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Research Article



## Empowering Deaf Students : A Genre Analysis of the film *Children of a Lesser God*

Dr. Najla Mosbehi

English Teacher,

Military Academy, Tunisia

Email: [mosbahinajla@gmail.com](mailto:mosbahinajla@gmail.com)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-8834-1271>

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### Abstract

People with hearing loss often need special skills to learn language and communicate. The film *Children of a Lesser God* focuses on the link between hearing impairment and speech. It portrays the way deaf students struggle to gain hospitality in the hearing world. It revolves around a romantic relationship between a deaf girl and a hearing speech teacher. This paper tackles the communicative skills that James achieves with his deaf students and Sarah through genre analysis as an analytic angle. It has been found that James uses innovative teaching techniques to help his deaf students have a better understanding for somatic sensations, such as vibration, playing loud rock music, reading hi lips and interpreting his sign language. *Children of a Lesser God* delves into the intricate challenges faced by individuals with hearing loss in the realm of language acquisition and communication. This exploration revolves around the romantic relationship between James, a hearing speech teacher, and Sarah, a deaf former student, uncovering the interplay between hearing impairment and expressive language skills. The film also challenges societal attitudes toward deafness, questioning whether it is viewed as a limitation or a distinctive mode of communication. This genre analysis provides a comprehensive examination of how

the film surpasses conventional norms of the romance genre while shedding light on the innovative teaching methods employed by James to support his deaf students and his girlfriend, Sarah. The central conflict of the narrative arises from the contrasting communication styles and perceptions of James and Sarah. Sarah's resistance to conforming to the hearing world presents a unique challenge for James, who endeavors to connect with her through American Sign Language (ASL). The film's title, *Children of a Lesser God*, underscores societal attitudes toward the deaf, framing the exploration of autonomy, understanding, and the right to define one's identity. Beyond the romantic storyline, the narrative expands to address the broader challenges faced by deaf students in their pursuit of education and communication. In light of the limited research on the intersection between films and language pathologies, especially deafness, this study uses genre analysis to explore the film's distinctive exploration of communication dynamics and educational practices. The primary objectives include examining how the film transcends conventions of the romance genre and deciphering the teaching methods employed by James to empower deaf students.

**Keywords :** Deafness, Genre Analysis, Communication, Language Pathologies, Innovative teaching, Romantic Genre, Empowerment, Language acquisition, Societal attitudes, Hearing impairment

### **Introduction: Hearing Loss and Language Acquisition**

Language impairment, a complex challenge in the realm of human communication, refers to difficulties in the development, comprehension, or expression of language. This multifaceted condition can manifest in various forms, impacting both receptive and expressive language skills. A crucial factor influencing language impairment is hearing loss, as highlighted by the provided ideas. Hearing, serving as a cornerstone for communication, plays a pivotal role in the acquisition and development of language. The intricate relationship between hearing and language skills becomes particularly pronounced in individuals facing sensory limitations due to hearing impairment. Delving into this connection, it becomes apparent that the co-occurrence of language disorders with hearing loss can significantly influence effective communication. Understanding this interplay is essential for addressing the complexities of language impairment and developing targeted interventions to support individuals facing these challenges.

Language impairment presents a multifaceted challenge in human communication (Ezzat et al.6), involving difficulties in language development, comprehension, and expression. This intricate condition can manifest in various forms, impacting both receptive and expressive language skills, hence comes the claim that hearing loss as a crucial factor influencing language impairment. Given that hearing serves as a fundamental element in communication, it plays a pivotal role in language acquisition and development. As an illustration, the co-occurrence of language disorders with hearing loss, suggests that the challenges of language impairment are further compounded in the presence of hearing difficulties. This intricate connection underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of the complex variables involved in language and hearing disorders. That is why, it is argued that unraveling these intricacies is vital for developing targeted interventions that can effectively address the challenges faced by individuals dealing with language impairment and hearing loss.

Furthermore, it is maintained that hearing impairment introduces sensory limitations that may contribute to the co-occurrence of language disorders, thereby impacting effective communication (Oliveira et al.41). Also, human communication heavily relies on auditory perception and the decoding of stimuli—a fundamental aspect of language comprehension and expression. In this way, attention is paid to the relationship between hearing loss and speech-language skills. Oliveira et al. identify the degree and onset of hearing loss as critical factors influencing the negative impact on language development. This

observation is further supported by the findings of a retrospective study that analyzed 482 archives of patients with speech-language disorders. In this study, they not only describe the characteristics of these patients but also reveal a statistically significant correlation between language disorders, the level of hearing loss, and specific language complaints. The study underscores the importance of early diagnosis and intervention to mitigate the diverse disturbances that individuals with hearing loss may encounter during their language acquisition journey. By focusing on gender, chief complaint, and type and degree of hearing loss, the researchers enrich our understanding of the implied associations between speech-language disorders and hearing impairment.

### **Synopsis of *Children of a Lesser God***

*Children of a Lesser God* is a dramatic exploration of the intricate relationship between James Leeds, a hearing teacher, and his Deaf former student, Sarah Norman. Mark Medoff's play delves into themes of communication, identity, and the barriers that exist between the Deaf and hearing communities. In this context, Attanasio (1986, para.2), The central conflict emerges from the differing communication styles and perceptions of James, a passionate teacher at a Deaf school, and Sarah, a Deaf woman who refuses to speak or learn lip-reading. Sarah's resistance to conforming to the hearing world poses a challenge to James, who seeks connection with her using American Sign Language (ASL).

The title, *Children of a Lesser God*, signifies societal attitudes towards Deaf individuals and the play's examination of whether Deafness is considered a limitation or a distinct form of communication. Throughout the narrative, the characters confront questions related to autonomy, understanding, and the right to define one's identity (ibid). In other words, the film *Children of a Lesser God* serves as a powerful exploration of the challenges faced by deaf students in their pursuit of education and communication in a predominantly hearing world. This article delves into the empowering themes of the movie through a genre analysis, shedding light on the communicative skills and teaching techniques used to support and empower deaf students. The selected film centers around the relationship between James Leeds, a hearing speech teacher, and Sarah Norman, a deaf student at a school for the deaf. The film portrays the struggle of deaf students to gain acceptance and understanding in a society that often fails to accommodate their unique communication needs.

Little research has been conducted on the intersection between films and language pathologies, specifically focusing on deafness. This gap in scholarly exploration forms the basis for the present study, which relies on a genre analysis to shed light on the teaching methods employed by the main character to assist both his girlfriend and his deaf students. *Children of a Lesser God* provides a unique cinematic lens through which the complexities of deafness, communication, and educational dynamics are portrayed. By employing a genre analysis, this study seeks to unravel how the film transcends conventional romantic narratives and instead accentuates the pedagogical approaches used to empower deaf individuals within the storyline.

The chosen film, centered around the relationship between James Leeds, a hearing speech teacher, and Sarah Norman, a deaf student, offers a compelling narrative that extends beyond the boundaries of typical romance genres. The scarcity of existing research in this domain underscores the significance of a genre analysis, which becomes a valuable tool for dissecting the film's thematic layers. In doing so, the study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of the challenges faced by the Deaf community, not only in matters of romantic relationships but also in the educational sphere. To put it differently, The genre analysis serves as a methodological approach to explore how the film navigates the intricate intersection between romance, communication, and teaching methods, offering insights that can enrich the discourse on deafness within cinematic narratives.

### **Statement of the problem**

The driving force of this research is to examine the intersection between films and language pathologies, namely deafness. That is why the present study depends on a genre analysis in order to show the teaching methods used by the main character to help his girlfriend and his deaf students.

## Research questions

The specific research questions can be summarized as following:

1. How does *Children of a lesser God* transcend the conventions of the romance genre ?
2. What are the teaching methods used by James to help Sarah and his deaf students ?

This paper aims to unravel how *Children of a Lesser God* transcends conventional norms of the romance genre, delving into its unique exploration of communication dynamics, identity, and societal perceptions surrounding deafness. Concurrently, the study seeks to illuminate the teaching methods employed by the protagonist, James Leeds, in his endeavor to assist not only his deaf students but also his girlfriend, Sarah Norman. The educational narrative woven into the film extends beyond the romantic storyline, offering a compelling exploration of the challenges and innovations within deaf education. By addressing the second research question, the study aims to uncover the pedagogical strategies utilized by James, contributing to a deeper understanding of the empowering and supportive measures depicted in *Children of a Lesser God*. Through these objectives, the research aspires to make significant contributions to the scholarly discussions surrounding cinematic genre analysis and the intricate dynamics of education within the context of language pathologies, specifically focusing on deafness.

In this context, the relationship between cinematic storytelling, language pathologies, and the experiences of the Deaf community becomes a focal point of investigation. The study endeavors to bridge the gaps in existing research by delving into unexplored dimensions, shedding light on how the film challenges and transcends traditional genre conventions. Furthermore, the examination of James Leeds' pedagogical approaches forms an integral part of understanding the intricate dynamics presented in *Children of a Lesser God*. This exploration not only contributes to a richer understanding of cinematic genres but also provides valuable insights into the educational strategies employed to empower and support deaf individuals within the narrative.

## Methodology

This section provides an in-depth exploration of the analytical framework employed for the selected film, which revolves around film genre. Genre analysis, as a methodology, involves the systematic examination of the characteristics and themes associated with a specific genre. As articulated by Bondebjerg, a film genre relies on a "set of conventions" (2015, p.1) that serve as cues for viewers to recognize the particular genre of a movie. Within the context of this study, the goal of genre analysis is to gain insights into how films within a genre either adhere to established conventions or deviate from them. *Children of a Lesser God* serves as a compelling case study in this regard, as it goes beyond the traditional conventions of the romance genre by uncovering innovative teaching methods employed for deaf students.

Rather than exclusively concentrating on the generic conventions of romantic narratives and characters' love stories, the film introduces a unique dimension by spotlighting the unconventional and transformative methods utilized in the education of deaf students. This departure from genre norms not only challenges preconceived notions but also enriches the cinematic landscape by intertwining romance with the exploration of pedagogical approaches. The film thus becomes a fertile ground for genre analysis, offering a nuanced understanding of how it navigates and redefines established conventions to convey a narrative that transcends the boundaries of traditional romantic storytelling. Through this analytical lens, the study aims to unravel the intricate layers of *Children of a Lesser God*, contributing to broader discussions on the dynamic intersections of film genre, pedagogy, and the portrayal of language pathologies within cinema.

Genre analysis, as applied to *Children of a Lesser God*, becomes a lens through which the study examines the film's narrative choices and thematic elements. The conventional expectations associated with the romance genre typically revolve around romantic relationships, love stories, and interpersonal dynamics. However, this film disrupts these norms by incorporating a subplot that centers around the challenges and triumphs within the realm of deaf education. The decision to intertwine romance with an exploration of pedagogical methods is a deliberate departure from genre conventions, revealing the filmmakers' intent to transcend the limitations often associated with traditional storytelling structures.

In light of the objectives outlined in this study, genre analysis provides a strategic tool to dissect how *Children of a Lesser God* defies genre norms and introduces a broader societal discourse. By closely examining the deviations from romance genre conventions, the research aims to uncover the underlying motivations behind these choices. Moreover, the study seeks to delineate how the film's innovative approach to genre contributes to a more profound exploration of language pathologies and the experiences of the Deaf community. Through the synergy of genre analysis and the specific research questions, this study aspires to offer a nuanced understanding of the film's narrative intricacies, shedding light on its unique contribution to the cinematic landscape and its potential implications for broader discussions on language pathologies, education, and cinematic genres.

However, the question to be raised here is what is the generic belonging of *Children of a Lesser God*. Does the film fall within the realm of a drama, adhering to traditional narrative structures and thematic elements inherent to the genre? Alternatively, does it transcend these generic categorizations, evolving into a distinct sub-genre that moves beyond conventional drama to become an empowering narrative specifically tailored for deaf students? The classification prompts an examination of the film's overarching themes, narrative choices, and stylistic features to ascertain whether it aligns more closely with established genres or ventures into uncharted territory.

### Analysis

Examining the generic conventions of *Children of a Lesser God* through its stylistic devices reveals a nuanced approach that intertwines traditional elements with innovative choices. Cinematographically, the film employs visual storytelling to capture the emotional nuances of the characters, adhering to conventional methods of romantic dramas. However, it diverges by emphasizing the visual language of American Sign Language (ASL) as a crucial stylistic element, offering a unique perspective that goes beyond the typical romantic narrative.

Sound design in the film plays a pivotal role in shaping the narrative and contributing to its genre identity. While traditional dramas often rely on spoken dialogue to convey emotions, *Children of a Lesser God* introduces a distinctive soundscape, incorporating silence to underscore the challenges faced by deaf individuals. This deliberate departure from auditory norms challenges generic expectations, adding a layer of authenticity to the film's portrayal of deaf experiences.

Visually, the film's aesthetics mirror the romantic drama genre, with intimate shots capturing the characters' emotions. However, the cinematography takes a bold step by integrating scenes that spotlight the physicality and expressiveness of sign language. These stylistic choices not only enhance the storytelling but also contribute to the film's unique position within the broader cinematic landscape.

The film's use of symbolism also merits exploration in the context of genre analysis. Traditional romantic dramas often rely on symbolic gestures to convey love and connection. In *Children of a Lesser God*, the symbolism extends beyond typical romantic motifs to encompass the transformative power of communication. The recurring motif of hands, whether in physical touch or signing, serves as a powerful symbol, elevating the film beyond conventional romance.

In this way, the film's stylistic devices contribute significantly to its genre classification by blending traditional romantic drama elements with innovative choices. By integrating the visual language of ASL,

manipulating sound design, employing unique cinematography, and infusing symbolic depth, *Children of a Lesser God* emerges as a genre-defying work that not only adheres to but also challenges and expands the conventions of the romantic drama genre.

On top of all that, the film strategically employs lighting and color schemes to enhance its narrative impact. Traditional romantic dramas often use warm and inviting lighting to create a romantic atmosphere. In this film, however, the use of lighting takes on a dual purpose. While some scenes employ conventional romantic lighting to evoke intimacy, others utilize stark lighting or shadows, mirroring the communication challenges faced by the characters. This intentional manipulation of lighting contributes to the film's genre-blending nature, as it simultaneously embraces and subverts established conventions.

The film's pacing is another stylistic element that warrants examination. Romantic dramas typically follow a predictable rhythm, building tension and climaxing in a resolution. *Children of a Lesser God* disrupts this pacing by interspersing poignant moments of connection with periods of tension and silence. This deliberate alteration in pacing aligns with the unique communication dynamics of the deaf community, introducing a distinct rhythm that challenges traditional genre expectations. The film's willingness to linger on moments of silence and contemplation reflects its commitment to authenticity and elevates it beyond the confines of a typical romantic drama.

Additionally, the use of narrative structure in the film contributes to its stylistic complexity. While romantic dramas often follow a linear narrative trajectory, *Children of a Lesser God* employs a more episodic structure. The film explores various facets of the characters' relationship through a series of interconnected scenes, each offering a snapshot of their evolving connection. This episodic approach adds depth and dimension to the storytelling, deviating from the linear progression commonly associated with the romance genre. In other words, the stylistic devices in *Children of a Lesser God* extend beyond the visual and auditory elements, encompassing lighting choices, pacing variations, and narrative structures. These deliberate choices collectively contribute to the film's unique identity, blending traditional romantic drama elements with innovative stylistic approaches. By challenging and expanding upon established conventions, the film creates a rich and nuanced cinematic experience that transcends generic boundaries.

Furthermore, what merits attention in the film is the deliberate incorporation of silence in *Children of a Lesser God*, which harmoniously aligns with the film's broader generic conventions, enriching the narrative and challenging traditional romantic tropes. In the realm of romantic dramas, where verbal expression often takes center stage, the film's use of silence serves as a distinctive element that elevates the storytelling and contributes to its unique genre identity.

In the context of the romance genre, where communication is typically depicted through spoken words and overt expressions of affection, the film's emphasis on silence introduces a refreshing and unconventional dynamic. By choosing silence as a central theme, the narrative aligns with the Deaf experience, highlighting the significance of non-verbal communication through sign language. This alignment with Deaf culture becomes a defining feature that sets the film apart from conventional romantic dramas, reflecting a commitment to authenticity and representation.

Moreover, the film's use of silence complements the thematic exploration of the barriers between the Deaf and hearing worlds. In the romance genre, conflicts often arise from misunderstandings or miscommunications that are verbally expressed. However, *Children of a Lesser God* utilizes silence as a metaphor for the communication gaps faced by Deaf individuals. This stylistic choice not only reinforces the film's commitment to portraying authentic Deaf experiences but also challenges viewers to reevaluate their perceptions of love and connection within the context of hearing impairment.

The harmonious integration of silence with the film's generic conventions extends beyond the romantic storyline. It becomes a narrative device that reinforces the overarching theme of societal

attitudes toward Deaf individuals. As the characters navigate the complexities of their relationships in a predominantly hearing world, the strategic use of silence becomes a powerful tool to convey the emotional nuances and challenges faced by the protagonists. Thus, the use of silence in *Children of a Lesser God* aligns seamlessly with the film's generic conventions, enhancing the narrative by providing a more authentic portrayal of Deaf culture and challenging established norms within the romance genre. This deliberate choice contributes to the film's overall impact, making it a poignant and groundbreaking exploration of love, communication, and the Deaf experience.

*Children of a Lesser God* can be categorized as a romantic drama with a central focus on Sarah's journey towards empowerment as a deaf student under the guidance of James Leeds. This genre analysis explores how the film effectively blends elements of romance and drama to portray Sarah's transformation, empowerment, and self-discovery. As a romantic drama, the film adheres to genre conventions by presenting a love story between James, the hearing speech teacher, and Sarah, a deaf woman. The narrative structure revolves around their evolving relationship, where James becomes Sarah's mentor and confidante. The film effectively portrays their emotional connection and the challenges they face due to communication barriers, which are central themes of the romance genre. Moreover, the film explores the complexities of human emotions, particularly Sarah's struggles as a deaf individual.

The drama aspect of the genre is evident as the film delves into Sarah's past traumas related to her deafness and the societal misconceptions she faces. James's empathetic and supportive approach is essential in helping Sarah confront these emotional challenges, leading to her empowerment. As the film progresses, Sarah's character undergoes significant development, which aligns with typical character arcs seen in romantic dramas. Under James's guidance, she gains self-confidence, asserts herself, and embraces her identity as a deaf person. This personal growth becomes a pivotal aspect of the narrative, mirroring the empowerment theme often found in romantic dramas.

Nevertheless, beyond the confines of traditional romantic drama, *Children of a Lesser God* introduces a nuanced exploration of empowerment and autonomy for deaf individuals. While the love story between James and Sarah remains central, the film transcends expected romantic conventions by placing a strong emphasis on Sarah's personal journey. The narrative unfolds as a dual exploration of romance and the empowerment of a deaf protagonist, challenging the limitations often associated with the genre.

In the realm of romantic dramas, character development is often intertwined with the progression of romantic relationships. In this case, the film diverges by prioritizing Sarah's individual growth, resilience, and self-discovery. Rather than solely relying on the romantic connection between the protagonists, the narrative delves into the complexities of Sarah's identity, allowing her to emerge as a fully realized character beyond her role in the romantic arc. This departure from the typical trajectory of romantic dramas adds depth to the film's thematic exploration.

Moreover, the film challenges societal perceptions of deafness by presenting Sarah not as a passive recipient of assistance but as an active agent in her own transformation. James's role extends beyond being a romantic partner; he becomes a catalyst for Sarah's empowerment, advocating for her autonomy and encouraging her to navigate a world that often marginalizes deaf individuals. This dynamic reshaping of conventional gender roles and power dynamics within the romantic narrative contributes to the film's uniqueness within the broader landscape of romantic dramas. Consequently, *Children of a Lesser God* achieves a delicate balance between romance and empowerment, creating a narrative space where love and personal growth coexist. By deviating from the expected trajectory of romantic dramas, the film establishes itself as a genre-defying exploration that resonates with themes of independence, resilience, and the pursuit of identity in the face of societal expectations.

## Discussion

The film subverts some conventional romance genre expectations by prioritizing Sarah's journey of empowerment over a typical romantic resolution. While the romantic relationship between James and Sarah plays a central role, the film focuses more on Sarah's self-discovery and the importance of embracing her deafness rather than solely on the romantic aspects. Instead of just focusing on the generic conventions of the romance genre and characters' love story, it unveils the innovative methods of teaching deaf students. As an explanation, James Leeds, the hearing speech teacher, demonstrates a deep understanding of the challenges faced by his deaf students. He employs unconventional techniques to foster their language development and comprehension. By using vibrations, playing loud rock music, lip-reading, and sign language interpretation, James breaks down barriers and bridges the gap between deaf students and the hearing world. By doing so, he exhibits a deep understanding of the challenges faced by his deaf students. He demonstrates empathy and sensitivity to their unique needs, recognizing the barriers they encounter in their communication and learning experiences. What is more, James's commitment to supporting his deaf students becomes evident through his unconventional and innovative teaching methods. One such method involves using vibrations and loud rock music to help his students experience sound in a tactile manner. By encouraging them to place their hands on speakers and feel the vibrations, James enables his students to connect with music on a different sensory level. This approach allows the deaf students to perceive and appreciate sound in a way they had not experienced before, enhancing their understanding of the auditory world. Moreover, another significant aspect of James's teaching approach is his emphasis on lip-reading as a vital tool for effective communication. He guides his students in using their lip-reading skills, which proves to be useful in helping them better comprehend spoken language and engage in conversations with hearing individuals. By empowering his students with improved lip-reading abilities, James equips them to interact more comfortably with the hearing world, reducing communication barriers. In addition to encouraging lip-reading, James is proficient in sign language and actively promotes its use in the classroom and daily life. He emphasizes the value of sign language as an essential means of communication for the deaf community.

By incorporating sign language interpretation into his teaching approach, James fosters a supportive environment that encourages his students to express themselves fully. This approach also encourages hearing individuals to engage with and learn from the deaf culture, promoting understanding between the two worlds. Beyond the classroom setting, James's impact is most profound on Sarah. Their romantic relationship plays a central role in the film, showcasing how James's understanding and support empower Sarah to assert herself and overcome past traumas related to her deafness. Through their relationship, the film emphasizes the significance of empowering individuals to embrace their identities and communicate with confidence. In point of fact, the heroine manages to gain self-confidence and assertiveness under James's guidance.

In this manner, the film, *Children of a Lesser God*, celebrates Sarah's journey towards empowerment for deaf students. Indeed, James's dedication to breaking down barriers and bridging the gap between the deaf and hearing worlds not only transform Sarah's life but also positively influence the lives of all his students, creating a supportive learning environment. 3. 2 Discussion What merits attention is that James plays a role in Sarah's empowerment journey. As their relationship evolves, he exhibits a deep understanding of Sarah's struggles and unique needs as a deaf individual. Through his innovative teaching methods and supportive approach, James creates a nurturing environment where Sarah begins to feel understood and valued. As an illustration, as the narrative progresses, the film showcases key moments where James's guidance and understanding have a profound impact on Sarah's self-esteem and confidence. Through the use of unconventional teaching techniques, such as vibrations, loud music, and sign language interpretation, James enables Sarah to connect with the hearing world in new and

meaningful ways. These experiences contribute to her gradual transformation, empowering her to communicate with confidence. As Sarah gains proficiency in lip-reading and sign language, her communication skills improve, leading to a growing sense of self-assurance. The film depicts instances where Sarah's increased confidence allows her to express herself more openly and advocate for her needs. She becomes more assertive in articulating her thoughts and emotions, challenging societal misconceptions and breaking free from previous limitations imposed by her deafness. The selected film *Children of a Lesser God* depicts the significance of empowering deaf students to embrace their identities and communicate confidently. The portrayal of Sarah's transformative journey, guided by James's understanding and support, serves as an inspiring representation of the positive impact a nurturing educational environment can have on deaf individuals. The film emphasizes the importance of breaking down barriers, dispelling misconceptions challenging stereotypes and fostering a sense of empowerment for all students, regardless of their hearing abilities.

However, the film does not completely break away from all generic conventions of the romance genre. While it places a substantial focus on empowerment and education, the central romantic relationship between James and Sarah remains a driving force in the narrative. This romantic element, although essential to the film's plot, could be seen as adhering to traditional genre expectations. The tension between conforming to established romantic genre norms and pushing the boundaries to address broader themes of empowerment introduces a layer of complexity to the film's generic identity.

The challenge lies in balancing the expectations of a romance genre audience, which often anticipates a specific trajectory for romantic narratives, with the film's ambition to be a vehicle for broader social commentary. By incorporating both elements, *Children of a Lesser God* challenges the conventional notion of what a romance film should entail. It compels the audience to grapple with the question of whether a romantic storyline can coexist with a more profound exploration of societal attitudes towards deafness and the empowerment of deaf individuals.

Additionally, the film's use of melodramatic elements, another common feature of romance genres, presents a challenge to its genre-defying aspirations. The heightened emotional conflicts and dramatic moments, while effective in conveying the struggles faced by the characters, align with traditional romantic drama conventions. This creates a tension within the film, as it seeks to balance the emotional intensity expected in romantic narratives with the nuanced exploration of educational empowerment.

In this manner, the challenge for *Children of a Lesser God* lies in negotiating between the expectations of a romance genre audience and the film's ambitious agenda to transcend those expectations. The delicate balance between romance and empowerment becomes a central theme, posing a complex challenge to the film's generic conventions and pushing the boundaries of what a romantic drama can embrace.

It can be argued that the genre of *Children of a Lesser God* presents a fascinating hybridity that defies easy categorization. Rather than adhering strictly to the conventional norms of the romance genre, the film seamlessly integrates elements of drama, romance, and empowerment narratives. This hybrid nature allows the narrative to transcend the limitations of a singular genre, creating a more nuanced and intricate storytelling experience.

The film's hybridity is evident in its narrative structure, which navigates between the central romantic storyline and the broader theme of empowerment for deaf students. While romance typically dictates a specific trajectory, the film deviates by prioritizing Sarah's journey of self-discovery and empowerment over a traditional romantic resolution. This unique blend challenges the established conventions of the romance genre, enriching the narrative with layers of complexity.

Moreover, the film's innovative portrayal of deaf education introduces a pedagogical element that is rarely associated with traditional romance genres. James Leeds, the hearing teacher, employs unconventional teaching methods to bridge the communication gap between deaf and hearing individuals. This educational dimension adds a layer of depth and hybridity, transforming the film into a genre-defying exploration of communication dynamics within the context of a romantic relationship. Therefore, *Children of a Lesser God* emerges as a hybrid cinematic creation that fuses romance, drama, and empowerment genres. This hybrid approach not only elevates the narrative but also challenges preconceived notions about the rigidity of genre classifications, inviting audiences to engage with a story that defies easy categorization.

In this context, the portrayal of deafness goes beyond the traditional lens of viewing it as a mere language impairment, instead positioning it as a distinctive and valid form of communication. This transformative perspective challenges prevailing notions that categorize deafness as a calamity or a desperate human condition. Oliver Sacks, as articulated in "Seeing Voices" rejects the perception of deafness as "one of the most desperate of human calamities" (Sacks 1). His insights advocate for recognizing the intrinsic value of Deaf culture and sign languages.

The idea of deafness as a unique form of communication has far-reaching implications for fostering inclusivity and understanding. By embracing the richness embedded in Deaf culture and language, society can move away from stigmatizing perspectives. Sacks's perspective underscores the significance of sign languages as legitimate and flourishing modes of expression, contributing to a more enlightened and respectful approach towards diverse ways of interacting with the world.

The analysis of *Children of a Lesser God* in this paper exemplifies this shift in perspective, avoiding the portrayal of deaf characters through a lens of pity or tragedy. Instead, the film highlights the intelligence, resilience, and distinctive communication methods within the Deaf community. In alignment with Sacks's insights, the narrative prompts viewers to appreciate and value the diverse forms of communication present in the Deaf culture. By doing so, the film becomes a cinematic celebration of the richness inherent in the unique communication styles of deaf individuals, challenging outdated perceptions and contributing to a more inclusive understanding of deafness.

### Conclusion

To conclude, the examination of *Children of a Lesser God* reveals a film that transcends conventional genre boundaries, presenting a unique blend of romance, drama, and empowerment. The narrative's hybrid nature, adeptly intertwining themes of love and deaf education, challenges established genre norms. James Leeds's innovative teaching methods and the central focus on Sarah's journey toward empowerment contribute to the film's genre-defying character. By delving into the complexities of human communication and the challenges faced by deaf individuals, the movie offers a thought-provoking and multi-faceted viewing experience. *Children of a Lesser God* stands as an illustration of the cinematic potential of hybrid storytelling, inviting audiences to explore the intricate intersections of romance, education, and self-discovery in a narrative that goes beyond traditional genre constraints.

In *Children of a Lesser God*, the genre analysis goes beyond just focusing on the conventions of the romance genre and the characters' love story. Instead, it delves into the innovative methods of teaching deaf students employed by James Leeds, the hearing speech teacher. The film not only adheres to some conventions of the romantic drama genre, but it also subverts expectations by highlighting the empowering journey of the deaf protagonist, Sarah, under James's guidance. Through genre analysis, the film celebrates Sarah's empowerment through James's creative teaching approaches. Through a genre analysis of the film, one gain valuable insights into the importance of empowering deaf students to embrace their identities and communicate confidently. The film under examination serves as a powerful reminder to all teachers about the significance of being creative and adaptable in response to their

students' individual needs. In other words, it shows how they can develop teaching methods that cater to their students' abilities. By tailoring their approaches to suit the students' needs, teachers can create a supportive learning environment, where every student has the opportunity to reach a sense of empowerment and build his or her confidence.

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