

## HOW DOES A FICTION ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF INCLUSION?



Comedy, drama  
Directed by Neil Burger  
Starring: Kevin Hart,  
Bryan Cranston  
Country: The United States  
Language: English  
Running time: 118 minutes

1 “There is probably no one in America in or around a wheelchair who won’t find  
something to complain about in *The Upside*, a Hollywood film starring Bryan  
Cranston and Kevin Hart that saw wide release in January. It is the story of a white  
quadriplegic plutocrat and a streetwise black guy who becomes his caregiver and  
5 soul-saver — the latest in a nascent but growing genre, the disability-buddy movie.  
It begins as an almost exact frame by frame remake of the much-lauded French  
film of 2011, *The Intouchables*, winner of five César Awards, the French version of  
the Academy Awards, and globally, the most financially successful French movie  
of all time. If the makers of the remake had stuck with the exact same shot-by-shot  
10 story beyond the opening two minutes, it would have been a fascinating piece of  
cultural appropriation — and maybe a better movie. Instead, they ventured off into  
an “Americanized” story, much of which falls flat.”

[illegible]

### THE UPSIDE: ANY DIFFERENCES FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH MOVIE?

#### "The Upside: how does it compare to the original French movie?"

Altogether, *The Upside* shows few differences compared to the original. New actors, new locations - except for a few details, the story is the same. It makes it easy to see where the differences are.

Earth, Wind & Fire is featured in the original movie, while Aretha Franklin is the American reference. The Italian luxury car driven by Dell is a Ferrari in New York but a Maserati in Paris. Phillip's personal assistant is a lesbian in the original, but not so in *The Upside*. Dell's son is a cousin in the French movie, which also features more characters in supporting roles. [...]

At one point, Dell is shaving Phillip's beard. Before giving him a clean shave, he uses Philip's forced immobility to design different mustaches. In the French version (see below), the last one (a "Hitler" mustache) takes up a good part of the scene. In the American movie, it's so short that I'm not sure that the intention to show the dictator is even recognizable.

#### Coincidence or respect for cultural differences?

Since *The Upside* has recycled many parts of the original, I wondered why it wasn't pushing the Hitler gag harder. Is it out of respect for the six million victims of Jewish faith?

I'm also asking myself if this could be a simple **cultural difference in humor**? Or, is it more the need to be **politically correct** for the American audience? However, when it came to the cast, the director didn't hesitate in casting an African American actor as a paroled convict. How cliché is that?

I can think of several French or German movies I knew had been remade for the US. "The Birdcage" and "Just Visiting" (both French originals) or "City of Angels" (German) were the first names to come to my mind, and also the only ones I remembered seeing as originals and as American versions.

Maybe because I first saw them in France or Germany, I found the American movies less funny or lacking depth. As Forbes stated in August 2015, "**Remaking foreign films for domestic audiences requires more than translation.**"

January 15, 2019, Catherine.

*The Cross Border Globe. About differences between the American, German & French culture.*



## GRAMMAR

How to compare in English?

- Comparison between two things or more.

Comparison	Short adjectives of two syllable ending by -er, -y or -ly	Other adjectives with two syllable or more
Superiority	Adj. + -er + than	More + long adj. + than
Inferiority	Less + adj. + than	
Equality	As + adj. + as	

- Superlative

	Short Adjectives	Long Adjectives
Superlative	The + adj. + -est	The most + adj. + adj.

Good - better - the best / Bad - worse - the worst / little - less - the least are irregular!

### 3. SPECIAL NEEDS FOR SOMEONE WITH DISABILITIES

- Remember the job interview scene of the movie. What type of job is offering Philip to Dell? Can you describe more precisely the job.
- What type of competencies and skills should seek Mrs Pendleton during the interview?
- Now, read a real job description and compare with your previous answer.

#### GRAMMAR

##### Le présent simple & le présent continu

**Objectif :** décrire ses compétences, sa personnalité et parler d'actions en cours.

##### Examples:

*I am a hardworking person who enjoys teamwork.* (présent simple pour exprimer une vérité générale)

*I am currently working on a project related to marketing.* (présent continu pour parler d'une action en cours)

=> Décrire son profil et ses compétences en utilisant les deux temps.

##### Le passé simple & le passé continu

**Objectif :** parler de ses expériences professionnelles et académiques.

##### Examples:

*Last year, I worked as an intern in a company where I learned a lot* (passé simple pour une action terminée)

*While I was studying, I also worked part-time in a store.* (passé continu pour une action en cours dans le passé)

=> Raconter une expérience professionnelle ou un projet scolaire marquant.

##### Le present perfect

**Objectif :** mettre en valeur ses expériences et réalisations.

##### Examples:

*I have developed strong communication skills during my internships.*

*I have never worked in a company before, but I am eager to learn.*

=> Compléter des phrases ou parler de ses expériences en utilisant le present perfect.

### 4. INCLUSION IN THE CINEMA INDUSTRY

- Read the following documents.
- Look at Text A (lines 5 to 10) and Text B (lines 15 to 20). Identify the verbs, then indicate their tense and their infinitive form.
- Do you think the film industry is inclusive? Are *The Intouchables* and its American remake inclusive? Write a short paragraph (approximately 120 words) to express your point of view. Support your ideas with examples from the unit.

#### Inclusion.

- the act of including someone or something as part of a group, list, etc., or a person or thing that is included (general definition)
- the idea that everyone should be able to use the same facilities, take part in the same activities, and enjoy the same experiences, including people who have a disability or other disadvantage (education, social science specialized)

Cambridge dictionary

#### A. PROGRESS? WHAT PROGRESS? INCLUSION IN HOLLYWOOD IS LIMITED AND LACKING

- "The study by Associate Professor of Communication Stacy L. Smith and the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative provides an update to the group's longitudinal investigation of top-grossing movies. This year, the report covers the 1,600 top films from 2007 to 2022, with a particular focus on the most popular films from 2022. A total of 69,858 speaking characters were examined in the study, which explores gender, race/ethnicity, LGBTQ+ identity, and characters with disabilities. This is the largest and most rigorous analysis of inclusion in film to date.

#### 5 [...]

The report also explored the prevalence of characters with disabilities. In 2022, 1.9% of all speaking characters were depicted with a disability. There has been no change in the portrayal of characters with disabilities since 2015 when the percentage was 2.4%. Most characters with a disability were shown with a physical disability (82.7%), followed by communicative disabilities (33.3%) and cognitive disabilities (17.3%). Fifty-four films in 2022 did not feature a character with a disability on screen, and 76 were missing girls and women with disabilities. The majority (69.1%) of characters with disabilities were male-identified and 76% were white.

"When we look beyond gender and race/ethnicity, it is clear that Hollywood's problems with inclusion are even more pronounced for the LGBTQ+ and disability communities," Smith said. "The lack of progress in these areas suggests that executives and content creators are relying on practices that continue to marginalize and exclude talented voices from all backgrounds."

August 17, 2023, the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative



#### .... AND...ACTION!

Practice your skills! You are hiring someone to help a friend/family member who is disabled. Imagine the job interview to recruit someone to take care of your friend or your family member.

## B. MINORITIES ATTACK 'STEREOTYPICAL' BIT PARTS IN FRENCH FILMS

- 1 "Some of France's top stars of colour slammed the French film industry on Thursday, accusing it of confining black, North African and Asian-origin performers to stereotypical bit parts.
- 5 In an open letter on the eve of the César - the French Oscars -- they lambasted the "invisibility" of minorities both in front of the camera and behind it.
- The 30 signatories slammed the hypocrisy of an industry which this year invited the black American director Spike Lee to head the jury at the Cannes film festival while pushing black creators to the margins at home.
- 10 The letter, which was also signed by La Haine director Mathieu Kassovitz and arthouse favorite Olivier Assayas, said minority "actors, directors and producers were almost invisible" in France.
- Those that did land parts were often relegated to minor roles playing stereotypical characters, it said.
- "Actors of colour are given insignificant parts which would never justify
- 15 them getting a César," the letter complained.
- The call echoes the #OscarsSoWhite movement in the US which began in 2015 and has spread noisily through social media. Eriq Ebouaney, the star of the historical drama "Lumumba", said that other than "a few exceptions like Omar Sy... when French actors of colour get a role it is in a film about the housing estates" in the
- 20 country's poor and restive suburbs.
- Sy -- best known for The Intouchables -- was conspicuously absent from the list of signatories, although he had earlier demanded "profound reform" of the César.
- The French Oscars has been rocking from a series of crises since it garlanded the controversial director Roman Polanski with the highest number of nominations for
- 25 his film *An Officer and a Spy*.
- "Urgent measures on inclusion have to happen," the letter warned, if the industry wants to avoid positive discrimination being forced on it.
- "It is time to open the doors and the windows of French cinema," it added. "Because talent, like emotion, has no colour."
- 30 The letter also pointed to the success of Mali-born Ladj Ly's Oscar-nominated movie, *Les Misérables*, as proof of the appeal of films that properly reflect the minority experience in France.
- [...]"

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