In this paper I want to address the question of what it means to be a sexual subject, primarily as a matter of theory, but always keeping in mind the implications of that project for a set of material parameters that concern the notion of human flourishing. Given that for any postmodernist analysis the complex issue of sexual subjectivity is always open to question and uncertainty, then to read the specific problematic, as I intend, through the field of disability, where sexuality has scarcely been theorised at all, is even more troubling. The widespread western uneasiness in acknowledging or even recognising erotic desire, an uneasiness that can be seen at play in the attempted effacement of childhood sexuality, or in the consignment of older people to a sexual limbo, is most clearly mobilised where the form of embodiment itself contests, either deliberatively or accidentally, the standards of normative corporeality. Whether the body in question has been intentionally transformed as in transsexual surgery or enhanced by body-building drug regimes, or has suffered severe trauma such as amputation or spinal injury, then the attributions of sexual desire and practice are likely to invoke discomfort and confusion. Even more disturbing, however, to the point of denial of any sexuality at all are those modes of embodiment that are both radically anomalous and resistant - either projectively or retrospectively - to normative recuperation. The category of congenital or early onset disability is surely paradigmatic in that its exclusion from the very notion of sexual subjectivity is so unproblematised that it is taken almost as a natural fact. It is not necessary to re-essentialise sexuality, however, in order to contest the exclusionary violence of such a view. Following the phenomenological path taken by Foucault and Butler, it’s clear that what is at stake lies in the performativity of sexuality, not as a potentially pleasurable bonus, but as a core element of self-becoming that infuses all aspects of the materiality of living in the world. As Merleau-Ponty (1963) suggests, sexuality is, quite simply, a modality of existence.

That this insight has profound implications for those who are differently embodied, for whom sexuality is both devalued and denied, is beyond question, for it suggests that to silence or strip sexuality of significance is to damage the very possibility of human becoming. What is at stake is an ethical matter of the promotion of the good of diversity, of a necessary ambiguity even, that cannot be encompassed by any facile appeal to equality, for that is fatally compromised by its implicit reference to a socio-normativity that is both reliant on and hostile to difference. The issue, at heart, concerns the meanings and representations through which an embodied sexuality is constructed as a positive property of the normative subject, and viewed as deviant, degraded, or simply not acknowledged at
all, in the non-normative subject. Although I shall eventually enlist a Deleuzian analysis in pursuit of an affirmative account of disability and sexuality that takes up the promise of the good, it is Foucault who best uncovers the mechanisms at work in the construction and maintenance of the socio-cultural order. Despite some substantial signals of where "bodies and pleasures" might subvert normative stability, Foucault is clearest in setting out the impressive array of disciplinary techniques that are aimed at the singular body in all its aspects, but above all in its sexual pleasures (Foucault 1979, 1980). As he shows, far from originating in an instinctual, biological ground, sexuality is always in a state of dynamic process that is neither predetermined nor fully open to intentional possibilities. Instead, sexuality is "organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations and pleasures" (Foucault, 1979: 155). And, indeed, within Foucault's schema, those bodies themselves are equally constructed, and thus open to endless transformation, rather than given. Nonetheless the thinking of those bodies has some curious omissions.

What Foucault notoriously fails to address, and what is taken up most clearly within Butler's notion of performitivity (1990), is how corporeality as sexed might be differentially constituted along the designated lines of male and female morphology. But what of the enactment of other significant differences, not least that which constitutes the binary between able-bodied and disabled? It is not my suggestion that that particular division can ever be as clearly articulated as the one separating male from female?although both conventions call for a deconstructive analysis - but that there are similar urgent reasons to interrogate the initial occlusion that covers over difference. In short, and with due regard to the dangers of universalism, should we not conclude that the phenomenology of disability generates its own specific sets of sexual possibilities that may both limit and extend the performitivity of self-identity? If the normative standard against which the acceptability of sexual practice is judged is male-dominant, heterosexual intercourse between two adults ideally acting without overt external intervention, then in addition to a extensive range of refusals mobilised by preference, or at least some form of subjective decision, there are also certain morphological constraints that preclude normative compliance. To have more or fewer limbs than the norm, to be unable to hear, or see in the same way as the majority, to be conjoined, all necessarily disrupt expectations of the "proper" conduct of sexuality. It is not that any one of us ? however we are embodied ? entirely fulfils normativity, and yet some forms of non-compliance evoke not simply disapproval, but feelings of disgust, albeit a disgust that is threaded through with a certain fascination. Why is it that things of which the body is capable and incapable should generate such negative concern?

At least part of the reason emerges if the socio-cultural description of sexual normativity is underpinned by a more philosophical analysis. What is at stake in the modernist western conception of the sexual subject are those familiar categories that constitute autonomy, that comprise notions of self-determination, separation and distinction, and corporeal wholeness. In contradistinction to homosexuality, for example, which may offend against specific social mores around sexuality by failing primarily to perform appropriate models of masculinity or femininity, disability touches on a far more entrenched understanding of what it is to be a subject at all. Given that connotations of dependency and vulnerability ? regardless whether they are operative or not ? are understood to be antithetical to the attribution of full subjectivity in general, then the anxieties provoked by those qualities are all the more acute when their embodiment appears in an area that is already beset by all manner of putative threats to the autonomous subject. What I mean is that most sexuality is inherently about intercorporeality, about a potential merging of bodies, wills, and
intentions, about a transmission of matter, and about an intrinsic vulnerability in which the embodied subject is not only open to the other in an abstract way, but is likely to be in a physical contact that is never wholly predictable nor decidable. That the subject is never settled or simply present to the self, but intricately interwoven with the other in a dynamic process of self-becoming is of course the basis of the phenomenological model of embodiment in a more general sense. But it is in the sexual relation, above all, that the reversibility of touch, with its implicit confusion of the boundaries between one body and another, and its potential for contamination, takes on a concrete materiality. It is precisely because of the inherent risk of losing self-control and self-definition that the domain of sexuality is so highly disciplined and regulated, so saturated with performative constraints. And where the body of the other is uncertain and resistant to the demands of normative comportment and expression - as it is paradigmatically in disability - then touch figures a moment of real threat, a troubling of the subject?s illusion of purity and self-sufficiency.

The implication is not that the corporeality of people with disabilities is uniquely unstable or vulnerable, but rather that the condition signals overtly what is more easily repressed in those whose embodiment satisfies normative standards. As Henri-Jacques Stiker puts it, disability is "the tear in our being" (1999: 10), a corporeal mode that in the context of sexuality in particular reveals the incompletion and lack of cohesion of the embodied subject. But if the disabled body refuses recuperation to the project of selfsameness - not simply an-other, not like me, but deeply disruptive of the very parameters that constitute selfhood - then its fate is to be refused any recognition in terms of sexual subjectivity. The response is not so much punitive, as it is with so many forms of sexual otherness, but more typically takes the form of a silencing that intends a denial, and yet reveals precisely the complicity that it seeks to cover over. As Foucault notes:

Silence itself - the things one declines to say or is forbidden to name?is less the absolute limit of discourse?than an element that functions alongside the things said?(silences) are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (1979: 27)

For Foucault, silence is an element of discursive power, but does it not also suggest also a psychic dimension to performativity that he leaves aside? Despite their explanatory power, then, it seems to me that neither the wider phenomenological approach nor the model of exterior governmentality is adequate to the theorisation of sexuality. Although Foucault convincingly charts the operations of a transformatory power over and through the body - albeit one that is interiorised by each individual, he fails to take on the psychic significances of irreducible differences in embodiment. Similarly, despite developing elsewhere a sophisticated understanding of the unconscious processes at work in sexuality (Butler 1993), Butler?s account of performativity per se, though non-volitional, remains a largely surface event.

My point is that if body image - and especially internalised body image - is never simply a material reality but a complex and fluid mix of corporeal, psychic, and social components, then there is need for a more nuanced understanding, not simply of the operation of normative constructions of sexuality, but of the reasons for their emergence. In my attempts to theorise the question of disability and sexuality around such a problematic, I initially moved towards an analytic derived from psychoanalysis, particularly as deployed postconventionally. Despite its efficacy in uncovering the roots of the normative anxiety that grips that troubling conjunction, however, the paradigm seems to provide no way of unsettling a cultural imaginary that is closed to a more positive model of corporeally anomalous sexual relationality. Like women?s sexuality, or more specific categories like
lesbian desire, that have suffered a certain erasure in which the unsaid indicates an unthinkable anxiety, the conjunction of disability and sexuality refers back to an explanatory model that implicitly privileges active phallic desire and the illusory quest for the restoration of an originary corporeal unity. It is not that either the psychic or performative operations of gender and disability are directly comparable, but both pose the question of whether any model based on the normative performance of male-dominant forms of genital sexuality has the capacity to encompass its excluded others. Having explored the shortcomings of the psychoanalytic approach more fully elsewhere (2005 forthcoming), I will pass swiftly over that trajectory here and move on to open up an alternative that retains a sense of psychic underpinnings, but owes more to Deleuze and Guattari than to Freud or Lacan.

As I understand it, the psychoanalytic model, which offers an explanation of the mechanisms by which the emerging subject moves from infantile to adult sexuality and is recognised as a sexual being, gives no real consideration to what difference morphological diversity would make. Aside from the supposedly inescapable biological sex of male or female, other differences play no part in the relevant theory. For both Freud and Lacan the acquisition and stabilisation of self-image is dependent on a certain corporeal introjection, not directly of the infant’s own bodily boundaries and sensations, but of an ideal body image representing, as Liz Grosz puts it, “a map of the body’s surface and a reflection of the image of the other’s body” (1994: 38). In place of the maternal-infant dyad, the infant experiences a split that mobilises an endlessly substituted desire for that irrecoverable originary but undifferentiated wholeness. But if as Lacan implies, the putative unity of the self relies on the reflective unity of the specular other ? indeed on jubilantly casting aside the infant’s actual “motor incapacity and nursling dependency” (1977: 2) - then subsequently would not that new found sense of self be radically shaken by any mark of disunity in the external image? The disabled body, then, could be read as both insufficient as an object of desire, and an unwelcome intimation of the corps morcelé that the emergent subject must disavow or abject. It is not that the disabled infant would fail to negotiate the mirror stage ? for in the psychic register all self-identity is based on a mis-recognition. Rather, in its apparent lack of wholeness, the infant becomes other, its self-positioning as a subject of desire ? like that of women ? denied recognition. To escape the Lacanian impasse, perhaps it is necessary to look elsewhere.

In decisively rejecting the Freudian/Lacanian model of desire as mobilised by lack, and by an implicit and impossible promise of completion and unity in a return to the mother, Deleuze and Guattari (1984, 1987) rewrite desire as productive. Rather than being goal-driven and singular, sexuality, then, becomes a network of flows, energies and capacities that are always open to transformation, and so cannot be determined in advance. Where for Lacan, the corps morcelé of early infancy ? and arguably the persistence of that body as a figure of disability ? is seen as that which must be covered over in order to form the unified self who will become a sexed and gendered subject in the Symbolic, Deleuze and Guattari celebrate precisely corporeal dis-organisation. The fragmented body is reconceived as the body-without-organs, the body in a process of becoming, that instead of figuring the conventional ideal of autonomous action, separation and distinction persists only by making connections in the fluid indeterminacy of a desire that has no fixed aim or object, and could always be otherwise. The meaning of the body-without-organs is not intended as a denial of corporeality as such, but is rather a way of rewriting it that avoids the Lacanian narrative of a move from fragmentation to ? at very least the illusion of - a temporally and spatially stable unity that grounds the subject. It is, then, the normative organisation of the body that is at stake here, an organism and organisation that closes
down and fixes its possibilities rather than operating as "a body populated by multiplicities" (1984: 30). What Deleuze and Guattari want to promote is not a return to the staging of the pre-subjectival infant body, but a deconstruction, a queering, of all bodies that entails both "taking apart egos and their presuppositions" and "liberating the prepersonal singularities they enclose and repress" (1984: 362).

Interestingly, the consequent freeing up of desire, both in its object and its aim, may remind us not of the Lacanian infant who after all greets its mirror stage escape from disorganisation with ? as Lacan puts it ? "jubilation", but of the polymorphous perversity of the Freudian infant, who finds undifferentiated sexual pleasure not only in every aspect of its own body, but in a variety of external objects. As Freud points out, such perversity in the trajectory of desire persists in adulthood even in such everyday practices as kissing (insofar as it has no genital aim), but for the most part, it must be abandoned ? repressed that is ? not for the sake of psychic health, but in the interests of socio-political organisation. Nonetheless, despite the potentially productive tension that is set up by Freud's recognition that the price of such repression is neurosis (1962: 104), his reluctant turn away from polymorphous perversity shuts down precisely the queer reading of desire that Deleuze and Guattari are to reopen. It is always tempting to think of Freud as the first - albeit thwarted - queer theorist, but Liz Grosz, in her own turn to a Deleuzian analytic, offers a less charitable view of polymorphous perversity. She warns against "adopting the psychoanalytic position, which takes erotogenic zones as nostalgic reminiscences of a preoedipal, infantile bodily organization", or "seeing the multiplicity of libidinal sites in terms of regression" (1995: 199). And it is precisely in the refusal to see alternative sexual pleasures as repressive that Foucault prefigures the queering of desire that is associated with Deleuze. Foucault's interest is both in what bodies can do, in how they are productive, rather than in how they respond to unconscious impulses, and in how the erotic can be redistributed to non-genital sites. In regard to S/M practice, for example, he is adamant that, "(t)hese practices are insisting that we can produce pleasure with very odd things, very strange parts of our bodies, in very unusual situations, and so on" (Halperin 1996: 320 quoting Foucault). For Deleuze and Guattari, that sexual creativity is at the heart of their anti-Oedipal project.

The conventional psychoanalytic approach that supports the normative post-Enlightenment paradigm of a closed and invulnerable subject whose sexuality is organised around the presence or absence of the phallus, and whose sexual aim is to replace lack with plenitude, is supplanted, then, by a model whose potential positivity is unconstrained. In place of prohibition, repression and disavowal, Deleuzian desire is expansive, fluid, and connective, grounding sexuality itself as highly plastic and as no longer reliant on the terms of any binary opposition such as those of male/female, active/passive, or human/animal. And because the emphasis shifts from the integrity of the whole organism to focus instead on the material and momentary event of the coming together of disparate parts, bodies need no longer be thought as either whole or broken, able-bodied or disabled, but simply in a process of becoming through the unmapped circulation of desire. At the same time, desire itself takes on a wider meaning that liberates it not simply from the bounds of genital sexuality per se, but more generally from the restricted parameters of what is usually defined as sexual relationality, whether that is accepting or challenging to the conventions. Skin on skin in the bedroom is no more privileged than the sensation of fine sand running through my toes, or the sweet taste of a juicy peach on my tongue. In an essay that is explicitly concerned to rethink lesbian desire, but which might equally open up the arena on the erotics of disability, Liz Grosz takes her cue from Deleuze and Guattari. She writes:
there is not, as psychoanalysis suggests, a predesignated erotogenic zone, a site always ready and able to function as erotic: rather, the coming together of two surfaces produces a trading that imbues eros or libido to both of them, making bits of bodies, its parts or particular surfaces throb, intensify, for their own sake and not for the benefit of the entity or organism as a whole. They come to have a life of their own, functioning according to their own rhythms, intensities, pulsations, movements. Their value is always provisional and temporary, ephemeral and fleeting: they may fire the organism, infiltrate other zones and surfaces with their intensity but are unsustainable. (1995: 182)

Above all, what mobilises or stalls the rhizomatic proliferations of desire is the extent to which the connective nodules escape organised patterns of operation.

Desire is not an element of any singular subject; it is not pregiven; it is neither possessed nor controlled; and nor does it flow directly from one individual to another. Instead it comes into being through what Deleuze and Guattari (1984) call "desiring machines", assemblages that cannot be said to exist outside of their linkages and interconnections, and which may encompass both the animate and inanimate, the organic and the inorganic. A desiring machine expresses no necessary cohesion, continuity or unity, and nor do its part-objects seek a return to an originary wholeness, or find completion in an absent other. What mobilises desire are not the endless substitutes for psychic loss, but the surface energies and intensities that move in and out of multiple conjunctions that belie categorical distinctions and hierarchical organisation. For Deleuze and Guattari, such conjunctions always engage the entire social and environmental field, centring not on the capacities of a unique individual, but on the scope and range of nomadic flows of energy? lines of flight? so that embodiment itself extends beyond the merely human. It is not that there is no distinction to be made between one corporeal element and the next, or indeed between the human and animal, or human and machine, but rather that becoming entails an inherent transgression of boundaries that turns the pleasures? sexual or otherwise - of the embodied person away from dominant notions of human subjectivity. As Tamsin Lorraine puts it: "The self, rather than having a perspective upon and apart from the world of temporal becoming, is part of a process of dynamic differentiation" (2000: 185). This is not to deny that the interaction of bodies in time and space continues to produce subject effects, but it is only when those effects begin to coalesce and settle that the familiar sovereign individual of the postEnlightenment could be said to appear. The performative repetition of particular patterns and modes of organisation serve to construct an illusion of stability and permanence which is, nevertheless, undermined not only by what Butler (1993) sees as the inherent slow-motion slippage of all reiterative processes, but by the unruliness of the leaky bodies whose fluidity, energies, and contingencies are engaged in mutual transformations. These are bodies that come together? and break apart? in multifarious ways, always frustrating the anticipated outcome of performativity in consistent sexual identities. And where the stress is on the multiple possibilities of connection rather than on the putative dangers of contiguity and the risk of touch, then anomalous bodies are no longer a source of anxiety, but hold out the promise of productive new becomings.

The stage is set, then, for a potential reclamation of disability and desire that is a very long way from the medium of an Oedipalised sexuality centred on the familial drama of "mommy, daddy and me". Like the female body, the corporeality of disability has widely figured in the western imaginary as disordered and uncontrollable, both seductive and repulsive, as threatening contamination of those who come too close, linked to disease, and so lacking in boundaries as to overwhelm normative subjectivity (Shildrick 2002). The
link with sexuality is either disavowed or seen as overdetermined and abased, a matter of
dangerous encounter that cannot but trouble the stability and self-presence of the unwary
subject. That none of this reflects the reality of the lives of people with disabilities, or
would be articulated as such, is of little consequence. What matters is the power of the
cultural imaginary to effectively exclude - in representative terms at least - a whole
category of people from an important element in the process of self-identity. In contrast,
what is offered by Deleuze and Guattari opens up a positive model of productive desire,
the take up of which is limited neither to those who already fulfil certain corporeal criteria,
nor to the sedimentation of a characteristically modernist form of autonomously produced desire.
In place of the limits that the ideal of independence imposes on desire, the emphasis is on
connectivity, and linkage. It is not that people with disabilities are unique in relying on a
profound interconnectivity, but that where for the normative majority such a need may be
covered over in the interests of self-sovereignty, it has come to figure a deficiency that
ostensibly devalues those unable to make such choices. The disabled woman who needs an
assistant or carer to help her prepare for a sexual encounter - be it in terms of dressing
appropriately, negotiating toilet facilities, or requiring direct physical support to achieve a
comfortable sexual position - is not different in kind from other women, but only engaged
more overtly in just those networks that Deleuze and Guattari might characterise as
desiring production. Similarly a reliance on prosthetic devices - the linkages between
human and machine - would figure not as limitations but as transformative possibilities of
becoming other along multiple lines of flight.

We should caution, nonetheless, against taking an overly romanticised view of disability in
which desire is always able to operate as an unchallenged positivity. There are clearly
some constraints, some morphological differences and discontinuities, that continue to
impede the flow of energies, particularly if that flow has been mapped in advance. But the
model I propose here is not about unrestricted choice, nor about a freedom that opens up
all and every possibility. Like Butler's original exposition of performativity (1990), which
was widely misunderstood to offer unbounded access to self-stylisation, the notion of
desiring production must always be contextualised. The rewriting of performativity as
intensely connective, and the slippage of reiteration as a more radical discontinuity,
highlight precisely a lack of control that may exacerbate the frustration of intentionality for
some people with disabilities. But rather than offering a route to sexual identity, the model
proposes something rather different: a break with the putative emergence of a coherent
sexual subject from the practices of embodiment, and a turn to the libidinal intensities
which play not across unified and integrated bodies, but at points of connection between
disparate surfaces or entities that may or may not be organic. The desire produced in and
over the dis-organised body owes little to genital sexuality or the goal of self-completion in
sexual satisfaction. As Liz Grosz notes:

The point is that both a world and a body are opened up for redistribution, dis-
organization, transformation; each is metamorphosed in the encounter, both become
something other, something incapable of being determined in advance, and perhaps even
in retrospect, but which nonetheless have perceptibly shifted and realigned. (1995: 200)

and she goes on: "That is what constitutes the appeal and power of desire, its capacity to
shake up, rearrange, reorganize the body's forms and sensations, to make the subject and
body as such dissolve into something else" (1995: 204-5). It is not that Deleuze and
Guattari allow no place for subject effects - "you have to keep small rations of
subjectivity?to enable you to respond to dominant reality" (1987: 160) - but that they are
unsustainable in fixed form, beyond the temporary or provisional. In being excluded from full sexual subjectivity, those with disabilities have lost nothing of permanent value.

What this all indicates is that were the western privileging of autonomous individuality and integrated identity less rigid, the performativity of (sexual) subjectivity could be radically transformed. Despite its commitment to the productive instabilities of discursive construction, the notion of performativity remains focused on a form of individual agency that might be more radically queered by taking account of the emergence of the self precisely through an erotics of connection. Indeed, Deleuze himself goes further in his deconstruction of the relationship between a willing agent and desire: “Far from presupposing a subject, desire cannot be attained except at the point where someone is deprived of their power to say ‘I?’” (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 89). As more and more theorists are beginning to acknowledge, the corporeality of disability is not that of an other fixed in a binary relation to the normatively embodied self, but is already queer in its contestation of the very separation of self and other. The so-easily silenced whisper of a kinship that would be denied – for it unsettles the foundations of western subjectivity – is growing into a roar that marks a new understanding of embodiment which owes much to Deleuze. Having now entered “the next century” of which Foucault (1977) claimed Deleuze as the philosopher, I should like to offer the equally bold suggestion that the Deleuzian project will be realised at least in part through the medium of rethinking disability. Once again, it is not that disability is a unique case, but only that its forms of embodiment seem to overdetermine the fragility and instability of corporeality in general. The postmodernist acknowledgment that all bodies – normative and non-normative alike – are in a constant process of construction and transformation, brought about not least through interactions in the spatio-temporal dimensions of the social world, means that all are potentially hybrid, nomadic, machinic assemblages. Moreover, in the specific differences of its capacities – particularly with regard to its libidinal investments – the disabled body exposes the queerness of all sexuality.

That disability should be perceived as dangerous, and that its erotic capacities should be disavowed, speaks to the threat that it is able to unsettle the normative constraints that attempt to limit adult sexuality to a highly regulated set of impulses that cover over the rhizomatic operation of desiring machines. For the most part, the libidinal possibilities of surprising, unpredictable, non-respectable, even dangerous conjunctions, which are in principle open to all of us, are kept in check by the rigid and repetitive structures of a normative sexuality that cannot easily countenance unauthorised variation or experimentation. To limit the erotic to the law of desire as it operates within the hegemony of the Symbolic is to assent to a system that can give no adequate account of corporeal difference nor of an alternate sexual imaginary, yet to be realised. It is to close down on fluidity, on connection, and on intercorporeality, and to impose prohibition or denial on those who are assigned to positions of social marginality. For people outside the mainstream, then, those who are transgendered, HIV positive, or people with disabilities for instance, the choice may be between an apparent asexuality that comforts normative expectations in its very powerlessness to mount a challenge, or an expression of desire that will be necessarily exploratory and transformative. It is not of course that all disabled people are sexual radicals or have any urgent wish to liberate their desire from the constraints of normative thought and practice; as for all members of regulatory societies, it is impossible to stand outside the networks of disciplinary power/knowledge by any simple act of will. Nonetheless, as comparative outsiders, many such marginalised figures are already engaged in a queer performativity that takes off from the innovative and intimate connections that are often a necessary part of life with a disability. I am thinking
here not only of the many forms of personal assistance that are available in the west, and which inevitably entail an embodied relationality that goes beyond normative encounters between putatively autonomous selves, but also of the enormous range of prosthetic devices that may be incorporated into the experiential field of a person with a disability. For others, it is not so much a matter of describing present practice but of thinking otherwise about the promise of connectivity, and about what would follow from attending not to the being of a subject, but to the becoming and doing that constitutes a provisional and contingent subjectivity.

So long as all fixed and unified identities rely on the performative exclusion of an abject domain of the unthinkable (Butler 1993), then certain bodies will never matter. If on the other hand, our mutual and irreducible connectivity were recognised as quite simply a condition of becoming, and as the ground for the positivity and productive play of desire, then the notions of independent agency and self-containment that mark the normative subject might lose their exclusionary power. In place of the demand for rights, choice, and self-determination that presently shape the dominant discourse of disability activism, a more open and productive model that celebrates the qualities of those already living at the margins might be proposed. It is their very dis-organisation, and their necessarily overt contiguities with an array of others, that the better enables such figures to breach the boundaries and explore what lies beyond the normative limits. The implications for an open-ended and ambiguous, yet more positive, model of sexuality specifically with regard to disability ? though with implications for all - are considerable. Once the plasticity of the erotic is acknowledged rather than repressed, then the circulation of desire and the partial satisfactions of pleasure would be a matter of differential exploration and experimentation, rather than the site of silence and shame. There are of course dangers ? not all lines of flight will soar ? but the possibilities of reconstruction and transformation, in sexuality as elsewhere, speak to the hope of human flourishing. That term is deeply unfashionable within postconventional discourse, but it is precisely what I mean.

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