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# Humanum

Issues in Family, Culture & Science

BOOK REVIEW

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## FILM: Temple Grandin

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**Mick Jackson**, *Temple Grandin* (HBO 2010).

*Temple Grandin* is an example of a film with an implicitly pro-life message. Based on the true story of Temple Grandin, a woman with autism who became an expert on animal husbandry, this biopic shows the inherent value of the person in the face of limitations or disability.

Claire Danes plays the title role with grace, never becoming a caricature of a disabled person. Temple's unique gifts are highlighted, as well as her differences and struggles. At various points in the film, the audience is given a glimpse of the world through Temple's eyes, and challenged to consider that autism may not be just an obstacle to overcome, but a gift that allows the person to see things in a way that others cannot. It is precisely her autism that allows her to design humane treatment in the cattle industry.

Temple's mother Eustacia, played by Julia Ormond, refuses to believe the psychiatrist who blames her for Temple's autism; the dominant thought in the 1960s was that autism was caused by a lack of bonding with the mother. Confident in her own love for her daughter and willing to work with her no matter what, Eustacia continues to expect great things. She is an excellent example of motherhood; she loves Temple unconditionally (and Temple knows it), challenges Temple without becoming demanding, and gives her space and freedom to grow.

Other important characters in the film, including an aunt and a science teacher, show a beautiful willingness to see beyond Temple's autism and encourage her to develop her potential. They see that she is more than her disability. If only we all were as able to see beyond appearances.

