



Impairment, Cure and Identity

Karen Beauchamp-Pryor PhD

k.beauchamp-pryor@swansea.ac.uk

School of Health Science

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Impairment, Cure and Identity

- A personal position: Impairment, cure and a changing identity
- From a wider perspective: Disability Studies and the Disability Movement – the concept of cure and ‘normalising’ the body
- The pursuit of cure: A matter of choice?
- Disability research: ‘Insider’/’outsider’ status – the role and purpose of research

A personal position: Impairment, cure and identity

- Impairment and identity – part of who I am?
- Social model – recognition of political and cultural factors
- So called cure
- Is it so wrong to pursue the ‘miraculous’ cure?

From a wider perspective:
Disability Studies and the Disability Movement
– the concept of cure and ‘normalising’ the body

- The pursuit of cure

[Christopher Reeve was] ‘in a position where he could have done huge amounts for disabled people but chose a different route’.

(Tara Flood, quoted in Disability Now)

From a wider perspective:
Disability Studies and the Disability Movement
– the concept of cure and ‘normalising’ the body

- ‘normalising’ the body / ‘corrective’ medical intervention

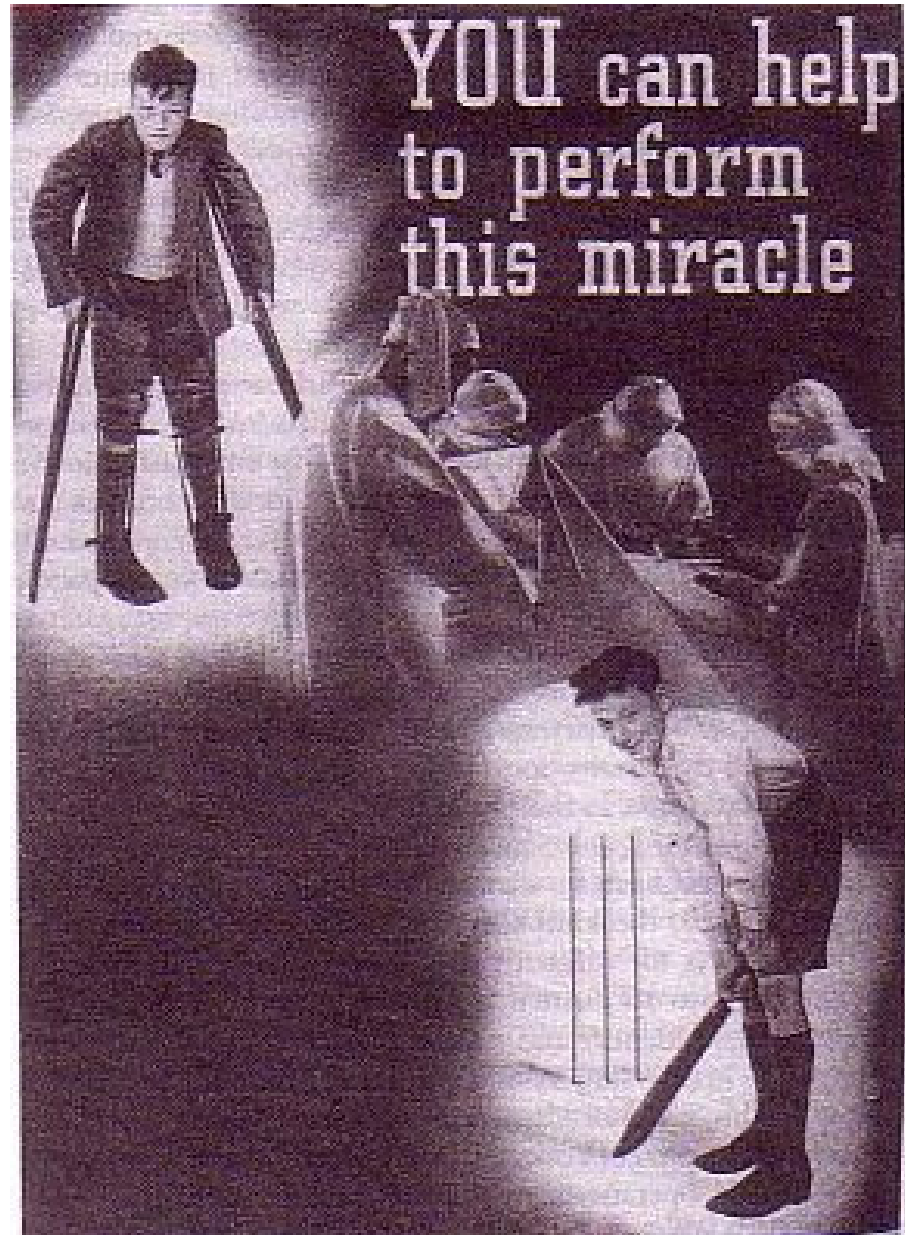
‘...surgical intervention and physical rehabilitation, whatever its cost in terms of the pain and suffering of disabled individuals, is always justified and justifiable – the ideology of normality rules’.

(Oliver, M., (1990), *The Politics of Disablement*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press)

Medical Professionals
in their quest to cure:

'You Can Help to Perform
This Miracle', Birmingham
Royal Cripples Hospital

Source: Borsay (2005)



From a wider perspective:
Disability Studies and the Disability Movement
– the concept of cure and ‘normalising’ the body

Assumptions that disabled people want to be cured as
Micheline Mason discusses:

‘...at my ‘special’ school, I remember one of the care-staff loudly telling me that I should never give up hope because one day doctors would find a cure for my affliction, and I loudly told her that I didn’t want to be ‘cured’.’

(Mason, M., (2007), *Incurably Human*, Nottingham: Inclusive Solutions)

The Pursuit of Cure: A matter of choice?

To be, or not to be cured – that is the question

‘...I cannot wish that I had never contracted ME, because it has made me a different person, a person I am glad to be, would not want to have missed being, and could not imagine relinquishing, even if I were ‘cured’.’

(Wendall, S., (1996), *The Rejected Body: Feminist, Philosophical Reflections on Disability*, London: Routledge)

Disability Research: 'Insider'/'outsider' status – the role and purpose of the researcher

- Positional and organic intellectual role
- Social relations of research production

‘Traditional expert model approaches, when used by a non-disabled researcher, means that disabled persons knowledge is placed into the hands of the researcher to interpret and make recommendations on their behalf.’

‘...non-disabled researchers can potentially misrepresent and misinterpret disabled peoples’ experiences and knowledge because they themselves have never experienced what it is like to be disabled.’

(Kitchen, R., (2000), ‘The Researched Opinions on Research: disabled people and disability research’, *Disability and Society*, 15, 1, 25-47)

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