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CRIP IS THE NEW QUEER?

A feminist analysis of Spanish and activist representations of disability and sexuality

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The presentation of the book on disability and sexuality was followed by a questions and answers session. A young, intellectually disabled man told the audience that he visited Madame X (a brothel-keeper from Barcelona who was praised in the book for running an accessible brothel) and that he was very satisfied with the service. Most of the members of the audience applauded. Madame X, who was also present, smiled and nodded. An old man with cerebral palsy, then said, '50 euros for a blow job sounds like a lot to me. Why do we have to pay? I want sexual freedom'. Some people clapped again.

Field notes, March 2014, Barcelona

If, at a public event, a non-disabled man spoke about having sex with a prostitute, it is unlikely that he would be applauded. And even less so if it were a non-disabled man complaining about the price of fellatio, calling for it to be free as part of a demand for sexual freedom. This would most likely be greeted with laughter or rejected outright. However, in the situation described here, this attitude is, in fact, rewarded. What conceptual and political framework is operating here? How do gender and disability intersect when we try to understand and evaluate disabled people's demands for their sexuality to be recognised? What does this tell us about the constructions of gender roles and dis/ability? These are the questions I tackle in this chapter, based on recent campaigns to broaden our understanding of disabled people's sexuality. I focus on the Spanish context, but these campaigns are politically relevant in many countries.¹ Their analysis helps us to understand not only how 'disabled sexuality' is constructed, but also the ableist and heteronormative constructions that underpin all sexualities.

I begin by defining the theoretical field under discussion: Disabled Sexuality Studies work. I detail the process taking place in Spain regarding the recognition of disabled people's sexuality, specifically sexual assistance. This involves a comparative analysis of two documentaries that deal with this subject: *Yes, We Fuck!* and *I Want Sex Too*.² To finish, the comparison of their dynamics of enunciation and representation opens the question about the subversive potential of disabled sexuality.

Disabled sexuality studies work

At a point in history when sexuality is no longer taboo, practices that were once cloaked in secrecy are now hypervisible: very few subjects and practices remain invisible. I am referring to people whose bodies and minds do not conform to the usual, legitimised parameters, and who are therefore labelled as ‘disabled’. Their sexuality has been negated, stigmatised and castrated. This is, according to American writer and disability activist Anne Finger, ‘the source of our deepest oppression; it is also often the source of our deepest pain’.³

Since the beginnings of Disability Studies in the 1970s, sexuality has been treated as a side issue, even within the Independent Living Movement.⁴ The few studies carried out into sexuality were based on the medical/rehabilitative model, which defined disability as a problem of the individual caused by a defective body or mind. They therefore focused on analysing ‘individual adjustment to one’s impairment in relation to normative sexuality’.⁵ Further, ‘such assumptions conveniently overlook the fact that loss of sexual function, where it does exist, is not the same as having no sexuality at all’.⁶ The adoption of the social model of disability was an advance but not so much regarding sexuality. British sociologist and disability rights activist Mike Oliver proposed this model based on the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation’s 1976 distinction between *impairment* (the biological component) and *disability* (social oppression imposed on *impaired* persons).⁷ Consequently, ‘social model’ defenders prioritised ‘material’ topics: accessibility, housing, and workplace inclusion.

In the 1990s, the taboos surrounding sexuality began to be broken down, thanks to a wider questioning of the theory behind the social model, criticising the lack of the body in this model and called for a ‘sociology of impairment’ to complement the sociology of disability.⁸ It was a debate similar to that faced by feminist theory when the distinction between sex (biological) and gender (cultural) was established and subsequently questioned. Early Feminist Disability Studies were a vital part of this process, bringing the slogan ‘the personal is political’ to the world of disability, dealing with reproductive rights, vulnerability, and care or paternity/maternity issues.⁹ So-called Dis/ability Studies today continue to delve into the complex relationship between the material form of the body and its representation, and ‘rejected a firm distinction between impairment and disability because they viewed biology and culture as impinging upon one another’.¹⁰

Sexuality Disability theorists took the social model as their starting point but moved beyond its ‘erotophobia’.¹¹ As stated by sexuality educator Mitchell Tepper in the title of his groundbreaking article, there was a ‘missing discourse of pleasure’.¹² It began to change with *The Sexual Politics of Disability*, the now-classic work by Tom Shakespeare, Kath Gillespie-Sells and Davies Dominic, which was ‘the first book to look at the sexual politics of disability from a disability rights perspective’.¹³ This unprecedented work argued that the concept of ‘sexual citizenship’ developed by British sociologist Ken Plummer (and subsequently redefined as ‘intimate citizenship’ by the same author in 2003), should be applied to disabled people.¹⁴ This introduced a line of thought which analysed the relationship between sexuality and disability in terms of rights and public policy. Disability theorist and activist Tobin Siebers pointed out and decried barriers to access to sexuality, arguing that disabled people constitute a sexual minority.¹⁵ This framework of rights is currently of significant interest due to the ongoing discussion surrounding ‘sexual assistance’ and analogous concepts such as ‘sexual support’, ‘sexual advisor[s]’, ‘sexual facilitation’, ‘facilitated sex’, or the most therapeutic approach: ‘sexual surrogates’.¹⁶ There is also continued debate regarding the sexual rights of disabled people in relation to sex work.¹⁷

Parallel to this focus on rights, access and public policy, which has been inherited from the social model, a new line of analysis has been generated in Sexuality Disability Studies in dialogue

with gender and queer studies. *The Sexual Politics of Disability*, for example, demonstrated that studying the sexuality of disabled people contributes ‘to undermining essentialist, naturalist notions of gender and sexual identity’.¹⁸ Several empirical studies have analysed the intersections of disability and gender. The classic 1988 work by psychologist Michelle Fine and bioethicist Adrienne Asch, *Women With Disabilities*, noted that disabled women suffer from ‘sexism without the pedestal’ referring to the fact that disabled women feel gendered mandates about being female, while at the same time being excluded from them.¹⁹ Later authors have examined the relationship between femininity and disability in greater depth.²⁰ Other works have viewed disability as a constant undermining of the masculinity of disabled men, even claiming that they suffer a traumatic ‘symbolic castration’.²¹ And several works have compared the experiences of both men and women. Disabled bodies ‘make them vulnerable to being denied recognition as women and men’.²² As I have argued elsewhere, gender in disability ‘operates ambivalently: on one hand, it involves “lower requirement levels”; on the other, it is reformulated by setting up new mechanisms of subjugation’.²³

Finally, the dialogue between queer studies and cultural studies has given rise to a field of thought within Sexuality Disability Studies centred on the area of the symbolic, analysing the notions and representations surrounding disabled sexuality. This perspective asserts that ‘Disabled people have been “queered” through various cultural processes of enfreakment.’²⁴ Extending the queer-crip analogy, the insult ‘crip’ is reappropriated and reclaimed. From this perspective, sexuality is a privileged site to showcase both gender and dis/ability performativity. Normative gender roles entail normative abled roles and vice versa. In *Crip Theory*, American crip theorist Robert McRuer applied Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity and Adrienne Rich’s concept of compulsory heterosexuality to the analysis of disability:

The system of compulsory able-bodiedness, which in a sense produces disability, is thoroughly interwoven with the system of compulsory heterosexuality that produces queerness [...] in fact, compulsory heterosexuality is contingent on compulsory able-bodiedness, and vice versa.²⁵

These queer-crip theories argue that sexually dissident performances have the potential to denaturalise and challenge both heteronormativity and ableism.²⁶ Disability is seen as an opportunity to criticise heteronormative constructions such as ‘the patriarchal obsession with the genitals’ and to move away from a phallogocentric model of sexuality.²⁷ Further, disability establishes ‘other’ imaginative, novel, and pleasurable sexual practices. The question posed by Shakespeare twenty years ago, which remains as relevant today for Sexuality Disability Studies, is: ‘Do we want to be normal?’²⁸

Spanish activism becomes sexual

From its emergence in the early part of this century, Spanish independent living activism prioritised traditional demands (accessibility, housing, and workplace and education inclusion) instead of worrying about sexuality. Its focus was on the creation of the first Independent Living Centres (self-managed groups of disabled activists who have/use personal assistance) in major Spanish cities, and on influencing public policies on disability.²⁹ Many of these advances were put on hold following the financial crisis of 2008, which resulted in substantial cutbacks to benefits and grants for dependency. But this crisis also promoted the 15M (the ‘*Indignados*’) movement, started in May 2011. These demonstrations were organised by different groups demanding ‘Real Democracy Now’ simultaneously in several cities; they demanded a radical change in

Spanish politics, denouncing, among other issues, political corruption, unemployment, welfare cuts, the support received by banks and the democratic deficit of Spanish institutions.

In this context of political experimentation, there emerged 15M functional diversity commissions in Madrid and Barcelona: new alliances between independent-living advocates, engaged professionals, diverse activists, and regular people were forged. This encouraged new and joint reflections about shared experiences of discrimination; about how to produce more accessible and inclusive social care policies; and triggered 'wilder' and more 'collaborative' forms of disability activism.³⁰ These alliances also generated new ideas in which symbolism played a central role in politicising the disabled body.³¹ Spanish independent living activism started giving sexuality a central role as a feature of political protest. In her text *De la compresa a la masturbación* ('From Sanitary Towels to Masturbation'), the activist Soledad Arnau discussed how, in the space of ten years, Spanish activism moved from calls for personal assistance to demanding sexual assistance.³² News of this debate reached the Spanish Parliament and was a headline in mainstream media.

Campaigners for the recognition of the sexuality of disabled people are not only calling for sexual assistance, however: they are also engaged in a broader struggle to change perceptions. The activist Antonio Centeno explained that the objective is to 'talk about sexuality to politicise disability'.³³ Allying with queer activism is, therefore, fundamental, leading to a range of projects that politicise disabled sexuality and position it as dissident.³⁴ Two successful documentaries were produced on sexuality and disability, mainly in Barcelona. The two films were made just over a year apart, but they are radically different. Reviewing them allows us to understand the different imaginaries and tensions underlying the apparent consensus within the movement for the recognition of the sexuality of disabled people.

Yes, We Fuck (YWF!): The disabled body as a dissident body

Yes, We Fuck! is a 2015 activist documentary made by Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Morena in response to the ableism permeating the standard imaginary surrounding disability and sexuality. The challenging nature of the film is couched in humorous terms: the title subverts Barack Obama's *Yes, we can!* and its logo is two androgynous figures, one in a wheelchair, performing an explicitly sexual act (see Figure 14.1).

YWF! tells the stories of six people with different types of impairment (physical, intellectual, sensory). Each one raises different issues with regard to dis/ability, gender, and sexuality, through ground-breaking discourse and explicit images of non-normative bodies, people, couples, and relationships that depart from normative concepts of beauty, desire, and sexual practice. One of the people featured, a physically disabled woman named Miriam, talks about her relationship with a non-disabled man. She challenges the viewer, asking: 'What makes something sexy? The tits' shape, the bottom, the face, the body? [...] If you are sitting or lying?' Merxe, another participant, a blind woman, describes sexuality as 'a source of pleasure, a way of interacting with people, of personal growth, it's all that for me'.

The story featuring young people with learning disabilities transgresses the stereotypical narrative of their sexuality that continues to dominate today (that they are either 'hypersexual perverts' or 'asexual innocents').³⁵ In *YWF!*, their voices (set against those of their parents, who are also interviewed) reveal a rich and varied sex life: seduction, pleasure, sex games, relationships, pornography, orgasm, and masturbation. Two further stories explore sexuality from the perspective of exploration and recreation, dealing with two workshops (a post-porn workshop and one on 'pussy ejaculation') for disabled and non-disabled people. Both workshops are organised by Spanish queer collectives and the filming of these stories

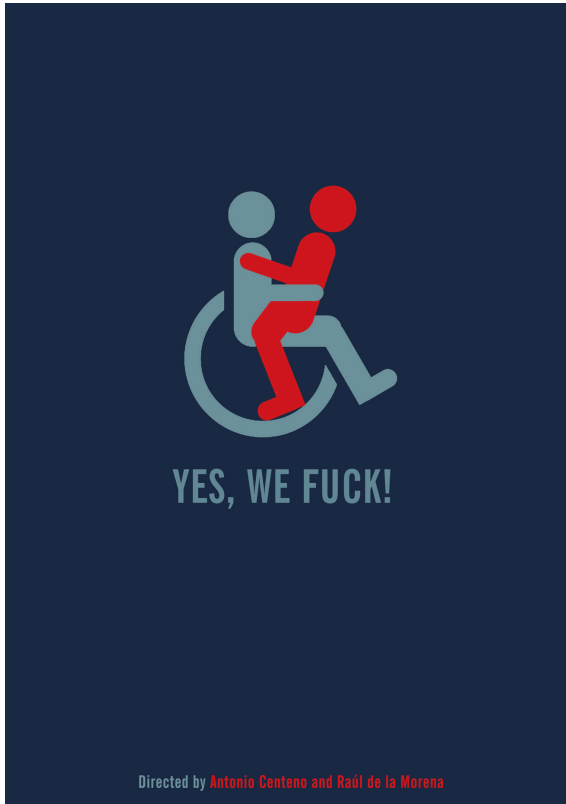


Figure 14.1 *Yes, We Fuck!* (logo/promotional image); permission granted by the Yes, We Fuck! Project

represented a paradigmatic moment in queer-crip alliances.³⁶ The post-porn workshop displays non-standard bodies (not only because of disability) as sexual: desiring and desirable. According to my previous research, *YWF!* 'is the first audiovisual product produced in the Spanish context that could be undoubtedly categorised as crip-queer'.³⁷ The participants provide a positive response to the question posed by McRuer and Anna Mollow: 'What if disability were sexy?'³⁸

Regarding paid sexual relations, the first participant to speak on *YWF!* is Oriol, a man with cerebral palsy, who explains: 'I have had sexual relations, paying and without paying, but now I am more interested in different ways of understanding sex.' To do this, he engaged a BDSM service. In the first scenes of the film, we see how he gets out of bed and bathes with the help of his personal assistant. Then the action moves to a domination scene taking place in a dungeon: the disabled body becomes erotic, it is manipulated, this time, for pleasure. The other story involving the exchange of money is that of Sole, a woman whose lack of mobility means she cannot touch herself or masturbate. She is assisted by Teo, a sexual assistant, telling him how she wants her body caressed. The scene focuses on Sole's self-discovery, both through her own hands moved by the assistant and through his hands: 'what smooth skin I have [...] I have never touched my nipple [...] it's lovely to touch'. This representation of sexuality as a service limited to autoeroticism contrasts with the ideas put forward in the next documentary I examine.

I Want Sex too (IWS): The disabled body as an object for rehabilitation

The documentary *Jo també vull sexe* (2016; *I Want Sex Too* in English) by Montse Armengou and Ricard Belis, seeks to portray the practices related to sexual assistance in Catalonia (Spain), and therefore covers a wide range of stories and people. In the opening scenes, a voiceover states that many disabled people ‘Cannot access their sexuality other than through a sexual assistant.’ We meet Xavi, a young man with physical, and cognitive impairment following a traffic accident. His mother tells us his story, expressing her concern because ‘Xavi can’t masturbate anymore’, and he has erections when she bathes him. For this reason, she decided to get the help of a sexual assistant for her son: ‘There are mothers who have masturbated their sons rather than find someone else, but I would not do that.’

The fear of breaking the incest taboo (‘mothers who masturbate their sons’) is used by the assisted, the assistants, and the leaders of organisations (although none will admit knowing of real cases where this has happened) to justify the need for sexual assistance. A (male) erection is interpreted as an unequivocal sign of unmet sexual needs for which a solution must be found. The sexual assistant is presented as the ideal solution, quite unlike prostitution (‘My task is more therapeutic, while prostitutes provide genital relief’, says Ruth, a sexual assistant). Further, sexual assistants are said to provide a service more akin to volunteering than a paid profession (as a client, Jesús, puts it: ‘They are not prostitutes; it is a life choice based on a desire to help these people’), although the assistants do charge.

In this way, the disabled body is desexualised, presented as an object for rehabilitation. This is evident in the explicitly medical scenes, such as when the nursing auxiliaries lift Xavi and bathe him while humming a childish nursery rhyme which refers to a ‘botty’. Desexualisation is also present in the scenes depicting sexual assistance, which are erotic only insofar as they depict ‘normal’, half-naked sexual assistants, who are mainly women (see Figure 14.2).

The undesirability of the disabled body is implied not only through the visual narrative but also in the interviews. Jesús, the main protagonist of the documentary, begins his story by asking:

Why am I always rejected by the opposite sex? [...] Am I predestined never to have love? [*The camera zooms in and shows close-ups of deformed parts of his body, such as his face*



Figure 14.2 *I Want Sex Too* (promotional image); public domain

or hands.] I do not want my face to be an impediment, my hands to be an impediment, my feet to be an impediment, everything I am to be an impediment.

Framing physical and functional difference as something unpleasant also justifies the need for sexual assistance: 'You can't expect every prostitute to have the sensitivity needed to be with someone who might soil themselves or drool' (Dyon, sexual assistant). The experience of sexual assistance, furthermore, is portrayed as something meaningful and transcendent. The concept of biological need sits, paradoxically, side-by-side with the desire for affection, which emerges throughout the documentary as an underlying need. Several assistants explain that what their disabled clients 'really' need and seek is to be caressed and 'to feel loved'. The film ends with Jesús explaining that while the practice of sexual assistance was satisfying, 'Finding a partner who loves me as I am is my greatest dream. I hope one day to meet someone.' The short stories of sexual assistance featuring disabled women reaffirm the idea that this service is the only way they could access sex or affection. As Inma says: 'I have to pay someone to touch my body.'

The rehabilitating function of sexual services is also evident in a scene focusing on a brothel that specialises in men with learning disabilities. Ms Rius, the brothel's Madam, explains that her service not only is about meeting sexual needs, it also has a therapeutic component: 'There is a boy with Down's syndrome who has stopped touching up girls in the street and in bars since he started coming here.' Gemma, the sexologist who developed the idea of bringing intellectual disabled men to the brothel, corroborates this statement on users' supposed improved behaviour. Prostitution, which has been stigmatised previously in the documentary, being described by both sexual assistance users and providers as an 'unsuitable' service (not individualised, not careful and not specialised), is now legitimised in relation to a specific collective, as it serves the same narrative: to present paid sexual relations as the only way to meet the 'sexual needs' of disabled people.

This analysis of cultural representations of disabled people's sexuality leads us to revisit central questions examined by disability studies, such as the relationship between impairment and disability, and the conflict between inclusion and normalisation. It also raises issues for some key contemporary discussions in gender and sexuality studies: the representation of stigmatised sexuality and the danger of co-opting it; or the discussion around sex work.

The dynamics of enunciation (who speaks and about what) and representation (what is shown and how) are radically different in the two documentaries. Their titles are eloquent in this regard. *Yes, We Fuck!*, by using the collective subject ('we'), is a forceful and combative affirmation of sexuality. *I Want Sex too*, however, alludes to an individual subject ('I'), who speaks of the desire to emulate a 'normal' person (who would be having sex). One of the directors of *YWF* is a renowned disabled activist, and the stories are constructed in partnership with their protagonists, producing an exercise in collective self-enunciation. The narrative seeks to question ableist assumptions about the sexuality of disabled people and to construct a positive imaginary. Disability is seen, in line with Siebers's arguments, 'as a critical concept to defamiliarise how we think currently about sex'.³⁹ The disabled body is portrayed as desiring and desirable, stigmatised in the same way as other sexual minorities and, consequently, also potentially dissident.

Whereas in *YWF!* the voices of professional judgement and diagnosis are absent, in *IWS* they are omnipresent and constantly validated. Even the discourses of disabled participants contribute to the reinforcement of the medical/rehabilitative approach of the documentary. *IWS* covers a broader range of stories and people, to give the impression that it portrays 'reality', but its stories develop the same ableist narrative: disabled people are intrinsically undesirable

and therefore require help to resolve their biological and affective ‘needs’. Placing sexuality and relationships as needs, instead of as desires, is strategic. It is ‘a distinction between those claims or requirements that, in a society self-consciously committed to equity, should be addressed and those that may be reasonably set aside’.⁴⁰

Both documentaries depict sexual assistance services but their approaches are worlds apart. *YWF!* shows a service where, in line with what anthropologist Don Kulick and Gender Studies scholar Jens Rydström observed in Denmark: the sexual assistant does not have sexual relations with the disabled person, but supports their access to sexuality.⁴¹ In Sole’s story of her first masturbation experience, the service is shown to be analogous with the practice of personal assistance: it is the disabled person who makes the decisions. On the contrary, in *IWS*, sexual assistance follows the ableist narrative in which the disabled person is a defective body/entity that needs treatment, in this case through sexual therapy, guided by professional experts (sexologists, psychologists, sexual assistants presented as therapists, and the Madam of a special brothel).

Sexual assistance organisations tend to present themselves as a sexual service which is ‘cleaner’ and ‘less sexy’ than prostitution, in order to avoid stigmatisation and criminalisation.⁴² In *IWS*, the disabled body is presented as the object of rehabilitation – desexualised, even – in scenes showing the practice of sexual assistance. This approach can also be strategic. According to French sociologist Lucie Nayak, sexual assistants defend their role as healthcare-related, differentiating it from the pornographic registry of prostitution. Paradoxically, prostitution services aimed at disability – which also appear in the documentary – tend to emphasise their ‘social function’ to legitimise their role too.⁴³ This justification was also found by criminologist Teela Sanders in her research with sex workers who attend to disabled clients.⁴⁴

IWS brings together all of the features of the medical/rehabilitative model of disability, which has been subject to criticism for over half a century in Disability Studies and by the Independent Living Movement. How is it therefore possible that this film, coming after *YWF!*, was equally successful and extremely well-received by the disability movement (mostly by traditional disability associations, from which the activism has sought to distance itself)?⁴⁵

Undoubtedly, the stereotypical discourse presented in *IWS*, which resonates with an ableist and heteronormative discourse, appeals to a wider audience than *YWF!*. According to Nayak, this approach to sexual assistance promotes the conformist idea of disabled people’s sexuality as a matter of health, promoting their difference and their ‘liminal’ status.⁴⁶ By presenting disabled sexuality in a medicalised setting the film co-opts radical advocacy, deactivating any potential desire and fear that might arise in the audience. In *IWS*, disabled people are degendered and homogenised as an object of medical treatment. However, simultaneously, masculine sexual desire is naturalised, and thus legitimised as a biological need that must be met: most of the protagonists are men and the practice of sexual assistance is presented as the ‘solution’. British scholar Kirsty Liddiard shows the relationship between disabled males’ motivations to purchase sex and the legitimisation of some principles of hegemonic masculinity.⁴⁷ This is explicit when Xavi’s mother says: ‘I can see that he is happier, more fulfilled, *manlier*, like “This stuff I’ve got here [*referring to male genitalia*], I can put it to work”.’

Notwithstanding the absence of a subversive approach, *IWS*’s success among disabled audiences might be due to their identification with the experiences of suffering in the sexual terrain that the film makes visible. According to Kulick and Rydström, a crip perspective is useful in discussing the sociocultural imaginary regarding disability, but it remains far from the actual lives of most disabled people.⁴⁸ By attempting to shy away from perpetuating the ‘idea of disability as a personal tragedy’, *YWF!* presents an affirmative and triumphalist discourse that romanticises the experience of difference and leaves no room for misgivings or vulnerability.

Sexuality is presented as a battlefield, while the desire for affection and intimacy is concealed by a modest silence. *IWS*'s impaired subject is hyperembodied through medicalisation and depoliticisation. However, *YWF*'s queer-crip hyper-politicised subject is, paradoxically, a disembodied one. Crucially, there is no place for representing gendered difference (disabled women's experiences are shown as analogous to those of men), or embodied power relations.

Conclusions

In just a few years, in Spain, the taboo surrounding the sexuality of disabled people has given way, and it is now the subject of public demands and discussions; has become a priority in independent living activism; and is reported in the mainstream media. The two documentaries I have discussed in this chapter provide snapshots of this process, generating radically different images and ideas about dis/abled sexuality: one treating it as a source of dissidence (*YWF*'s queer-crip approach) and the other as a source of exclusion (*IWS*'s medical/rehabilitative model). In conclusion, as Foucault argued in his *History of Sexuality*, speaking of sexuality is not in itself necessarily disruptive, not even when talking about stigmatised sexuality or when first-person testimonies are presented. Such speaking can even reinforce gender stereotypes, heteronormative structures, and ableist systems. A model of sexuality that denies body diversity, gender differences, or human vulnerability, is not an empowering one but is, rather, an ableist way of normalising disabled people's experiences.

Notes

- 1 For more, see Julia Bahner, *Sexual Citizenship and Disability: Understanding Sexual Support in Policy, Practice and Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2020).
- 2 *Yes, We Fuck!* (documentary, 2015), dir. Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Morena; *Jo també vull sexe* ('I Want Sex Too', documentary, 2016), Montse Armengou and Ricard Belis (dirs), and Roser Costa (prod.), Spain. TV3 – Televisió de Catalunya – CCMA.
- 3 Anne Finger, 'Forbidden Fruit', *New Internationalist*, 233 (1992), 8–10 (p. 9).
- 4 The Independent Living Movement was born in the USA in the 1970s to fight for the rights of disabled people. It was led by disabled people, as its slogan 'Nothing about us without us' shows. Their main objectives were the deinstitutionalisation of disabled people, personal assistance provision, and community-based services.
- 5 Russell Shuttleworth, 'Toward an Inclusive Sexuality and Disability Research Agenda', *Sex and Disability: Politics, Identity and Access*, ed. by Russell Shuttleworth and Teela Sanders (Leeds: The Disability Press, 2010), pp. 1–20 (p. 2).
- 6 Margrit Shildrick, 'Contested pleasures: the sociopolitical economy of disability and sexuality', *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 4.1 (2007), 53–66 (p. 57).
- 7 Mike Oliver, *Social Work with Disabled People* (Houndmills; Basingstoke; Hampshire and London: Macmillan Education, 1983), pp. 50–63.
- 8 Bill Hughes and Kevin Paterson, 'The Social Model of Disability and the Disappearing Body: Towards a Sociology of Impairment', *Disability & Society*, 12.3 (1997), 325–40 (p. 326).
- 9 Jenny Morris (ed.), *Encounters with Strangers: Feminism and Disability* (London: Women's Press, 1996); Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, 'Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory', *NWSA Journal*, 14.3 (2002), 1–32.
- 10 Dan Goodley, *Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (London: Sage, 2011), p. 14.
- 11 Abby Wilkerson, 'Disability, Sex Radicalism and Political Agency', in *Feminist Disability Studies*, ed. by Kim. Q. Hall (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), pp. 193–218 (p. 197).
- 12 Mitchell Tepper, 'Sexuality and Disability: The Missing Discourse of Pleasure', *Sexuality and Disability*, 18.4 (2000), 283–90 (p. 283).
- 13 Tom Shakespeare, Kath Gillespie-Sells, and Davies Dominic, *The Sexual Politics of Disability: Untold Desires* (London: Cassell, 1996), p. 1.

- 14 See Kenneth Plummer, *Intimate Citizenship: Private Decisions and Public Dialogues* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003).
- 15 Tobin Siebers, 'Sexual Culture for Disabled People', in *Sex and Disability*, ed. by R. McRuer and A. Mollow (Durham: London: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. 37–53 (p. 38).
- 16 On 'sexual assistance, see Gulia Garofalo Geymonat, 'Disability Rights Meet Sex Workers' Rights: the Making of Sexual Assistance in Europe', *Sex Res Soc Policy*, 16 (2019), 214–26; Lucie Nayak, 'Une logique de promotion de la "santé sexuelle". L'assistance sexuelle en Suisse', *Ethnologie française*, 43.3 (2013), 461–8. On 'sexual support', see Kirsty Liddiard, *The Intimate Lives of Disabled People* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2018); Bahner, *Sexual Citizenship*. On 'sexual advisor[s]', see Don Kulick and Jens Rydstrom, *Loneliness and Its Opposite: Sex, Disability, and the Ethics of Engagement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015). On 'sexual facilitation', see Julia Bahner, 'Risky Business? Organizing Sexual Facilitation in Swedish Personal Assistance Services', *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 18.2 (2015), 164–75. On 'facilitated sex', see Margrit Shildrick, 'Contested Pleasures: The Sociopolitical Economy of Disability and Sexuality', *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 4.1 (2007), 53–66 (p. 58). On 'sexual surrogates', see Ronit Aloni, Ofer Keren, and Shlomo Katz, 'Sex Therapy Surrogate Partners for Individuals with Very Limited Functional Ability Following Traumatic Brain Injury', *Sexuality and Disability*, 25.3 (2007), 125–34.
- 17 Teela Sanders, 'The Politics of Sexual Citizenship: Commercial Sex and Disability', *Disability & Society*, 22.5 (2007), 439–55; Kirsty Liddiard, "'I Never Felt Like She Was Just Doing It for the Money": Disabled Men's Intimate (Gendered) Realities of Purchasing Sexual Pleasure and Intimacy', *Sexualities*, 17.7 (2014), 837–55; Kelly Fritsch and others, 'Disability and Sex Work: Developing Affinities through Decriminalization', *Disability & Society*, 31.1 (2016), 84–99; Gulia Garofalo and P. G. Macioti, 'Ambivalent Professionalisation and Autonomy in Workers' Collective Projects: The Cases of Sex Worker Peer Educators in Germany and Sexual Assistants in Switzerland', *Sociological Research*, 21.4 (2016), 201–14.
- 18 Tom Shakespeare et al., *The Sexual Politics of Disability*, p. 207.
- 19 Michelle Fine and Adrienne Asch, *Women with Disabilities: Essays on Psychology, Culture and Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).
- 20 Morris, *Encounters with Strangers*; Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Carol Thomas, *Female Forms. Experiencing and Understanding Disability* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999).
- 21 Tom Shakespeare, 'The Sexual Politics of Disabled Masculinity', *Sexuality & Disability*, 17.1 (1999), 53–64; Russell Shuttleworth, Nikki Wedgwood, and Nathan J. Wilson, 'The Dilemma of Disabled Masculinity', *Men and Masculinities*, 15.2 (2012), 174–94. On symbolic castration, see Robert Murphy, *The Body Silent* (New York: Norton, 1987).
- 22 Thomas Gerschick, 'Toward a Theory of Disability and Gender', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 25.4 (2000), 1263–8 (p. 1264).
- 23 Andrea García-Santesmases Fernández, '(Im)pertinent Bodies: A Queer-crip Analysis of the Possibilities of Subversion from Functional Diversity', PhD Thesis (Barcelona: University of Barcelona, 2017), p. 176.
- 24 Mark Sherry, 'Overlaps and Contradictions between Queer Theory and Disability Studies', *Disability & Society*, 19.7 (2004), 769–83 (p. 781).
- 25 Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory. Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), p. 2.
- 26 Carrie Sandahl, 'Queering the Crip or Crippling the Queer? Intersections of Queer and Crip Identities in Solo Autobiographical Performance', *GLQ*, 9 (2003), 25–56; Sherry, 'Overlaps and Contradictions between Queer Theory and Disability Studies'; McRuer, *Crip Theory*; Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).
- 27 Wendell, *The Rejected Body*, p. 274; Wilkerson, 'Disability, Sex Radicalism and Political Agency', p. 212.
- 28 Tom Shakespeare, 'Disabled Sexuality: Toward Rights and Recognition', *Sexuality and Disability*, 18.3 (2000), 159–66 (p. 162).
- 29 Personal assistance is defined in the European Network on Independent Living website as:

a tool which allows for independent living. [...] Personal assistance should be provided on the basis of an individual needs assessment and depending on the life situation of each individual [...] As disabled people, we must have the right to recruit, train and manage our assistants with

adequate support if we choose, and we should be the ones that choose the employment model which is most suitable for our needs

Retrieved from ENIL website: <https://enil.eu/independent-living/definitions/>

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- 36 On this paradigmatic moment, see García-Santesmases, Vergés, and Almeda.
- 37 García-Santesmases Fernández, 'Cuerpos (im)pertinentes', p. 170.
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- 39 Siebers, 'Sexual Culture for Disabled People', p. 38.
- 40 Shildrick, 'Contested Pleasures', p. 59.
- 41 Kulick and Rydström, *Loneliness and Its Opposite*, p. 263.
- 42 Garofalo, 'Disability Rights Meet Sex Workers' Rights', p. 215.
- 43 Nayak, 'Une logique de promotion de la "santé sexuelle"', pp. 464–5.
- 44 Sanders, 'The Politics of Sexual Citizenship', p. 448.
- 45 For more, see García-Santesmases Fernández, '(Im)pertinent bodies', pp. 53–67.
- 46 Nayak, 'Une logique de promotion de la "santé sexuelle"', p. 466.
- 47 Liddiard, "'I Never Felt Like She Was Just Doing It for the Money"', p. 849.
- 48 Kulick and Rydström, *Loneliness and Its Opposite*, p. 15.

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