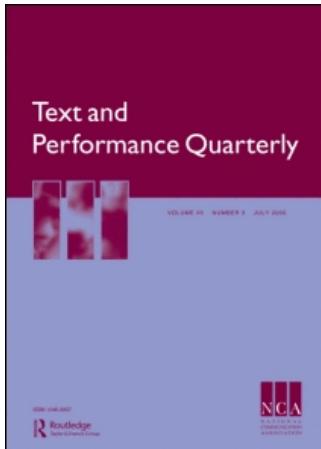


This article was downloaded by:[Quinlan, Margaret M.]  
On: 20 February 2008  
Access Details: [subscription number 790738543]  
Publisher: Routledge  
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954  
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Text and Performance Quarterly

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:  
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713709382>

### Dances and Discourses of (Dis)Ability: Heather Mills's Embodiment of Disability on **Dancing with the Stars**

Margaret M. Quinlan; Benjamin R. Bates

Online Publication Date: 01 January 2008

To cite this Article: Quinlan, Margaret M. and Bates, Benjamin R. (2008) 'Dances and Discourses of (Dis)Ability: Heather Mills's Embodiment of Disability on **Dancing with the Stars**', Text and Performance Quarterly, 28:1, 64 - 80

To link to this article: DOI: 10.1080/10462930701754325

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10462930701754325>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article maybe used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

# Dances and Discourses of (Dis)Ability: Heather Mills's Embodiment of Disability on *Dancing with the Stars*

Margaret M. Quinlan & Benjamin R. Bates

*This essay explores the relationships among disability, performance, and dance studies. Individuals with disabilities are often marginalized in current dance scholarship. Heather Mills's performances on Dancing with the Stars insert a dancer with a disability into mainstream perceptions of dance. This essay discusses three themes that emerge from an analysis of journalistic and blogger reactions to her performances. These themes reveal both empowering and disempowering potentialities for individuals with and without disabilities. Conclusions and implications for our understanding of disability, dance, and performance are offered.*

**Keywords:** Heather Mills; Disability; Dance; Performance Criticism; Media

*Dancing with the Stars* (DWTS) is a reality show in the United States based on a British series in which 11 celebrities are paired with professional dancers to perform a dance every week. During the live shows, judges will give a score based on several factors, including technical execution. The judges' scores alone do not decide a couple's future on the show; individuals at home help to decide. The audience votes for their favorite couples, and the audience's votes are revealed the next evening. The pair of dancers with the lowest combined score from the judges and the viewers leaves the show. The 2007 edition of the show featured the usual cast of fading stars: actors from long canceled sitcoms, aging athletes, and singers who have fallen off the charts. This season's cast, however, also featured the show's first dancer with a visible disability.

---

Margaret Quinlan (M.S., Illinois State University, 2005) is a doctoral candidate and Benjamin R. Bates (Ph.D., University of Georgia, 2003) is an Assistant Professor in the School of Communication Studies at Ohio University's School of Communication Studies. The authors wish to thank Bruce Henderson and the anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts of this essay. Correspondence to: Margaret M. Quinlan, School of Communication Studies, Ohio University, Lasher Hall 035, Athens, OH 45701, USA. Email: mq316105@ohio.edu

Heather Mills, activist and former wife of Beatle Sir Paul McCartney, was the first dancer on DWTS to perform with a visible disability. In August 1993, she was hit by a motorcycle while crossing a street. As a result of the accident, Mills's left leg was amputated below the knee and replaced with a prosthesis. Despite this apparent "handicap," Mills and her partner outlasted half the competition. She was eliminated from the show in the sixth week.

The purpose of this paper is to examine Mills's performances of the disabled body, and public interpretations of this performance, as indicated in journalistic and blogger discourse. First, we will review the literature related to media representation of people with disabilities, dance as performance, and disability as performance. Then we will outline three themes presented in public discourse about Mills's performance: themes that portray her as "supercrip," themes that imply that she is taking advantage of the sick role, and themes that sexualize the disabled body. Finally, we offer conclusions and the implications that the representation of the dancing disabled body has for our understanding of the gendered politics of the disabled performing body.

### (Dis)ability Dancing

Scholars have attended to media portrayals of people with disabilities (e.g., Haller, "Limp" 273; Harris 144; Nelson, "Broken" 1). Harris states, "Many people have no contact with disabled people so gain their knowledge of disability from mass media. It therefore becomes important . . . [to] understand how the media shapes reality" (144). Often, individuals with disabilities are shown in the media as "othered" or as different from able-bodied individuals. Barnes claims that we come to know about people with disabilities through books, films, and television, and that it is because of this mediated knowledge that individuals make assumptions about people with disabilities (39). Most images of individuals with disabilities have been negative (Nelson, "Media" 180). According to Donaldson, individuals with disabilities are often portrayed as having "some sort of stress, trauma, overcompensation, character flaw or bizarre behavioral tendencies" (415), which disempowers and further "otherizes" people with disabilities.

Mitchell and Snyder note that the bodies of individuals with disabilities are often compared to "normal" functioning bodies (367). Mills could not easily participate in or be a dancing subject on DWTS if it were not for her prosthetic leg. Langan describes the prosthetic subject as a subject whose capacities for mobility and freedom are determined by whether the material and built environment allows them to participate in public activities (464–5). There may be, however, different kinds of prosthetic subjects as the "political in aesthetic, disability art . . . [seeks] to redress the imbalance of dominant 'negative' images which represent disabled people as mythical, tragic 'other'" by offering "positive" images that do not fit within the dominant order (Gowland 121).

Mitchell and Snyder claim that, often, disability is viewed "as a restrictive pattern of characterization that usually sacrifice[s] the humanity of the protagonist and villains alike" ("Representation" 196). As scholars, we need to re-examine this

understanding and create possibilities for different performances of disability. Mills offers a new possibility and different performance of disability.

Rather than viewing disability as being fixed in time, in a condition, or by specific symptoms (Kuppers, *Visibility* 8–9), disabled embodiment is often disregarded in scholarly efforts to move away from the biomedical model. Because disability scholars have sought to avoid focusing on conditions, they have often ignored the corporeal experience of the disabled body and have also moved us away from the material, somatic body. We have moved away from understanding how the disabled body moves and performs and, instead, toward making mental maps of the understanding of disability. Mitchell and Snyder further claim, “Disability studies has strategically neglected the question of the experience of disabled embodiment in order to disassociate disability from its mooring in medical cultures and institutions” (“Representation” 368; see also Harter and Kirby 48; Japp and Japp 107). Mitchell and Snyder explain that, because the disabled body is often approached “as a discrete object that could be rehabilitated or ‘cured’” (“Re-engaging” 370), disability studies scholars have ignored the disabled body as an object in order to avoid this biomedical discourse. This neglect of embodiment, however, ignores the fact that “all bodies are deficient in that materiality proves variable, vulnerable, and inscribable” (Mitchell and Synder, “Talking” 7). Thus, the decision to ignore somatic bodies out of fear that the biomedical model will be reinscribed is also a decision to limit our ability to see how the multiplicity of bodily forms can inscribe alternative understandings of the “normal” body through alternative performances.

One mode of varying the body, displaying and inscribing new understandings through movement, is dance. Cooper Albright writes that, in dance, the dancing body is creating a representation; it is in the process of performing that dancing bodies simultaneously produce and are produced by their own dancing (*Choreographing* 3). The dance is not only a performance for others to view, but dancing physically shapes the body through exercise and makes this form of exercise possible. Dance includes daily training and the final product. As such, dance “can help us trace the complex negotiations between somatic experience and the cultural representation between body and identity” (Cooper Albright, *Choreographing* xiv). This negotiation occurs because bodies not only represent social constructions of gender, race, and sexuality, but also embody somatic identity (*Choreographing* xii–xiv). Cooper Albright concludes that coupling cultural identities with somatic identities enables dancers to reenact and challenge these identities. Although the dance itself allows the dancer agency, this performance is constrained by how viewers of the dance discuss that dance (see *Choreographing* 23–5).

Dance, then, is both a personal expression of being and a public performance. In recent years, there has been an increase in critical dance scholarship (Cooper Albright and Gere xvi–ii; Dils and Cooper Albright xiii; Gere et al. 1). Rogers noted that little attention, however, has been paid to dance by communication scholars (5). In *Text and Performance Quarterly* several scholars have examined dance performances for their expression of culture(s), their aesthetic qualities, and their relationship(s) to theatre and poetic (Bordwell 369–80; Bowman and Pollock 113; Carter 119; Corey

205; Feldman 210; Hamera 107; Pollock 97; Roberts 261). Less often explored, however, are the ways that dance allows the dancer to perform the self. A move to seeing dance as a mode of performance that enacts and expresses the self is necessary because dance is a performance of being and has long been used as a communicative act (Dils and Cooper Albright 93). In addition, extant literature on dance and performance generally presumes that the dancers are able-bodied. Barnes notes that disabled people are often dismissed, if not excluded, by arts training (207). The few studies that examine dance by persons with disability claim that it is necessarily different from “normal” dance, and state that a dancer with a disability simply cannot dance the same way as the able-bodied dancer (see Cooper Albright, *Choreographing* xxiii–iv; Mitchell and Snyder 367). Mills’s performances on DWTS, then, make accessible alternative performances of self and challenge hegemonic representations that link dance and athleticism with able-bodiedness. Her performance challenges the idea that able-bodied dancers only dance “normally” while dancers with disabilities only dance “abnormally.”

Kuppers points out that the monstrous and freakish have provided the conventions of disability performance (“Accessible” 119). Instead of viewing the disabled body as something to be gazed at, Kuppers holds that the body can be danced to reclaim disabled identity (*Disability* 5). Additionally, Kuppers asserts that, although the “freak show” is a “spectacle of certainty” in which the disabled person’s “position on the far side of the stage is assured” (*Visibility* 34–5), this is not the only performative position available. Kuppers acknowledges that individuals with disabilities have had a place on the stage, but were seen as “freaks” and outcasts (*Visibility* 34). That is, the disabled performer has had to perform differently to have a place on the stage (Cooper Albright, “Strategic” 475; Mitchell and Snyder 367). However, to perform on DWTS, Mills used a prosthetic leg to pass as an able-bodied individual and avoid being seen as a “freak.” This “passing” relies on Mills’s moving in a “normal” way and on her being accepted as so moving. Thus, one cannot look simply to Mills’s dance, but must also look at how people talk about her dancing.

### **Staging Heather Mills**

In poststructuralist theory, “subjectivity is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (Weedon 32). Inherent in the “construction” of subjectivity is the assumption that identities are socially produced. Foucault, and other people working from a Foucauldian perspective (e.g., Buzzanell and Lui 1; Fraser 17–66), direct our attention to the discursive processes through which some subject positions are privileged and other subject positions are disqualified. Discourse frames how disability is “known to be.” Discourse reflects the intersection of language and social phenomena (Tannen 5) and creates a particular view of reality through “textual staging” (Richardson 349). Language acts through definitional processes to make disability what “we” know it to be (Higgins 25–35). Moreover, discourse frames our evaluation of disability. Discourse reflects

hegemonic systems of meaning and practices by determining what is irrelevant or bad (Weedon 21–6). Contextually grounded discourses, vocabularies, and categories are interpretive resources for classifying everyday life (Holstein and Gubrium 79). In addition to shaping mental maps of disability, Lakoff and Johnson assert that our language is unavoidably embodied (454). Not surprisingly, then, disability scholars often critique how disability devaluation is embodied in language. Some disability scholars call for a scrutiny of language to see how it assigns meaning to disability in public discourse. Linton claims that changing linguistic conventions is necessary “to wrest control of the language from the previous owners, and reassign meaning to the terminology used to describe disability and disabled people” (*Claiming* 8–9).

To examine how viewers interpret, accept, and engage in Mills’s performance, we examined journalistic and blogger discourse. To do so, a Google Alert was set up to alert the researchers and gather material relevant to Mills’s performance on DWTS. The search terms “Heather Mills” and “Dancing with the Stars” were also entered into the *America’s Newspapers* database to retrieve articles published between February 20 and May 9, 2007. A total of 260 articles and 216 blogs were analyzed for emergent themes. The thematic approach used was inductive in nature and placed emphasis on the use of collected discourse to guide the creation of key arguments, concepts, and theoretical contributions (Taylor and Bogdan 136–40). The first step in the analysis process requires recognition of recurring themes that emerge from observations and documents (Patton 35–63). Throughout the discourse collection process, new themes can surface, requiring constant reevaluation of the discourse. As themes flowed from this discourse, we constructed a comprehensive understanding of discourses of disability in and around Mills’s dance performances. After themes were identified, representative exemplars of these themes were retained for closer reading. This reading of the discourse found three themes: supercrip, taking advantage of the sick role, and sexualized disabled body.

### *Heather Mills: Supercrip*

The first theme that emerged from this discourse was the performance of Mills as a “supercrip.” In disability studies, the supercrip is one of the most studied images of individuals with disability (Hardin et al. 22). According to Nelson, the “supercrip” is known in the disability community as “someone who has excelled so much in spite of his or her handicap that others who do not measure up are regarded as inadequate” (“Media” 185–7). For example, Helen Keller has become famous for transcending visual and aural impairment by learning to read and speak; although these are activities that a “normal” person can perform easily, Keller’s abilities are regarded as evidence that she has performed beyond her corporeal limitations. Because of these abilities, a supercrip is allowed to live a “normal” life (Smart 3–4). Haller states that the disabled person is portrayed as “special” because he or she lives a regular life “in spite of” disability (“Frames” 55–83). Zola claims that the supercrip image of individuals with disabilities is harmful because it makes it appear as if a disability can be “overcome” (“Developing” 49–59).

Often, scholars suggest that people with disabilities can succeed at anything if they try hard enough (Berger 794; Harnett 21; Shakespeare 217; Shapiro 12). For the viewers of DWTS, it is through the “powers” of her prosthetic leg that Mills becomes a supercrip. On Sawf News Connect, Mills was quoted saying:

I never expected it to come out through Dancing With the Stars. You clear 21 million sq. meters of landmine-filled land and you fitted 400,000 people with limbs and [people] go on to vilify you. You do two-and-a-half to three dances and suddenly you’re amazing. It’s crazy!

Mills implied that she was already participating in activities that bring about change and that this should attract positive attention. However, it is Mills’s ability to dance on stage that allows her to be recognized as a complete person.

Also, this discourse makes it appear as if her back and prosthetic leg are more flexible than those of an able-bodied individual. Exposay.com commented: “The former model – who lost her left leg below the knee in a motorcycle accident – has had the prosthetic limb specially made to give her more flexibility on the U.S. TV dance contest.” This blogger is advancing the idea that Mills’s bionic limb is more powerful than a flesh and bone leg, and that this manufactured leg gives Mills an advantage over dancers with only organic limbs. Much like in the *Bionic Woman*, the artificial limb is stronger, faster, and more flexible than the individual’s organic leg. As a supercrip, Mills capitalizes on her abilities and exceeds the competition. Her moves were flashier and more complicated than those of her able-bodied competitors and required greater precision and flexibility. Mills claims these moves are more “her,” which makes her more spectacular, flexible, and precise than her opponents and, therefore, better than them.

Mills is shown to be generically “amazing.” For example, Lopez et al. state that one of the judges said: “She was fantastic. Incredible. . . . It proves to everybody with an amputation that they don’t have to feel incomplete.” This juxtaposition of incompleteness against Mills’s performance indicates that this judge saw Mills as proof that disability does not make one less of a person. Similarly, Strauss quoted judges as saying: “She and Roberts were virtually flawless executing the move.” More is said about how amazing it is that she was able to do the moves she did. Strauss emphasizes the judges’ comment that Mills is virtually flawless and amazing, indicating that she can exceed the expectations placed on an able-bodied individual. One blogger on HSN.com compared Mills to herself, saying, “I think for a person in her situation, she’s doing a darn good job . . . better than I could with 2 normal legs.” This is a comparison between an able-bodied individual and someone with a disability, and the able-bodied individual admits that even with two legs she could not have accomplished what Mills has accomplished. Furthermore, Mills is shown as having exceeded the judges’ expectations. Alanat.com recounts Mills’s dance partner Jonathan Roberts’s remarks about the experience of training and performing with Mills:

“Heather’s really shown me it’s not what you can’t do, it’s what you can do,” Roberts said . . . “not only has Heather learned to dance but she has done flips and

jumps and slides." Roberts is focusing on her ability, not disability and in his opinion she has gone above and beyond his original expectations.

The MiamiHerald.com claims that Mills is not just a "girly girl" but has almost superhuman characteristics: "Mills dazzled the usually soporific judges by executing an audacious, daring back flip while dancing the mambo. . . . Mills, who wears a prosthetic leg, is anything but a girly girl." The term "girly girl" does not apply to Mills because she is a strong woman, not a weak girl. She is shown to be strong, independent, and capable, whereas a girly girl would be weak, dependent, and incapable.

Mills is shown as being a courageous supercrip. According to Abcnews.go.com, Bruno Tonioli, one of the judges, exclaimed: "You've got more guts than Rambo." As a supercrip Mills is being compared to Rambo, a soldier who exceeded all challenges placed in front of him. One blogger commented: "She did a great job, regardless of her disability. She is brave and beautiful" ([Celebsplanet.blogspot.com](http://Celebsplanet.blogspot.com)). Another said Mills "shows the courage of a handicapped person overcoming a second handicap" ([News.independent.co.uk](http://News.independent.co.uk)). Mills is seen as brave simply for getting out there and dancing. In this case, the second handicap was her damaged relationship with McCartney. Just as her physical movement and beauty restore her image, this doubled bravery of performance is where Mills faces her fear of failing to dance well and her fear of criticism by McCartney fans.

Mills is also shown as a supercrip in the ways in which she is said to inspire individuals with disabilities. Mills said: "What I want to do is show that you can get out there and do anything with an artificial leg." She was also quoted as saying, "A little kid sitting there who's just lost a limb, I hope they're gonna go, 'Oh, I can'" (Showbuzz), and as saying she "wanted to show what I could do. I wanted to take the stigma away from the disability" ([Exposay.com](http://Exposay.com)). While on the show, Mills wanted other individuals with disabilities to model her attempt to achieve supercrip status. Mills is a public person who provides goals which children with disabilities may hope to attain. Many of these individuals, however, may never be able to achieve her status.

Mills is also admired for training her body to appear as able-bodied. One blogger admires Mills's bodily discipline that allows her to pass as able-bodied. The blogger states: "The profound difference between the dancers I most admire and Heather's performance is the extreme disciplining of Heather's body so her dance conforms to that of her nondisabled competitors on Dancing" (Linton *Disability Culture Watch*). She is admired because she can dance like everyone else (i.e., dancers who are able-bodied).

There were negative reactions in the media to Mills's performances, especially by individuals with disabilities. Mills was criticized for not being sensitive to her own advantages as a supercrip. Mills is rich, beautiful, and famous. Not everyone with a disability could achieve as she has; they lack money and fame. Also, because Mills's amputation is below the knee, she may be able to dance better than she would if her amputation had been above the knee. Not all amputees have the same abilities. Carol from Minnesota said: "Heathers amputation is BELOW the knee giving her 90

percent mobility. My amputation is near the hip . . . which means almost no mobility. People who are not familiar with amputations now think ALL amputees can dance like Heather" (bbc.co.uk). Mills has more mobility than someone like Carol, who has an amputation close to the hip, and it is unrealistic to expect Carol to perform in the same way as Mills. Similarly, another blogger accuses Mills of not acknowledging the ways in which all individuals with and without disabilities have different abilities. This blogger said: "Yeah, Mills isn't exactly showing all the disabled population has to offer . . . her weak, 'I don't know, I'm just fortunate,' response actually contributes to the discourse and intensifies existing ignorant, able-ist attitudes" (Broverman). Also, some individuals do not consider Mills to be a fair representation of people with disabilities because Mills can afford to buy legs that allow her to perform like the able-bodied. One British blogger said: "She's done nothing for amputees in this country, rich enough to afford whatever leg she wants now while others have to raise £1,000s in whichever way they can for a near decent leg" (bbc.co.uk). Mills may fail to acknowledge that not everyone should be held to the standards of her performances because of where her amputation took place and her financial capacity to buy a better leg. Mills reinforces the idea that being able-bodied makes one a better and more complete person, and that passing as a fully able person is the next best option. Indeed, Mills's performance as an able-bodied person was so complete that several viewers accused her of talking advantage of the sick role.

### *Taking Advantage of the Sick Role*

The second theme that emerged from the discourse was the implication that Mills was taking advantage of the sick role. The sick role is an identity adopted by an individual as a "patient" that specifies a set of expected behaviors. The sick role concept was first developed by Parsons in the 1950s, who argued that this role is legitimized by medical professionals and that fitting this role exempts the sick person from social responsibilities such as work until he or she gets better (287–88). Glenton claims, "To achieve the sick role is to achieve recognition of one's suffering and is also a social license to be exempt from particular duties" (2243). For example, a person who is recognized as having the flu is allowed to lie in bed, drink chicken soup, and watch television all day instead of going to work or school. Brown and Rawlinson conceptualize the sick role in terms of dependency, lack of power, inactivity, and undesirability (12), but, when people take advantage of the sick role, they may be accused of taking advantage of the system because their possession of suffering allows others in society to make accommodations for them.

Mills was accused of taking advantage of her sick role as a person with a disability in the UK media. It was reported that, if Mills can dance on stage in America, then she should not be allowed the "privileges" that go with having a disability (i.e., a blue disability parking pass). The reasoning behind this is that if Mills can dance, then she can walk. If Mills can dance, she has transcended her role as an individual with a disability and her body is not disabled. Mills's performances go beyond passing as an able-bodied individual. She is so able-bodied that she is not really a person with a

disability. In the UK, people wanted her disability parking permit to be taken away. One blogger said, "Campaigners think that if she is fit enough to glide around a ballroom floor, she should 'do the honourable thing' and not use her blue disabled badge to park her 4x4 Mercedes" ([metro.co.uk](http://metro.co.uk)). Kathy Goddon, of the Brighton and Hove Federation of Disabled People, said: "She has mobility and, morally, should refrain from using her blue badge when she doesn't really need to" ([metro.co.uk](http://metro.co.uk)).

Because Mills's dancing shows her to be active, these commentators argue that Mills fails to fit the sick role and, because she does not fit it, she should not have access to accommodations that are made for the "truly" sick. These accusations that Mills was not really sick were also used in interpreting her performance on the show. Some individuals claimed that, during the competition, judges gave her sympathy votes because of her disability and may not have "fairly" judged her. One said, "Afterwards, the judges get to . . . well, judge them. One said that she 'coped well.' Another said that her disability doesn't come into the equation in his assessment of her dancing. . . . And the third says that her 'disadvantage' might be an advantage, but I did not understand what she said after that" (Linton). Another blogger said: "Did she get a sympathy vote from the judges? You bet she did. . . . If they are going to be fair, fair is for all. You don't give her a break (whether they meant to or not) because she has an artificial limb" (Showbuzz). Mills is trapped in a double-bind; the argument that she is taking advantage of the sick role means that she can never win the competition. If she is truly sick, then she cannot dance, and if she can dance, then she must not be truly sick. She cannot be both sick and a dancer at the same time.

Mills was not the only one accused of taking advantage of the sick role. There was speculation that her leg could fall off, and ABC played on this speculation to attract viewers. ABC may have taken advantage of Mills's sick role status. Mills was accused of playing a part in it, too, by making fun of the possibility that her leg might fall off. She was accused of consciously over-emphasizing her disability. However, if Mills sets the expectations low then, simply by not falling, she looks amazing. One blogger believed that Mills purposely tried to play up her disability to set low expectations for her performances: TB said, "From the beginning, she's played along with the producers' crass promotion, expressing fears that her fake leg will fly off on live television, and playing up her disability by walking down the stage stairway like Jerry Lewis in *Cinderfella*" ([Anorak.co.uk](http://Anorak.co.uk)). Another said, "Her loathsome PR tour hinges on a *Dancing With the Stars* stint in which she shamelessly trades on her disability" ([nymag.com](http://nymag.com)). There are two senses in which advantage is taken here of the sick role. First, Mills emphasizes an obviously false fear that her leg will become detached; Mills knows full well that her prosthetic leg was made specifically for dancing so that it would not fall off. There is a disconnection between what Mills knows about her leg and her avowed fear, which allows critics to argue that Mills is trying to take advantage of her physical condition. Second, ABC is aware that the chances of Mills's leg flying off are remote, but seeks to entice viewers who hope to see Mills fail disastrously. Moreover, those who fear that Mills will be hurt or ashamed publicly are also drawn in to invest in her and continue to watch the show. The longer that Mills stays on the show, the longer these people watch. This fascination with Mills's leg

encourages viewers to focus on this one body part, a focus that easily leads to the sexualization of Heather Mills.

### *Sexualized Disabled Body*

This focus is different from most portrayals of persons with disabilities. According to Nemeth, societal messages about sexuality and disability indicate that the American public fails to perceive people with disabilities as sexual beings (37–48). However, Mills and her leg become sexualized. Despite evidence that individuals with disabilities do engage in fulfilling and satisfying sexual relationships, individuals with disabilities are not expected to have sex or be sexual (White et al. 372). Zola asserts that society has a narrow definition of for whom romantic relationships and sex are reserved, a definition that excludes the disabled (“Denial” 63–7).

Tilley emphasizes the pressure that women experience to have the “perfect” body and to fit into their gender role, which is “defined by a traditional heterosexual marriage complete with children and probably a job” (140). Implicit in this statement is that an able-bodied individual has the perfect marriage, a job, and the ability to participate in all major life activities. The very definition of disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, though, is that one cannot fully participate in all major life activities and is excluded from this discourse. Tilley claims that society perceives people with disability as not entitled to love, and society imposes barriers and inhibitions to repress the sexuality of people with disability. Chenoweth concludes that women with disabilities face a “double strike”: being a woman and being disabled (22). Mills fits the “double strike” not only because of her amputated leg, but also because many individuals in the UK accused her of being a bad woman because of the failure of her marriage.

Cooper Albright argues that the image of the female dancer emphasizes the characteristics connected with the Western ideal of femininity such as beauty, youthfulness, and sexual attractiveness (*Choreographing* 48). Adair states that, in dance performance where the dance is an open display to the audience, the body becomes a sign to which the audience is to assign meaning and which the audience is to interpret (72). The female dancing body is often the object for a traditional, “patriarchal” reading of femininity. It is the choreographer’s obligation to redirect the audience’s gaze from the body to other aspects of dance. Cooper Albright, in her discussion of women and representation, notes that because dancers are actively present, they are more capable of projecting their kinesthetic and subjective experiences to the audience. The dancer is a live subject who is not simply reduced to an object of visual pleasure. Cooper Albright claims that live dance performances are capable of disrupting the traditional, oppressive male gaze prevalent in two-dimensional media like photography and film (*Choreographing* xviii). Mills, however, has long been at the center of the male gaze because her public life as the former wife of a Beatle, her work as an activist, and her previous career as a nude model have called attention to her as a public figure.

Initially, Mills presented herself in conservative dress. While she was on DWTS, however, her outfits became more sexualized. For the first show, Mills wore a long yellow dress that covered most of her body. On her last show, she wore a low-cut top and her midriff was showing. One blogger wanted to get the message out that people with disabilities can be sexy and feminine. She said, “[The dress] was a bit sexy for me, but it put a message out for people with disabilities. . . . Whenever I wear a skirt with my legs out, it shows that amputees can get legs that look real. It shows you don’t have to not be sexy or feminine” ([bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk)). In one way this statement is empowering because it is stating that people with disabilities can be attractive. At the same time, it is disempowering because, to be sexy, one must show a little leg. This statement creates a false binary between the choice to hide the leg completely and allow no-one to see it and the choice to display the leg fully by wearing short and revealing clothes. Instead of the extreme either/or choice that Mills’s performance implies, the extent of display should be based on one’s personal preference in dress style, and can be a display anywhere along this continuum.

Mills also says that she began to appreciate parts of her body through her participation on the show. She said, “Jonathan said that he wanted me to be as graceful as a swan. Yet he kept saying I was impersonating a waddling duck. He said that I kept sticking my butt out, which I was actually pleased about, as I always thought I didn’t have much of a butt” (Gabber). The show replicates the fairy tale narrative in which, all along, this ugly duckling was a beautiful swan. Just as the swan has a long neck, moves gracefully, and is generally seen as ornamentation for public parks and private estates, Heather Mills has a long neck, is graceful, and becomes an object for viewers to admire as she skims across the stage.

Because Mills is seen as a sexual being, people indicated that they watched the show through a voyeuristic lens. It is almost as if her leg became a fetish for some viewers, almost as if her leg were separated from her body.

As a teaser, before the commercials, we get a close-up of her prosthesis, propped up against the wall of her dressing room. That image, flashed across your screen, says to viewers: “stay tuned, you’ll want to see this.” The shot of the isolated prosthesis invites voyeurism. (Linton)

Mulvey wrote about the male gaze and the ways in which it chops women into body parts (27–33); similarly, men are encouraged to focus on Mills’s body parts as being separate. Moreover, the lingering shots on Mills’s legs, both the organic one and prosthetic one, become an invitation to scrutiny that allows the viewer to examine those legs without any need for, or expectation of, interaction with Mills the person. Indeed, some media discourse explicitly compared this objectification to a form of acceptable prostitution. *Nymag.com* reported:

Theoretically, pimping out your peg leg is weird, inappropriate, and blatantly opportunistic. But Mills’s fake leg is actually really interesting. Aside from all the perfectly logical questions it raises—how does it look so darn real? Can she ever wear strapless shoes?—her leg has managed to capture our hearts and become a character unto itself. It’s not a leg, it’s Leg.

In this case, Mills's leg was removed and set aside. The leg is clearly the reason that people were encouraged to watch. The leg becomes, in itself, a sexual object, inviting the gaze of the viewer. Although in itself a material object, and even if it were organic a non-sexual part of Mills's body, the focus on this limb as the object of desire attracts the viewer and encourages him or her to remain with the show through the commercial break so that he or she can see the leg again. Not only is the viewer given the opportunity to stare at Mills's leg, this voyeurism also implies that Mills, and other individuals with disability, seek to become exhibitionists. For example, one blogger with a disability wrote, "I think it's exciting that she's getting out there in the public eye because it's OK to look [at] us, it's OK to be curious" (Abcnews.go.com). Because the leg becomes ornamentation that attracts the viewer's gaze, the prosthetic limb may appear to become like any other device used to attract the male gaze. This artificial limb becomes a form of body manipulation like Mills's pierced ears or Roberts's decision to have his chest hair waxed, albeit an extreme one. Simply put, with the fetishization and objectification supplied by ABC's discourse, Mills seems to wear the leg for the same reason that other women get hair extensions or apply make-up: she wants us to look at her.

### Conclusion and Implications

Three themes were enacted in the discourse. The first theme was the representation of Mills as a supercrip, a person who has superhuman capabilities because they have a disability. This is important to our image of individuals with disabilities because not everyone with a disability can achieve star status. Mills's performance creates false expectations for individuals with disabilities, as there may be the expectation that they are supposed to act as able-bodied as she does. Individuals with disabilities may view themselves as inadequate because they cannot live up to this image.

The second theme that emerged was that Heather Mills took advantage of the sick role. Viewers may be led to believe that individuals with disabilities are trying to gain unfair access to privileges or accommodations. This representation may encourage individuals with disabilities not to access accommodations to which they are entitled for fear that they too might be seen as taking advantage of the sick role. As a result of not accessing accommodations, they might not be able to perform to their fullest ability for fear that they, too, might be called out for not being disabled enough to receive accommodations.

The third theme that emerged was the sexualization of Heather Mills's disabled body, instead of the depiction of the disabled object that many disability scholars would expect. For viewers, this sexualization encourages focus on fragmented body parts rather than on the person as a whole being, and allows the fetishization of the disabled body. The sexualized images may create a new beauty myth to which individuals with disabilities must aspire, and encourage them to view themselves as objects to be displayed. The closer one is to being able-bodied, the more attractive one is considered to be.

Although these three themes emerged from discourse surrounding Heather Mills's performance, other discourses surrounding the performances of individuals with disability should be examined to determine whether these three themes are common. For example, both Chad of *Survivor Vanuatu* and Sarah of *The Amazing Race 10* had received amputations below the leg before they competed on their respective shows. Both were portrayed as supercrips; the producers of each show made clear that both competed regularly in triathlons. Sarah was also positioned as taking advantage of the sick role because, even though she was a triathlete, she would board airplanes when pre-boarding was offered for individuals with disabilities. Chad, however, was not shown as taking advantage of the sick role. In addition, the theme of the sexualized disabled body may occur in other performances. For example, Gina Davis, a deaf participant on *The Swan 2*, and Amanda Swafford, a blind competitor on *America's Next Top Model 3*, were highly sexualized by the producers of these shows. Examining the performances of other individuals with disability may allow us to observe other variations on these three themes, as well as the emergence of additional themes.

Understanding these three themes adds to our understanding of performance, dance, and disability. Heather Mills is expected to be as close to able-bodied as possible, as well as attractive, in order to be accepted as a dancer. This media representation still teaches us that disability is negative and should be avoided (Haller, "Limp" 273; Harris 144; Nelson, "Broken" 1). Also, this media representation indicates that disabilities can be overcome if one just tries hard enough, is attractive enough, and has the financial capacity. In essence, an individual with a disability can be re-abled. With her training and expensive legs, Mills is allowed to be normal and is no longer considered disabled. This implication sets up a false hope and provides an unattainable standard for most individuals with disabilities.

DWTS also encourages a focus on the somatic expression of disability. Scholarship in disability studies has moved away from a focus on the physical movements of the disabled body (Cooper Albright, *Choreographing* xxiii–iv; Mitchell and Snyder 367). This essay puts the moving body and audience members' reception of that body at the center of analysis. Previous scholars have not wanted to talk about what the disabled body cannot do (i.e., deficits). However, the rhetoric of difference as deficit, as seen in the biomedical model, and which is implicitly present in most disability studies research, must be rejected. It is only in seeing how Mills can or cannot dance that we can understand how her body moves, and only by seeing how that body moves will viewers understand the opportunities and constraints experienced by individuals with disabilities. Seeing Heather Mills perform may provide a context for how all individuals with disabilities should perform. Also, individuals may generalize from Mills's performances that individuals with disabilities do not "really" need accommodations (e.g., beeping crosswalks and wheelchair ramps). If a viewer concludes that, because of Mills's somatic body, Mills does not need these accommodations, then the viewer may also conclude that we do not need to accommodate other individuals with disabilities.

Finally, most previous research into the intersection of disability, dance, and performance studies has focused on able-bodied dancers to show that the dancer

expresses himself or herself through dance (Choi 431; Roberts 261; Rogers 5). Dancers with disabilities, however, are portrayed as having to express a freakish or otherized mode of being. Individuals with disabilities are often portrayed as not being able to dance the way they want to because of their "limitations," while able-bodied individuals dance the way they choose to perform their bodies. Dancers with disabilities, because of their "limitations," are further limited by academic interpretation to doing "disabled dance" only.

If we take seriously the idea that the body shapes the dancer, and the dancer shapes the body, the claim that dancers with disabilities must perform "disabled dance" and fully able-bodied dancers must do "normal dance" is highly questionable. Mills, an individual with a disability, does not perform disabled dance. She has, through performance and manipulation of her body, become able to perform able-bodied dance. Heather Mills's performance is also frustrating because she is performing as an able-bodied individual and, by conforming to normal dance, may displace or make invisible alternative performances of disability dance and devalue performances that are "abnormal." Mills need not perform as part of a "freak show" to be really disabled, and neither must a person with a disability pass as normal. Rather than supporting a division in which persons with disability can do disabled dance, Mills's performance allows us to recognize a continuum from the fully able-bodied to the fully disabled in dance performance. Instead of assigning people to separate stages, space should be made for people of all abilities to dance together in the way that best suits them individually.

## References

- Abcnews.go.com. *Heather Mills Booted from "Dancing with the Stars" Despite Sambaing with Prosthetic Leg, Beatles' Ex-Wife Gets Voted Off.* 25 April 2007 <<http://abcnews.go.com/gma/dancingstars/story?id=3076731&page=1>>.
- Adair, Christy. *Women and Dance: Sylphs and Sirens*. Washington Square NY: New York U P, 1992.
- Alanat News. *Heather Mills Reflects on 'Dancing'*. 28 April 2007 <<http://www.alanat.com/women/heather-mills-reflects-on-dancing>>.
- Americans with Disabilities Act. 42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.* 1990.
- Anorak.co.uk. *Dancing with the Stars – Heather Mills' Pogo Feet*. 20 March 2007 <<http://www.anorak.co.uk/random-image/172235.html>>.
- Barnes, Colin. *Disabling Imagery and the Media*. Halifax: Ryburn, 1992.
- Bbc.co.uk. *Disability Bitch vs. Heather Mills (again)*. 22 April 2007 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/features/b1tch/230307.shtml>>.
- Berger, Ronald J. "Pushing Forward: Disability, Basketball, and Me." *Qualitative Inquiry* 10.5 (2004): 794–810.
- Bordwell, Marilyn. "Dancing with Death: Performativity and 'Undiscussable Bodies in *Still/Here?*'" *Text and Performance Quarterly* 18.4 (1998): 369–80.
- Bowman, Michael S. and Della Pollock. "'This Spectacular Visible Body': Politics and Postmodernism in Pina Bausch's *Tanztheater*." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 9.2 (1989): 113–9.
- Broverman, Aaron. *Heather Mills: The Media's New Champusee*. 5 April 2007 <[http://www.rrj.ca/blog/2007/04/heather\\_mills\\_the\\_medias\\_new\\_c.php](http://www.rrj.ca/blog/2007/04/heather_mills_the_medias_new_c.php)>.

- Brown, Julie S., and May Rawlinson. "Relinquishing the Sick Role Following Open-Heart Surgery." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 16.1: 12–27.
- Buzzanell, Patrice M., and Meina Lui. "Struggling with Maternity Leave Policies and Practices: A Poststructuralist Feminist Analysis of Gendered Organizing." *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 33.1 (2005): 1–25.
- Carter, Kathryn. "Response: Residing on the Line in Between or How Not to Resolve Performative Tensions." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 9.2 (1989): 119–25.
- Celebsplanet.blogspot.com. *Viewers in Backlash as Heather Appears on America's Strictly Come Dancing*. 20 March 2007 <<http://celebsplanet.blogspot.com/2007/03/viewers-in-backlash-as-heather-appears.html>>.
- Chenoweth, Lesley. "Invisible Acts: Violence against Women with Disabilities." *Australian Disability Review* 2 (1993): 22–8.
- Choi, Kyeong-Hee. "Impaired Body as Colonial Trope: Kang Kyoung'ae's 'Underground Village.'" *Public Culture* 13.3 (2001): 431–58.
- Cooper Albright, Ann. *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance*. Hanover NH: U P of New England, 1997.
- . "Strategic Abilities: Negotiating the Disabled Body in Dance." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 37.3 (1998): 475–501.
- Cooper Albright, Ann and David Gere. *Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader*. Middletown CT: Wesleyan U P, 2003.
- Corey, Frederick C. "Martha Graham's Revision of Jocasta, Clytemnestra, and Medea." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 10.3 (1990): 205–19.
- Dils, Ann, and Ann Cooper Albright. *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Middletown CT: Wesleyan U P, 2001.
- Donaldson, Joy. "The Visibility and Image of Handicapped People on Television." *Exceptional Children* 47.6 (1981): 413–7.
- Exposay.com. *Heather Mills Surprised by Positive Support on'Dancing with the Stars'*. 29 March 2007 <<http://www.exposay.com/heather-mills-surprised-by-positive-support-on-dancing-with-the-stars/v/9697/>>.
- Feldman, Alice E. "Dances with Diversity: American Indian Self-presentation within Representative Contexts of a Non-Indian Museum." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 14.3 (1994): 210–22.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*. Trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
- Fraser, Nancy. *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1989.
- Gabber, David. *Heather Mills Out on a Limb*. 29 March 2007 <<http://www.tmz.com/2007/03/29/heather-mills-out-on-a-limb/>>.
- Gere, David, Lewis Segal, Patrice C. Koelsch, and Elizabeth Zimmer. *Looking Out: Perspectives on Dance and Criticism in a Multicultural World*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1995.
- Gowland, Ronda. "Freak Fucker: Stereotypical Representations of Sexuality in British Disability Art." *Disability Studies Quarterly* 22.4 (2002): 120–7.
- Glenton, Claire. "Chronic Back Pain Sufferers: Striving for the Sick Role." *Social Science and Medicine* 57.11 (2003): 2243–52.
- Haller, Beth. "How the News Frames Disability: Print Media Coverage of the Americans with Disabilities Act." *Expanding the Scope of Social Science Research on Disability* (Vol. 1). Ed. Barbara M. Altman and Sharon N. Barnartt. Stamford CT: JAI Press, 2000. 55–83.
- Haller, Beth. "If They Limp They Lead? News Representations and the Hierarchy of Disability Images." *Handbook of Communication and People with Disabilities*. Ed. Dawn O. Braithwaite and Teresa T. Thompson. Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000. 273–88.
- Hamera, Judith. "A Post-Jungian Perspective on Repetition and Violence in the *Tanztheater* of Pina Bausch." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 9.2 (1989) 107–13.

- Hardin, Brent, Marie Hardin, Susan Lynn, and Kristi Walsdorf. "Missing in Action: Images of Disability in *Sports Illustrated for Kids*." *Disability Studies Quarterly* 21.2 (2001) 21–32.
- Harnett, A. "Escaping the 'Evil Avenger' and the 'Supercrip': Images of Disability in Popular Television." *Irish Communications Review* 8 (2000): 21–9.
- Harris, Leslie. "Disabled Sex and the Movies." *Disability Studies Quarterly* 22.4 (2002): 144–62.
- Harter, Lynn M., and Erika L. Kirby. "Socializing Medical Students in an Era of Managed Care: The Ideological Significance of Standardized and Virtual Patients." *Communication Studies* 55.1 (2004): 48–67.
- Higgins, Paul C. *Making Disability: Exploring the Social Transformation of Human Variation*. Springfield IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1992.
- Holstein, James A., and Jaber F. Gubrium. *The Active Interview: Qualitative Research Methods Series* 37. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 1995.
- HSN.com. *Anyone Watching Heather Mills?* 21 March 2007 <<http://community.hsn.com/eve/forums/a/tpc/f/7371021/m/956101854/p/2>>.
- Japp, Phyllis M., and Deborah K. Japp. "Desperately Seeking Legitimacy: Narratives of a Biomedically Invisible Disease." *Narratives, Health, and Healing: Communication Theory, Research, and Practice*. Ed. Lynn M. Harter, Phyllis M. Japp, and Christina S. Beck. Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005. 107–30.
- Kuppers, Petra. "Accessible Education: Aesthetics, Bodies and Disability." *Research in Dance Education* 1.2 (2000): 119–31.
- . *Disability and Contemporary Performance: Bodies on Edge*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- . *The Scar of Visibility: Medical Performances and Contemporary Art*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Langan, Celeste. "Mobility Disability." *Public Culture* 13.3 (2001): 459–84.
- Linton, Simi. *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity*. New York: New York U P, 1998.
- Linton, Simi. *Disability Culture Watch: Judging Heather Mills*. 28 March 2007 <<http://similinton.com/blog/?p=28>>.
- Lopez, Molly et al. "Dancing with the Stars: Heather's Doc Makes a House Call." *People* 67.15 (2007): n.p.
- Metro.co.uk. *Mills Dances into Trouble*. 27 February 2007 <[http://www.metro.co.uk/fame/article.html?in\\_article\\_id=39041&in\\_page\\_id=7](http://www.metro.co.uk/fame/article.html?in_article_id=39041&in_page_id=7)>.
- MiamiHerald.com. *Heather Mills Flips Script on Dancing*. 29 March 2007 <<http://www.stg.kansascity.com/mld/miamiherald/living/people/16651963.htm?template=contentmodules/emailstory.jsp>>.
- Mitchell, David T., and Sharon L. Snyder. "Representation and its Discontents: The Uneasy Home of Disability in Literature and Film." *Handbook of Disability Studies*. Ed. Gary L. Albrecht, Katherine D. Seelman, and Michael Bury. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 2001 195–218.
- . "Talking about Talking Back: Afterthoughts on the Making of the Disability Documentary *Vital Signs: Crip Culture Talks Back*." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 37.2 (1998): 316–36.
- Mulvey, Laura. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Bloomington: Indiana U P, 1989.
- Nelson, Jack A. "Broken Images: Portrayals of Those with Disabilities in American Media." *The Disabled, the Media, and the Information Age*. Ed. Jack A. Nelson. Westport CT: Greenwood, 1994 1–24.
- . "The Media Role in Building the Disability Community." *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 15.3 (2000): 180–93.
- Nemeth, Sally A. "Society, Sexuality, and Disabled/Ablebodied Romantic Relationships." *Handbook of Communication and People with Disabilities*. Ed. Dawn O. Braithwaite and Teresa L. Thompson. Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000. 37–48.
- News.independent.co.uk. *Heather Mills McCartney Faces the Music*. 29 April 2007 <<http://news.independent.co.uk/people/profiles/article2489963.ece>>.

- Nymag.com. *Free Heather Mills's Leg!* 29 March 2007 <[http://nymag.com/daily/intel/2007/03/free\\_heather\\_millss\\_leg.html](http://nymag.com/daily/intel/2007/03/free_heather_millss_leg.html)>.
- Parsons, T. *The Social System*. New York: Free Press, 1951.
- Patton, Michael Quinn. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 1990.
- Pollock, Della. "The Aesthetics of Anti-aesthetics of Post-modern Performance: Pina Bausch's *Tanztheater*." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 9.2 (1989): 97–9.
- Richardson, Laurel. "Writing: A Method of Inquiry." *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 1998 345–71.
- Roberts, Kathleen Glenister. "Speech, Gender, and the Performance of Culture: Native American 'Princesses.'" *Text and Performance Quarterly* 22.4 (2002): 261–79.
- Rogers, Richard A. "A Dialogics of Rhythm: Dance and the Performance of Cultural Conflict." *The Howard Journal of Communications* 9.5 (1998): 5–27.
- Sawf News Connect. "I Am No Gold Digger," Says Heather Mills. 4 April 2007 <<http://news.sawf.org/gossip/35464.aspx>>.
- Shakespeare, Tom. "Cultural Representation of Disabled People: Dustbins for Disavowal?" *Disability Studies: Past, Present and Future*. Ed. Len Barton and Mike Oliver. Leeds: Disability Press, 1997. 217–36.
- Shapiro, Joseph P. *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Times Books, 1994.
- Showbuzz. *Mills Graceful as "Dancing" Returns: Heather Mills McCartney Elegant on Prosthetic Leg as Reality Show Begins Season 4*. 20 March 2007 <[http://www.showbuzz.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/03/20/tv\\_realty\\_tv/main2586856.shtml](http://www.showbuzz.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/03/20/tv_realty_tv/main2586856.shtml)>.
- Smart, Julie. *Disability, Society, and the Individual*. Gaithersburg MD: Aspen Publishers, 2001.
- Smart, Sharon L., and David T. Mitchell. "Re-engaging the Body: Disability Studies and the Resistance to Embodiment." *Public Culture* 13.3 (2001): 367–89.
- Strauss, Gary. "Head over Heels for 'Dancing'." *USA Today*. 28 March 2007 <[http://www.usatoday.com/life/people/2007-03-27-dancing-mills\\_n.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/life/people/2007-03-27-dancing-mills_n.htm)>.
- Tannen, Deborah. *Gender and Discourse*. New York: Oxford U P, 1994.
- Taylor, Steven J., and Robert Bogdan. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: The Search for Meanings*. 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984.
- Tilley, Christine M. "Sexuality in Women with Physical Disabilities: A Social Justice or Health Issue?" *Sexuality and Disability* 14.2 (1996): 139–51.
- Weedon, Chris. *Feminist Practice and Poststructural Theory*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987.
- White, Mary J., Diana H. Rintala, Karen A. Hart, and Michael J. Fuhrer. "Sexual Activities, Concerns and Interests of Women with Spinal Cord Injury Living in the Community." *American of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* 72 (1993): 372–8.
- Zola, Irving K. "Denial of Emotional Needs to People with Handicaps." *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* 63.2 (1982): 63–7.
- . "Developing New Self-images and Interdependence." *Independent Living for Physically Disabled People*. Ed. Nancy M. Crewe, Irving K. Zola. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983 49–59.