Text Matters, Number 16, 2026
https://doi.org/10.18778/2083-2931.16.16

Check for updates

COPE
Member since 2018
JM13713

Katharina Wiedlack
University of Vienna

Anna T.
Interdependent Scholar, Curator, and Artist

Ema Benčíková
Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Dis_ability and Pleasure: Cripistemology, Intra-action, Intercorporeality

Abstract

This paper approaches dis_ability at the intersection of racialised (Chen), sexualised (McRuer), and gendered (Kafer) neurobiodiversity, as a point of relationality, solidarity, and care through an analysis of *Yes, We Fuck!* (dir. Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Morena, ES, 2015). *YWF!* employs standard documentarian aesthetics (talking heads, street interviews) as well as footage from sex workshops and group discussions, and foregrounds alongside dis_ability, migration, class, sex-work, and BDSM themes. The authors show that dis_ability emerges in *YWF!* as an aspect of relationality and connection rather than something to be pitied or vilified, and resolved in isolation (Mitchell and Snyder). They explore decolonial and queer aspects of care and pleasure-making through three concepts: *cripistemology* (Johnson and McRuer), *intra-action* (Barad), and *intercorporeality* (Merleau-Ponty). Barad's concept of *intra-action* is particularly pertinent to dis_ability and sexuality as it reorganises ontological understandings of causality, agency, matter, discourse, responsibility, and accountability. There are no pre-established bodies, merely bodies that co-constitute each other upon coming into proximity. An *intercorporeal* understanding of queer/crip intimacy can show how the interdependent self is constructed through touch, gaze, and the development of body schemas in relation. A *cripistemological* perspective further emphasises *YWF!* open-ended meaning production. Such a perspective acknowledges the film's depiction of different types of interabled relationships and moments where ableism, exoticisation, and asymmetrical dynamics are at play. *YWF!* presents moments when knowledge and beliefs are fractured and queer crip pleasure emerges.

Keywords: dis_ability art, sexuality, post-representational aesthetics, queer crip kinship, intersectional care.

creative commons

© by the author, licensee Lodz University – Lodz University Press, Lodz, Poland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

Funding information: Not applicable. **Conflicts of interests:** None. **Ethical considerations:** The Authors assure of no violations of publication ethics and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Received: 27 Aug. 2025. Verified: 1 Feb. 2026. Accepted: 17 Mar. 2026.

In a world with mass disabling events (pandemics, war, poverty), issues of dis_ability are not only influencing, but restructuring daily life, scientific research, and culture. This paper analyses how contemporary art and popular culture can address dis_ability, beyond a category for minority identity construction, at the intersection of racialised, sexualised, and gendered neurobiodiversity, as a site of relationality, solidarity, and care. Writing the term dis_ability with a spectrum gap, or what Swantje Köbsell calls the "ability gap" (89), we want to mark the category's fluidity and non-binary nature. This spelling aligns with other language strategies, such as the slash (dis/ability) (Goodley 36, 103–09), yet the underscore does not clearly divide disability and ability into a binary opposition, but rather signals a fluidity and ambiguity between the two concepts, states, or experiences.

Through an analysis of *Yes, We Fuck!* (dir. Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Morena, ES, 2015),[1] we show that dis_ability emerges as an aspect of relationality and connection and as an aspect of human variance, rather than something to be pitied or vilified, and finally resolved in isolation (Mitchell and Snyder 7). Through a combination of semiotic and textual and audiovisual discourse analysis, the questions "How are solidarity, care, and relationality imagined and narrated in this film?" and "What novel aesthetic forms appear through this relational approach to dis_ability?" will be addressed. We have selected three concepts we see arising in this documentary, which revolve around decolonial and queer aspects of care and pleasure-making: *intra-action*, *intercorporeality*, and *cripistemology*.

METHODOLOGY, METHODS, QUESTIONS

While our research methodology is rooted in cultural studies, what we propose with this analysis is a syncretic transdisciplinary approach. We employ cultural studies tools to read aesthetics and situate ourselves within Critical Disability Studies. In parallel, we import the concepts of intra-action (by feminist theorist and physicist Karen Barad), intercorporeality (by phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty), and cripistemology (by Merri Lisa Johnson and Robert McRuer, both working within English and Cultural Studies) to explore the complexity of what the documentary represents and depicts: dis_ability and sexuality in ways that defy individualism, commodification, and (re)pronormative expectations.

[1] The film is freely available online (CC License: Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives) with many subtitling options, which adds to its value as an education and empowering resource. The film can be watched on the creator's website: www.rauldelamorena.com (password: yeswefuck).

Our methods are an assemblage of semiotic and discourse analysis that employs textual (visual) analysis, visual discourse analysis (including mise-en-scène), and aspects of narratology. Stuart Hall differentiates between three kinds or levels of representation: symbolising, standing for/acting on behalf of, and revisiting what is in the past (28). We are interested in the first and second levels of representation: the symbols of dis_ability and the narratives that report about dis_ability. Importantly, we are not only interested in the elements and meanings of narratives and symbols/signs, but in how they come together in distinct forms of storytelling and their entanglements with political and material practices of becoming.

Additionally, we will draw from queer autoethnography to engage with aspects of reception and affect. As queer and ethnically minoritarian researchers who self-identify with various aspects of dis_ability, neurodivergence, and chronic pain, we believe that making our subjectivities visible and highlighting our positionalities and perspectives through autoethnography adds important insights to the analysis of structural hegemonies, while at the same time critically distancing our analysis from claims to universality. Following Stacy Holman Jones and Tony E. Adams, queer autoethnography "is an effort to set a scene [that] makes witnessing and testifying possible and puts pleasure, difference and movement into productive conversation" (199). It is an attempt to produce knowledge, while at the same time laying bare the hegemonies involved in knowledge production, and highlighting incompleteness. Each researcher watched the film in whole and in fragments on their own over the course of a few months, and we discussed it in meetings and through the produced text. We are interested in exploring this artefact through the lenses of solidarity and relationality. Accordingly, the questions that arise from the chosen methodological framework are: how are solidarity, care, and relationality imagined and narrated in this film?; what novel aesthetic forms appear through this relational approach to dis_ability?

THE FILM

We selected this Spanish documentary *Yes, We Fuck!* from a corpus of diverse media with different potentials as we felt it could allow us to explore questions of agency, intra-action, and intercorporeality, and, crucially, it would situate such an endeavour within the context of European Critical Disability Studies, while much of crip theory and CDS research comes from and focuses on the US and the UK. The film is from 2015, which gives us some temporal distance, while still remaining contemporary and relevant. Also, while it represents a broad range of themes, discussions,

and voices, it has not been analysed sufficiently. Yet another reason is its accessibility: it is freely available online (by the creators' choice) and, as such, does not keep audiences behind a paywall or dependent on the independent festival circuit to experience it.

YWF! offers the viewer several accounts of "functionally diverse" people (the English translation of the Spanish term "diversidad funcional") (Romañach and Lobato), queer people, crip-queer people, activists, and activist groups in their journey to explore their sexualities and bodies, and think about accessibility and pleasure (*Yes, We Fuck!*; García-Santesmases Fernández et al.). It does so by featuring a sex workshop, talking head segments, and street interviews, and foregrounding themes of dis_ability, migration, class, sex-work, and BDSM. It employs standard documentary aesthetics as well as footage from the workshop and group discussions. More importantly, it employs sex, eroticism, sensuality, and horniness, allowing viewers to explore these in different settings. Pleasure is one of the primary epistemological frameworks of the film; as one of the protagonists, Majo, says: "for me [sex] is diversity, imagination, pleasure-knowledge" (*YWF!* 09:59–10:04).

Andrea García-Santesmases Fernández et al. have written about the film in English, and while their analysis is meaningful—also to our research—and informative for understanding the post-porn Spanish radical documentary movement, our analysis presented in this article focuses more on developing a post-representational and relational aesthetic and less on the sociological dimension of the production and reception of the film.

YES, WE INTRA-ACT: RELATIONALITIES AND CRIPISTEMOLOGIES OF *FUCK*ING

We approach *YWF!* from a cripistemological perspective that goes "back and forth . . . about knowing and unknowing disability, making and unmaking disability . . ., and the importance of challenging subjects who confidently 'know' about 'disability,' as though it could be a thoroughly comprehended object of knowledge" (Johnson and McRuer 130). Such a perspective not only acknowledges the film's honest depiction of different types of intimacy between non-professionals and its deconstruction of ableism and crip pride, but also those moments where ableism, exoticisation, and asymmetrical dynamics are at play. If "cripistemology refuse[s] the usual routes of academic knowledge, accumulating meaning in the ephemera of . . . queer gatherings" (ibid.), then *YWF!* must be seen as a work of cripistemology, as it documents how queer crips gather to create and deconstruct dis_ability and sexual knowledge. According to Johnson

and McRuer, cripistemology follows the disrupting force of "an endemic crisis of ability and disability" (131). *YWF!* equally follows the disrupting force, but from the perspective of those inhabiting the affective spaces that emerge, where knowledge fails or there is no "official" or "sanctioned" knowledge. In other words, the film does not pretend to offer authentic or certain knowledge of the sexuality and pleasure of functionally diverse people. Instead, it presents moments when knowledge and beliefs are fractured and ruptured, and when queer crip pleasure emerges.

Understanding relationality and pleasure as organising principles of *YWF!*'s cripistemology, we draw on Barad's intra-action. Barad's concept is particularly pertinent to dis_ability and sexuality as it reorganises ontological understandings of causality, agency, matter, discourse, responsibility, and accountability (Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway* 32). Seen through the concept of intra-action, it becomes apparent that *YWF!* challenges the form of documentary as an educational cinematographic genre and its genre-typical discourses on both sexuality and dis_ability. While its purpose remains educational, the documentary integrates scenes of collective and collaborative sexual explorations of bodies that are not primarily educational, but rather erotic. These scenes play with cinematic techniques reminiscent of erotic films. One scene that uses erotic or pornographic elements most directly shows a young man with cerebral palsy and a sex worker. Their BDSM play is set in warm colours. The camera fragments the bodies, turned to the sex worker's ass in a tight leather harness rubbing against the client's loins, for example, or offering a close-up of his face and arms, pinned down by a person above him, who is out of focus (*YWF!* 24:15–26:54). While the scene does produce knowledge about dis_ability and sexuality, actively fighting the stereotype that "severely" disabled people are asexual or simply unable to have sex, especially kinky sex, it does not necessarily clarify, explain, or convey any knowledge beyond that.

Rather, by employing techniques from erotic or pornographic film, it invites the distinct mode of looking that Laura Mulvey has termed scopophilia, deriving pleasure from gazing (8). Scopophilia, in Mulvey's terms, is a power structure or exercise of power that sexually objectifies primarily women. In the earlier-mentioned scene of *YWF!*, scopophilia sexually objectifies the male-identified person, quite literally, in the context of a BDSM play, where he is caged, bound, blinded with a black cloth, and spanked, but also through the camera focus that fragments his body, blurring its parts, and illuminates them in soft, warm oranges, reds, and grays. However, rather than degrading him, it can be argued with Martha Nussbaum that this "sort of objectifying attention to bodily parts is an important element in correcting the deformation [of desire] and promoting genuine erotic equality" (290).

While this is the most explicitly erotic or pornographic scene in *YWF!*, and it most directly invites the viewer to experience sexual desire rather than the desire for knowledge, it is not the only one. Other scenes, for example, when the camera follows a group of people with disabilities who are participating in a sex workshop (*YWF!* 05:40–09:35), equally transgress the boundaries of documentary cinema, by inviting the viewer to feel sexual desire for the multiple bodies with dis_ability caressing each other and themselves with their hands, feet, mouths, or toys.

These scenes are followed by others that fit more conventionally into the documentary genre, with people talking about their desires, the social prejudices they experience, the inaccessibility of sexual encounters, for instance, due to these prejudices and anxieties of their caregivers, who infantilise them. In their assemblage, they create a discourse that affirms the sexual agency of people with disabilities and makes a claim for sexual assistance, sexual accessibility, and sexual autonomy. A particularly ambiguous scene that does not reveal clearly who is speaking about what and in which context is a dialogue between two people against a black screen (28:00–30:55). In this conversation, the voices talk about how being perceived as female allows society to pathologise their experiences, for example, of female ejaculation as a bodily dysfunction rather than as a valuable experience. They explicitly address that sexual desire is connected to power, and that inequality of power can seem quite attractive. Their conversation is educational, but also filled with ambivalence. By not seeing who is speaking, the scene does not reveal if the two are physically disabled or not, but what clearly disables them is their social status as women. Thus, *YWF!* deconstructs social categories by visibilising similarities between different, but related vectors of oppression. A different kind of ambiguity is created through the scenes where parents are shown with their doubts and concerns about how much autonomy their adult children with disabilities should have. The viewers can feel the parents' discomfort in speaking about their children's sexuality. Additionally, it becomes clear that although the parents are benevolent, they carry prejudices and some measure their children against ableist norms. Their statements are not directly challenged by the narrative or any commentator, leaving it to the viewer to evaluate them.

FROM INTRA_ACTION TO INTERCORPORALITY: GENDER AND FUNCTIONAL DIVERSITY/DIS_ABILITY

An intercorporeal understanding of functional diversity and queer/crip intimacy can show how the interdependent self is constructed through touch, gaze, and the development of body schemas in their relation.

"Rather than closing the gap between me and the other, intercorporeality opens the gap between me and myself such that I encounter a spectral otherness in the interpretive responsivity of my own body's behavior," writes Marrato (199). The otherness can be extended and integrated through the phenomenological experience of co-embodiment during moments of queer/crip intimacy. As the film's voiceover is heard, the audience can see blurred close-ups of body parts and wider shots of a room full of pleasuring embodiment: "We breathe. I touch a stomach. It is not my body. All the hands. All the bodies. . . We recognise each other. We get lost in the movements of our hands. Let ourselves be pampered. Let ourselves be loved. We can feel ourselves" (*YWF!* 07:01–07:38). In this scene, we approach queer/crip intimacy through the prism of intercorporeality and see how "the experience of the body (however united or fragmented that experience may be) is coconstituted, never sovereign or informed by a maximal kind of agency. It is a process, instead, of relation and negotiation" (Malatino 71).

A useful cultural text here is a podcast episode of *Disability After Dark* in which the host and queer crip activist Andrew Gurza discusses the relationship between queerness and dis_ability with the professional adult-content creator Trip Richards. Their conversation on dis_ability and transness fleshes out elements that are also part of *YWF!*, such as the parallels between essentialism, biologism, and biological determinism in how bodies are rendered unable to do certain things as well as the prohibitions imposed on them. The two also discuss strap-ons (and sex toys/accessories in general) and their role as assistive devices, thus creating one more link between dis_ability and queerness as perhaps a unified project that targets normativity as a whole through its different cues (lookism, ableism, cisgenderism, queerphobia).

A cripistemological perspective emphasises that *YWF!* does not produce a utopia where crip and queer practices take place away from ableism, which is only talked about in theoretical terms, but instead it captures the nuanced, "well-intentioned" expressions of those within interable relationships. An example occurs at the beginning of the film, where a cis-male person from India argues that the Kama Sutra gives solutions to any sexual obstacles, and says that he prefers sex with his dis_abled partner as he gets to do what he wants with her: "Before it was complicated to do everything with women, I was fast and strong and the woman was not strong and didn't finish, and I finished. . . it was difficult. Now with Miriam, this body . . . she doesn't touch me, I touch her, things are the way I like them, the position. . . I like this body" (*YWF!* 15:41–16:07). We see here an asymmetrical power dynamic that is expressed with one partner being able to do everything (including achieving an orgasm), be

strong, and overcome obstacles (thanks to the Kama Sutra) and expressly enjoying this asymmetry, and the other presumably (as she does not get to respond to this statement in the film) being the body that both creates obstacles to overcome and offers the terrain for the other to do what they like the way they like it.

The film (like the podcast) creates direct links between gender and functional diversity/dis_ability in the ways they are perceived and performed constantly, and attempts to confront us with our own dis_abilities, genders, assumptions, relations to others, stance towards sex work, multi-partnered sex, and what is considered solo sex for a person with functional diversity. Pleasure is one of their primary epistemological frameworks, yet *YWF!* also directly addresses the connections between productivity, reproductivity, and capitalism from the very beginning. Urko, one of the film protagonists, says: "We live in a society where some bodies are considered more valuable than others according to some capacities that are considered more valuable than others. Those capacities are the productive ones; if you are a productive body, you are valuable" (05:36–05:51).

YWF! offers us a generous reflection on what McRuer calls "compulsory able-bodiedness" (2) and the invisibilities of dis_abilities and non-normative/non-reproductive sexualities. It forces the audiences to come into proximity with the politics of pathologisation that have historically cast certain people aside, either because of what their bodies look like or what these bodies supposedly can or cannot do (trans and queer people, people with functional diversity, dis_abled people, people whose looks diverge from beauty norms). It contextualises neoliberalism's rhetoric of "personal responsibility," the idea that individuals are responsible for overcoming systemic hurdles, which are seen exclusively as personal failings or choices. It counters the assumption of the lack of eroticism in the lives of dis_abled people and employs sensuality to inform and turn us on. It offers us raw, warm, sexy imagery and honest conversations.

We want to argue that the film's depictions of knowledge-production at the site of a political claim to pleasure and access to pleasure present intra-actions. Intra-actions, according to Barad, "enact an agential cut (in contrast to the Cartesian cut . . . between subject and object) effecting a separation between 'subject' and 'object.' That is, the agential cut enacts a 'local' resolution within the phenomenon of the inherent ontological indeterminacy" ("Posthumanist Performativity" 815). Crucially then, intra-actions enact agential separability—the local condition of exteriority-within-phenomena.

The directors' focus on what happens during and after these encounters between people of variable abilities and experiences, the use of POV, and the inclusion of the bodies and desires of the creators into the "action"

reminds us of this agential disruption of the binary and border of subjects, and objects. Here, the separation of roles becomes murky, and agency (usually connoted with subjects and not objects) is explicitly addressed both thematically and often in the meta-commentary the film offers with interviews that occur after the event (of the sex workshop for instance).

According to Barad, and in simpler language, we come to be through material-discursive intra-actions that we enact agentially. Rather than separate already-formed entities, we are inseparable agentially intra-acting "components" (Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity*" 32). This perspective is particularly useful in experiencing the work of sexual assistants and sex workers in the film, as it allows for interdependent and enmeshed understanding of care/sex work without its politicised dichotomisation and mutual negation. Furthermore, it is largely within dis_ability communities that interdependence comes to substitute independence and self-sufficiency, which in a capitalist culture of hyper-optimisation are deemed universally aspirational. Dis_ability, as presented in the film, is largely understood as the need for each other in situations where people only have the social contract to guide them in sharing abilities and resources, care and time, making communities in the process.

When talking about agency and desire, consent and legal framings are important. Legal and medical language has often attempted to regulate and canonise desires and practices. As Barad writes, "the category 'acts against nature' claims to save or defend but in reality erases and demonizes" ("Nature's Queer Performativity*" 33). Queer pleasures and dis_ability have traditionally been placed outside the domain of society, often under the category of legal language that avoids naming and thus can (and would) include anything deemed divergent from the confines of normalcy. Barad uses the term "acts against nature," also seen, since the 16th century in Europe, as "crime against nature" or "unnatural act" in iterations of various legal systems to cover masturbation, sodomy, fellatio, bestiality (and more recently to include sex work, incest, and public sex). As the term already speaks of nature and outlaw acts that are not reproductive, we can see that the focus is on regulating pleasure or certain instances of violence, but not other (arguably, compulsory heterosexuality and gender, like anything compulsory, are violent by default).

The intimate experience of watching *YWF!* opens up in the viewer the horizon of intercorporeal being-with the dis_abled queer people that are captured within the film. Through making immanent ontological intimacy (Maclaren 18–40) in its concretisation in the act of viewing, we can further sense a deeper political reworking of embodied pleasure, attraction or care. *YWF!* can then be seen as a process of experiencing queer crip intimacy anew.

The way intimacy is represented in *YWF!* makes apparent that touch, sounds, and gaze all constitute a process of co-creating embodied experience, that embodied experience of the world and of one's being in it is a collective undertaking. Following Merleau-Ponty, we can imagine the bodymind as the condition and context through which we are able to have relationships in spacetime. The intertwinement of our being in relationships with others can be termed a "co-intentionality: a coexistence towards the world" (Maclaren 23).

This interdependence is realised intersubjectively through intercorporeality. Intercorporeality refers to a phenomenological notion of being that critiques and overcomes Cartesian dualism (similarly to Barad's intra-actions) of the self-other binary. While understanding being as intercorporeal, we can imagine others not just as distant wilful objects we encounter, but as perspectives and embodiments we partially and temporarily inhabit. Touching another person's skin, I feel its texture and temperature; we inhabit each other's affective registers, we feel through each other and attune to each other's state of being.

To further explain what inhabiting the gaze of the other could mean, Maclaren and Valentine both reproduce an example of a child and mother (Maclaren 23; Valentine 86). This event can be extrapolated to any intimate relationship where a connection is maintained, where the perspective of another enters into one's own: imagine a small child discovering a worm. They pick it up from the ground and proudly show it to their caregiver. The caregiver reacts with visible disgust, puts their hand over their mouth, and looks disconcerted by the dirtiness of the worm. The initially proud attitude of the child, motivated by a discovery, is then transformed by the gaze and gesture of the caregiver into one of shame and apprehension. We inhabit each other's gaze, our self-image, and crucially our body schemata are created intercorporeally; at all times we experience our porosity, our ontological intimacy, or in Merleau-Ponty's words: "It is as if the other person's intention inhabited my body and mine his. The gesture that I witness outlines an intentional object. This object is genuinely present and fully comprehended when the powers of my body adjust themselves to it and overlap it" (215).

Through this example, one can easily imagine how destructive the normative cis-hetero-ableist gaze is to queer crip non-normative bodyminds not only in the abstract discursive media landscape, but also in the embodied lived everyday experience. How inhabiting the disgusted gaze of the other in an intimate situation can produce pain and shame, activating the stress registers of the nervous system, triggering, disabling connection and access to authentic intimacy. In *YWF!*, the scene where the ableist gaze is most directly addressed, without being fully or unambiguously called upon, is the sex workshop scene. We see a gender-non-conforming person

who leads the workshop and is at the same time its central focus, offering their body to the audience for a vulva examination (*YWF!* 32:39). Rather than being presented as erotic or sexual, the scene potentially reminds one of a medical examination and thus has the potential of pathologising trans bodies and female-perceived bodies. Yet, the queer joy of the sex workshop participants in gazing and being looked at counters such a reading, at least for an audience that can "read" queer joy.

Understanding ontological intimacy within a liberatory, emancipatory, critical framework, as Valentine writes, invites us to ask crucial questions: "[W]hat does it mean to be constituted by others, especially when it comes to the variety of bodyminds we inhabit? How ought we respond to power asymmetries inherent in interpersonal relationships, especially those where one partner may need the other for their immediate survival?" (87). Or, what kinds of responsibility are inherent to intimate situations with others, and what kinds of political action does this responsibility motivate?

In the sex workshop scene and more generally, *YWF!* documents the political practice of answering these questions in immediate embodied presence: "To share intimacy raises awareness about the importance of accessible spaces for all corporealities" (García-Santesmases Fernández et al. 275). What matters is the right to access intimacy for all bodyminds, and that is, intimacy aware of its responsibility for each other's embodied reality. As Mia Mingus writes,

> Access intimacy is that elusive, hard to describe feeling when someone else "gets" your access needs. The kind of eerie comfort that your disabled self feels with someone on a purely access level. Sometimes it can happen with complete strangers, disabled or not, or sometimes it can be built over years. It could also be the way your body relaxes and opens up with someone when all your access needs are being met.

The film repeatedly thematises and heavily critiques the inaccessibility of intimacy in a cis-hetero-ableist regime. It also documents the practice of creating queer crip community spaces based on the values of agency, consent, responsibility, and interdependence that enable relaxation and release of stress from inaccessibility into the warmth of intimacy.

Virtual intercorporeality facilitated through the film does not allow for direct interaction, but it does open up a possibility of reorienting towards divergent vectors of attraction and intersubjective connection within the viewer. These orientations then have the potential to influence real-life intimate political crip and queer relationships, ultimately developing experience of the responsibility for embodied mutual co-creation and coexistence in the community.

The way access to intimacy is represented in the film oscillates on the spectrum of political, care, sex work, and personal and sexual assistance, be it through a trans postporn community space, finding and ordering a BDSM experience online, or in an intimate partnership that needs a care worker to prepare the dis_abled partner for the situation of sexual intimacy. The way care and sex work are formulated in *YWF!* does not draw a boundary between the two, which is also not the point of this observation; rather, the film shows the intra-active quality of care/sex work enmeshment; care and sex work are entangled and reshaped in their material-discursivity.

Particular attention can be given to the way sexual assistance is portrayed. Sexual assistance in sociological research is seen as the work that "supports their [dis_abled people's] access to sexuality" (García-Santesmases Fernández 172) or in rights-based discourse as "help or support provided for the performance of sexual activities" (De Asís Roig 137). The last scene of the film (*YWF!* 46:19–55:21) is framed by two dialogue shots of interdependent actors Sole and Teo discussing power, consent, and agency in a relationship of sexual assistance. In between those is a POV of Teo assisting in Sole's intimate exploration of her own body. The softness of the POV invites identification beyond normative ableist gazing, identification through virtual intercorporeal intimacy, through inhabiting the gaze of another. While still framed as labour, highlighted during this POV shot is the affective labour in the touch, voice, and attunement needed for a responsible practice of sexual assistance. As García-Santesmases Fernández writes,

> 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." (169)

This scene (*YWF!* 46:08–54:37) represents trans and crip sexual pleasure non-conforming with the patriarchal rehabilitative narratives of sexual assistance. It underscores how our bodyminds are constituted intercorporeally in an interdependent mesh of relationships.

CONCLUSION

Employing cripistemology, the film moves past "official" or "sanctioned" knowledge and, as it focuses on queer ephemera, it presents moments when knowledge and beliefs are fractured, ruptured, and queer_crip

pleasure emerges. It transcends the documentary as an educational genre and crosses over into the erotic, a corrective scopophilic as well as an interpersonal attempt to "correct the deformation of desire" (Nussbaum 290). Its use of POV places the person discovering her skin and nipples and the pleasure she takes from touching them as the protagonist, allowing her narration and exclamations to lead the narrative. The directors' choices of the encounters of the different protagonists/participants/interviewees, the scenes of the workshops in particular, with the many bodies on the mattresses being with one another, and the focus on sexual assistants bring to mind a non-deterministic (indeed non-biologistic) understanding of ourselves as intra-actions; agentially co-informing material-discursive entangled parts of phenomena (Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway* 32). Discussing ontological intimacy within a liberatory framework, the film crucially addresses the violence of ableism that keeps certain desires un-enacted and beyond reach; it engages with violence in knowledge-production that does not come from pleasure itself (binary and compulsory understandings of sexuality as [re]productive only). The documentary creates a situation for virtual intercorporeality by opening up the possibility of reorienting towards divergent vectors of attraction and intersubjective connection, expanding from within the viewer to the larger community around them.

Works Cited

Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Duke UP, 2007. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822388128

Barad, Karen. "Nature's Queer Performativity*." *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*, nos. 1–2, 2012, pp. 25–53. https://doi.org/10.7146/kkf.v0i1-2.28067

Barad, Karen. "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2003, pp. 801–31. https://doi.org/10.1086/345321

Chen, Mel Y. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Duke UP, 2012. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822395447

De Asís Roig, Rafael. "Is Sexual Assistance a Right?" *The Age of Human Rights Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2019, pp. 133–47. https://doi.org/10.17561/tahrj.n12.7

García-Santesmases, Andrea. "Crip Is the New Queer?" *The Routledge Companion to Gender, Sexuality, and Culture*, edited by Emma Rees, Routledge, 2022, pp. 165–77. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367822040-17

García-Santesmases Fernández, Andrea, et al. "'From Alliance to Trust': Constructing Crip-Queer Intimacies." *Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2017, pp. 269–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2016.1273100

Goodley, Dan. *Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. SAGE, 2011.

Gurza, Andrew. "Is a Strap-On an Assistive Device? Sitting Down with TripleXTransMan Trip Richards." *Disability After Dar*k, episode 208, *PlayerFM*, https://player.fm/series/disability-after-dark/episode-208-is-a-strap-on-an-assistive-device-sitting-down-with-triplextransman-trip-richards, accessed 23 Jan. 2026.

Hall, Stuart. "The Work of Representation." *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall, SAGE, 1997, pp. 13–74.

Holman Jones, Stacy, and Tony E. Adams. "Autoethnography is a Queer Method." *Queer Methods and Methodologies*, edited by Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash, Ashgate, 2010, pp. 195–214. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315603223-13

Johnson, Merri Lisa, and Robert McRuer. "Cripistemologies Now (More than Ever!)." *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2024, pp. 115–34. https://doi.org/10.3828/jlcds.2024.1

Kafer, Alison. *Feminist Queer Crip*. Indiana UP, 2013. https://doi.org/10.2979/6841.0

Köbsell, Swantje. "Doing Dis_ability: Wie Menschen mit Beeinträchtigungen zu 'Behinderten' werden." *Managing Diversity*, edited by Karim Fereidooni and Antonietta P. Zeoli, Springer, 2016, pp. 89–103. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-14047-2_6

Maclaren, Kym. "Intimacy as Transgression and the Problem of Freedom." *Journal of Critical Phenomenology*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2018, pp. 18–40. https://doi.org/10.31608/PJCP.v1i1.3

Malatino, Hil. *Side Affects: On Being Trans and Feeling Bad*. U of Minnesota P, 2022.

Marrato, Lorenzo. "Intercorporeality." *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*, edited by Gail Weiss et al., Northwestern UP, 2019, p. 199. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvmx3j22

McRuer, Robert. *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*. New York UP, 2006.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Colin Smith, Routledge Classics, 2002. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203994610

Mingus, Mia. "Access Intimacy: The Missing Link." *Leaving Evidence*, 5 May 2011, https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/05/05/access-intimacy-the-missing-link/, accessed 23 Jan. 2026.

Mitchell, David T., and Sharon L. Snyder. *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*. U of Michigan P, 2001. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.11523

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1975, pp. 6–18. https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6

Nussbaum, Martha C. "Objectification." *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1995, pp. 249–91. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.1995.tb00032.x

Romañach, Javier, and Manuel Lobato. "Diversidad Funcional, Nuevo Término Para La Lucha Por La Dignidad En La Diversidad Del Ser Humano." *Foro de Vida Independiente y Divertad*, 26 July 2005, https://forovidaindependiente.org/diversidad-funcional-nuevo-termino-para-la-lucha-por-la-dignidad-en-la-diversidad-del-ser-humano/, accessed 23 Jan. 2026.

Valentine, Desiree. "Shifting the Weight of Inaccessibility: Access Intimacy as a Critical Phenomenological Ethos." *Puncta*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2020, pp. 76–94. https://doi.org/10.5399/PJCP.v3i2.9

Yes, We Fuck! Directed by Raúl de la Morena and Antonio Centeno, 2015.

Katharina Wiedlack (she/her) is Assistant Professor for Anglophone Cultural Studies at the Department of English and American Studies, University of Vienna.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9236-8819
katharina.wiedlack@univie.ac.at

Anna T. (she/her) is an artist, lecturer, and curator based in Vienna, Austria. Her work exists at the intersection of art and theory, blending forms and playing within and without canonical scholarly formats.
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5354-6259
anna@annatee.co.uk

Ema Benčíková (she/they) is a Vienna-based curator, theatre director, and care worker. In their artistic research, they focus on critical phenomenology of non-normative embodiment.
ema.bencikova@tuwien.ac.at