Watching "Stairway to Heaven," you get the real Temple Grandin - unscripted, straightforward, and compellingly genuine. There's an immediacy to her that's gripping; she's right there in front of you, laying out her vision of the world in a way that's as clear as it is enlightening. In ‘Temple Grandin’ it feels as though Claire Danes’ portrayal is meticulously researched. She nails it, from the unique speech patterns to the distinctive way Temple might cock her head or fix her gaze on a detail most of us would miss. While it can feel dramatized it’s also rooted in authenticity. What is surprising about Grandin is her practicality combined with imagination; she has a highly analytical mind that is also deeply empathetic towards animals. This mix is affecting in both representations. The impact on me as a spectator varies between the two; Morris’s documentary felt engaging on a more intellectual level, prompting reflection and insight, while the HBO film elicited a more emotional response, creating a sense of inspiration and admiration for Grandin’s perseverance and creativity. Both mediums contribute significantly to understanding Temple Grandin as an icon of autism advocacy and animal science.

In McRuer’s essay, he highlights the various systems of normalization that control individuals who deviate from perceived norms. “Temple Grandin” portrays several of these systems in action. For example, the educational institutions shown often attempt to fit Grandin into a particular mold. Her unique ways of thinking and learning are initially seen as disruptive, and the film shows how school officials and peers attempt to enforce conformity, pressuring her to adhere to the standard behaviors and learning styles that represent the “normal.”

Additionally, Grandin's interaction with the livestock industry presents another layer of normalization. Her revolutionary approach to cattle handling challenges the status quo, facing resistance from a technology-focused industry. Grandin must navigate through these rigid expectations to establish her humane methods, which also reflect a broader metaphor for her experience as an autistic individual in a world that often marginalizes those who are different.

In the film "Temple Grandin," her invention of the squeeze machine is initially met with skepticism and ridicule. Her university's academic committee, epitomizing the expert opinion, regards the device as an aberration, incompatible with the established norms of behavior and science. The committee's reaction reflects the prevailing technologies of normalization that label the machine as unorthodox and Grandin's empathy with cattle as perverse. As an observer, one feels a sense of frustration toward the narrow-mindedness that fails to recognize the potential benefits of Grandin's empathetic approach to animal science. It’s also evident that gender dynamics are at play; Grandin is not only dismissed for her unconventional ideas but also because she is a woman in a male-dominated field. This underlines the societal bias against her gender and her neurodivergence. Yet, Grandin's perseverance in the face of such institutional and cultural adversity is not only inspiring but also a poignant critique of those very systems that seek to constrain her.

Temple Grandin's abilities are deeply intertwined with her intricate understanding of animal behavior, particularly her empathetic connection with livestock. Her visual thinking enables her to design humane slaughterhouse systems, revolutionizing the industry. Driven by a profound respect for animals, she aims to alleviate their distress, reflecting her core values of compassion and innovation. Working in a slaughterhouse, for Grandin, is not just about improving efficiencies but also about ensuring the welfare of animals, fulfilling her goal of making the agricultural world more humane and ethical—a reflection of her commitment to melding care with science.