

Some Ways That a Thing Can Go Wrong:
Malfunctions, Disorders and Perversions

by

Peter Bach-y-Rita

Submitted to the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
on July 13, 2006 in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

ABSTRACT

“Selection and Artifacts” is about how artifacts acquire functions. According to Karen Neander, the function of an artifact is the purpose for which it is designed or built. But I argue that in order for an artifact to have some function its parts and properties must also have been properly selected.

“Defining ‘Disorder’” examines the conceptual analysis of medical disorder. I defend and develop the idea that a medical disorder is a harmful malfunction.

“Teleological Theories of Sexual Perversion” examines attempts to analyze sexual perversion in terms of the biological goal of sex or the functions of sexual organs and psychological mechanisms. I argue that teleological theories are false, and defend the view that sexual perversion is excessive, and therefore unwarranted, sexual attraction, especially sexual attraction to that which is disgusting.

Thesis Supervisor: Judith Jarvis Thomson
Title: Professor of Philosophy