feedback.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The sole author was responsible for the conception, analysis, writing, and revision of the paper.

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS


Bev Enion orcid.org/0009-0001-7414-2322
University of Sheffield, UK

REFERENCES

Barnes, Colin. 1992. *Disabling Imagery and the Media: An Exploration of the Principles for Media Representations of Disabled People*. Halifax: Ryburn Publishing.

Bignell, Jonathan. 2008. *An Introduction to Television Studies*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203827598s

Blose, Maud. 2020. "Stereotypes: Contribution of Soap Opera Media Text to Women's Identity Construction." *Agenda* 34(1): 34–39. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2019.1686304

Broadcasters' Audience Research Board. 2026. "*Weekly Top 50 Shows*." Accessed September 27, 2026. https://www.barb.co.uk/viewing-data/weekly-top-50-shows.

Brunsdon, Charlotte. 1997. *Screen Tastes: From Soap Opera to Satellite Dishes*. London: Routledge.

Bolt, David. 2014. "An Advertising Aesthetic: Real Beauty and Visual Impairment." *British Journal of Visual Impairment* 32(1): 25–32. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0264619613512619

Caballero Pérez, Adriana, and **Andrés Mauricio Guzmán Rincón.** 2025. "Surrogacy and Disability: An Overview of the Legal, Regulatory, and Ethical Issues." *Oñati Socio-Legal Series* 15(6): 2318–2351. DOI: https://doi.org/10.35295/OSLS.IISL.2383

Chambers, Guinevere. 2023. "Disabled Sexuality and Negotiations with Sexual Partners." *Sexuality and Disability* 41(2): 357–386. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11195-023-09784-0

Christian, Gerald, Joey Gray, Kelsie Roberts, and **Jackie Eller.** 2020. "Quadriplegic Sexuality: Demystifying Misconceptions." *Leisure Sciences* 42(3–4): 322–339. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2020.1712281

Coronation Street. 1960–present. *Created by Tony Warren. ITV*. Television series.

Ellcessor, Elizabeth, Mack Hagood, and **Bill Kirkpatrick.** 2017. *Disability Media Studies*. New York: New York University Press.

Ellis, Katie, and **Gerard Goggin.** 2015. *Disability and the Media.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-50171-4

Fertility Network UK. n.d. "IVF Postcode Lottery." Accessed June 8, 2026. https://fertilitynetworkuk.org/postcodelottery/.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. 2002. "The Politics of Staring: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography." In *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, edited by Sharon L. Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, 56–75. New York: Modern Language Association.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. 2005. "Feminist Disability Studies." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30(2): 1557–1587. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/423352

Goggin, Gerard, and **Helen Meekosha.** 2021. "Desexualising Disabled People in the News Media." In *The Routledge Handbook of Disability and Sexuality*, edited by Russell Shuttleworth, and Linda Mona, 290–304. London: Routledge. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429489570-26

Goodley, Daniel. 2017. *Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: SAGE.

Grech, Lisa B., Donna Koller, and **Amanda Olley**. 2023. "Furthering the Person-First versus Identity-First Language Debate." *Australian Psychologist* 58(4): 223–232. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/00050067.2023.2192863

Haller, Beth. 2010. *Representing Disability in an Ableist World: Essays on Mass Media*. Baltimore: Advocado Press.

Hill, Sarah. 2024. "Navigating Visibility and Risk: Disabled Young Women's Self-Presentation Practices on Social Media." *Journal of Gender Studies* 33(5): 512–523. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2023.2219971

Hogg, Christopher. 2020. "A Class Act: An Interview with Julie Hesmondhalgh on Casting, Representation and Inclusion in British Television Drama." *Critical Studies in Television* 15(3): 302–311. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1749602020934670

Janiszewski, Connie, Emily Friedel, David Skvarc, Donna Koller, and **Lisa B. Grech.** 2025. "The Relationship between Disability Identity and Use of Person-First and Identity-First Language." *Rehabilitation Psychology*. Preprint. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1037/rep0000631

Jenkins, Joy, and **Ana Cabas-Mijares.** 2025. "Desiring the Disabled Body." In *The Routledge Companion to Visual Journalism*, edited by Nicole Dahmen, and T. J. Thomson, 276–286. London: Routledge. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003391340-27

Kafer, Alison. 2013. *Feminist, Queer, Crip*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2979/6841.0

Kang, Jungwoo, Moghees Hanif, Eushaa Mirza, and **Shazia Jaleel.** 2020. "Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome in Pregnancy: A Review." *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology* 255: 118–123. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejogrb.2020.10.033

Kaye, H. Stephen, H. Lita Jans, and **Erica C. Jones.** 2011. "Why Don't Employers Hire and Retain Workers with Disabilities?" *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* 21(4): 526–536. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-011-9302-8

Kim, Eunju J., Susan L. Parish, and **Tina Skinner.** 2019. "The Impact of Gender and Disability on the Economic Well-Being of Disabled Women in the United Kingdom: A Longitudinal Study between 2009 and 2014." *Social Policy & Administration* 53(7): 1064–1080. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12486

Krippendorff, Klaus. 2019. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. 4th ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781

Lappeteläinen, Anu, Eija Sevón, and **Tanja Vehkakoski.** 2017. "Forbidden Option or Planned Decision? Physically Disabled Women's Narratives on the Choice of Motherhood." *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* 19(2): 140–150. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2016.1243150

Liddiard, Kirsty. 2018. *The Intimate Lives of Disabled People*. London: Routledge. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315556598

Liddiard, Kirsty, and **Tig Slater.** 2018. "'Like, Pissing Yourself Is Not a Particularly Attractive Quality, Let's Be Honest': Learning to Contain through Youth, Adulthood, Disability and Sexuality." *Sexualities* 21(3): 319–333. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716688674

Livingstone, Sonia M. 1989. "Interpretive Viewers and Structured Programs: The Implicit Representation of Soap Opera Characters." *Communication Research* 16(1): 25–57. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/009365089016001002

Malacrida, Claudia. 2009. "Performing Motherhood in a Disablist World: Dilemmas of Motherhood, Femininity and Disability." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 22(1): 99–117. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390802581927

Malinowska, Anna. 2018. "Lost in Representation: Disabled Sex and the Aesthetics of the 'Norm.'" *Sexualities* 21(3): 364–378. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716688678

McKee, Alan. 2001. "A Beginner's Guide to Textual Analysis." *Metro Magazine: Media & Education Magazine* 127/128: 138–149.

McRuer, Robert. 2006. *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*. New York: New York University Press.

Meekosha, Helen. 2004. "Drifting down the Gulf Stream: Navigating the Cultures of Disability Studies." *Disability & Society* 19(7): 721–733. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/0968759042000284204

Mitchell, David T., and **Sharon L. Snyder**. 2000. *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.11523

O'Hara, Mary. 2015. "We Need More Disabled People on Movie and TV Screens." *The Guardian*, October 28, 2015. Accessed January 28, 2025. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/oct/28/disabled-people-movie-tv-becoming-bulletproof.

Ofcom. 2023. *Licences, Facts and Figures*. Accessed January 28, 2025. https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/.

Office for National Statistics. 2023. *Time Use in the UK: 23 September to 1 October 2023*. Accessed January 28, 2025. https://www.ons.gov.uk/.

Oliver, Mike. 2013. "The Social Model of Disability: Thirty Years On." *Disability & Society* 28(7): 1024–1026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2013.818773

Parsons, Alexandria, Arleigh Reichl, and **Cory Pedersen.** 2017. "Gendered Ableism: Representations and Gender Role Beliefs' Effects on Perceptions of Disability and Sexuality." *Sexuality and Disability* 35(2): 207–225. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11195-016-9464-6

Rice, Carla, Sarah Riley, Andrea LaMarre, and **K. Alysse Bailey.** 2021. "What a Body Can Do: Rethinking Body Functionality through a Feminist Materialist Disability Lens." *Body Image* 38: 95–105. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.03.014

Sancho, Jane. 2003. *Disabling Prejudice: Attitudes towards Disability and Its Portrayal on Television*. British Broadcasting Corporation, Broadcasting Standards Commission, and Independent Television Commission. Accessed January 28, 2025. https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/research/disabling-prejudice.pdf.

Shakespeare, Tom. 2017. "The Social Model of Disability." In *The Disability Studies Reader*, edited by Lennard J. Davis, 5th ed., 195–204. London: Routledge.

Shildrick, Margrit. 2007. "Contested Pleasures: The Sociopolitical Economy of Disability and Sexuality." *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 4(1): 53–66. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/srsp.2007.4.1.53

Snyder, Sharon L., and **David T. Mitchell.** 2006. *Cultural Locations of Disability*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226767307.001.0001

Sumiala, Johanna. 2013. *Media and Ritual: Death, Community, and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203094877

Tepper, Mitchell S. 2000. "Sexuality and Disability: The Missing Discourse of Pleasure." *Sexuality and Disability* 18(4): 283–290. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005698311392

Thomas, Carol. 1997. "The Baby and the Bath Water: Disabled Women and Motherhood in Social Context." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 19(5): 622–643. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.1997.tb00423.x

Thomas, Carol. 2007. *Sociologies of Disability and Illness: Contested Ideas in Disability Studies and Medical Sociology*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-02019-2_7

Titchkosky, Tanya. 2009. "Disability Images and the Art of Theorizing Normalcy." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 22(1): 75–84. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390802581893

Vaidya, Shubhangi. 2015. "Women with Disability and Reproductive Rights: Deconstructing Discourses." *Social Change* 45(4): 517–533. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0049085715602787

Wendell, Susan. 1989. "Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability." *Hypatia* 4(2): 104–124. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1989.tb00576.x

Wendell, Susan. 1996. *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability*. New York: Routledge.

Wilde, Alison. 2020. "Disabled People on Film and Television." In *The International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media, and Communication*, edited by Karen Ross, Ingrid Bachmann, Valentina Cardo, and Cosimo Marco Scarcelli. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119429128.iegmc142

Wilde, Alison. 2021. "Coronation Street and Its Changing Approach to Disability." *Disability Arts Online*, March 5, 2021. Accessed January 28, 2025. https://disabilityarts.online/magazine/opinion/coronation-street-and-its-changing-approach-to-disability/.

Wilde, Alison. 2022. "The Representation of Disabled Women and Recent Disabled Women-Led Media." *Disability & Society* 37(3): 522–527. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2021.2015292

Wilde, Alison, and **Rebecca Fish.** 2024. "Gender, Feminism and the Project of Critical Disability Studies (CDS)." *Disability & Society* 40(3): 1–22. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2023.2298774

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:
Enion, Bev. 2026. "Sexuality on Screen: A Feminist Disability Studies Reading of Izzy Armstrong in *Coronation Street*." *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* 28(1): 551–563. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16993/sjdr.1412

Submitted: 27 November 2025
Accepted: 27 September 2026
Published: 07 October 2026

COPYRIGHT:
© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/.

Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Stockholm University Press.