IQ, Speciation and Sexuality: How Suspicions of Sexual Abuse are Produced within a Contemporary Intellectual Disability Service

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Introduction

It is commonplace, in our historical moment, to assume the inherent characteristics of people we label intellectually disabled makes them vulnerable to sexual abuse or exploitation. Drawing on the findings of a qualitative research project regarding the treatment of sexuality within a service for adults with intellectual disabilities in the Republic of Ireland, I take a very different approach. I argue that, in the specific case of Rathbeg Services (pseudonym), suspicions, fears, and allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation are best understood as produced in, and by, the material-semiotic assemblage (the Rathbeg speciation assemblage) that both service providers and service users inhabit. In the most reductive terms possible, I am going to suggest that suspicions and allegations of sexual exploitation are continually produced within the disability service because the two social species ('normal people' and 'people with intellectual disabilities') that inhabit this material territory, and share its spaces, understand intimate relationships with and amongst people with intellectual disabilities through very different discursive lenses.

'Normal' service providers tend to operate within a discursive framework inherited from eugenic scientists that uses IQ tests and the mental age concept to divide the human species into a hierarchy of social species ('normal' people and people with 'mild', 'moderate', 'severe', and 'profound' intellectual disabilities). In the absence of an

agreed standard of consent, this hierarchy of humanity has become entangled with a system of sexual morality.[1] In short, service providers often see intimate relationships that breech a social-species barrier (for instance, 'mild'/'moderate') as inherently exploitative and somehow paedophilic. Service users, meanwhile, are aware they are intellectually disabled, but are never told the precise species they belong to (for example, whether they are 'mild' or 'moderate') and therefore tend to operate within a system of sexual morality based around mutual desire and consent amongst peers. This means that when they enter into relationships they understand as consensual, they often find themselves constructed as sexual exploiters or sexually exploited.

In the first section of the article, I outline Darwinian and poststructuralist theories of speciation (the splitting of one species into two distinct species) and suggest that they have a lot more in common than one might anticipate and, indeed, can be combined using the concept of a *speciation assemblage*. In the second section, I consider some historical processes that created the conditions of possibility for the Rathbeg speciation assemblage. I argue that diagnostic frameworks that divide humanity into a hierarchy of species and progressively infantilise these species, as well as discourses that problematize interspecies relationships, were invented by eugenic scientists whose understandings of human evolution we now consider to be erroneous. In the third section, drawing on the findings of a qualitative study that adopted a methodology of assemblage analysis, I explore how this dubious diagnostic framework contributes to producing suspicions of sexual abuse in the present and within a disability service.

Biological and poststructuralist theories of speciation and the concept of a speciation assemblage

Biological theories

Darwin's theory, explicated in *On the Origin of Species* (1859), can be summarised as follows:in general, the number of individuals in a species increases at an exponential rate over consecutive generations, but if this happens within an environmental context of limited resources, disease, and predation species, not all of the individuals of a particular generation will survive and reproduce. Individuals whose traits contingently facilitate survival within their specific environmental context will tend to survive longer and leave more offspring who tend to inherit the traits of their parents. Thus traits that give their bearer a

statistically greater chance of survival will tend to be passed on more frequently than traits that do not increase statistical chance of survival. Darwin calls this process natural selection. Whilst premised on the ceaseless production of diversity amongst organisms, Darwin's theory did not explain what was producing this diversity. By the 1930s a consensus, known as *the modern synthesis,* began to emerge, which suggests that diversity is the result of random genetic mutations that arise when DNA is replicating. These mutations are, in turn, subject to natural selection (Futuyma 2009).

Darwinism/the modern synthesis is significant because it dismantles the philosophical concept of the essence. Pre-Darwinian evolutionary biologists tended to believe that each species had an ideal form and, accordingly, endeavoured to collect specimens that most closely approximated their species' supposed essence, variation from which was understood as accidental imperfection (Futuyma 2009). In sharp contrast, Darwin's theory made the ceaseless production of diversity amongst individual organisms inevitable and effectively demolished essentialist understandings of species: 'No single robin models the "true robin"; *all* Robins are true robins.... No robin is privileged over others as the exemplar of the species' (Roughgarden 2009:14). From a critical disability studies perspective, it is important to note that what is true of robins is also true of humans. Darwin's ontology of life is also significant because it provides an account that is purely non-teleological, that is fundamentally mindless, and shaped entirely by chance or contingency (Grosz 2004). This non-teleological understanding of evolution was not shared by those who shaped our contemporary understandings of intellectual disability. Rather, they believed that evolution was progressive and hierarchical. Even today, the lay public often confuses evolution with progress.

Darwin (1859) does not provide any precise definition of species or any thoroughly biological explanation as to how speciation occurs. Rather, he suggests: 'I look at the term species as one arbitrarily given, for the sake of convenience, to a set of individuals closely resembling each other' (Darwin 1859:52). As Grosz (2004) points out, Darwin thus provides a proto-postmodern account in which speciation is product of taxonomy. Darwin's proto-postmodernism failed to satisfy many followers who longed for an objective and universal definition. These fierce debates are known within the discourse of evolutionary biology as 'the species problem' and far from leading to consensus, actually brought about an explosion of up to twenty-five competing definitions of 'species' (Zimmer & Emlen 2013). The closest biologists *have* come to agreeing upon a universal definition of species is Mayr's (1942)

biological species concept (BSC). This defines a species as a group of organisms that are *potentially* capable of interbreeding: a lion can potentially reproduce with a lioness and therefore they belong to the same species; a bull and a butterfly cannot reproduce and therefore belong to different species. Rather than emphasising taxonomy, proponents of the BSC came to understand speciation as occurring when organisms of a single species are divided over a long period of time through some kind of *isolating mechanism,* such as changes in sea-level leading to island formation. Once a species has been divided, differential evolution over many generations will eventually produce reproductive isolation (an inability to reproduce) and hence biological speciation.

Although influential, the BSC remains a spectacularly inadequate definition of species and account of speciation. Firstly, it has limited applicability, working only for organisms that reproduce sexually. Secondly, if we adhere strictly to the BSC a great many of our best known and best loved species turn out not to be species at all. For example, lions and tigers can, and do, produced hybrids, including fertile hybrids (Guggisberg 1975). Thirdly, contemporary biotechnological technologies that make reproduction amongst diverse species possible increase the inadequacy of the BSC. For example, the species barrier between goats and spiders collapsed when scientists combined their DNA to breed spider-goats. Moreover, if (as certain scientists now suggest) a human/chimpanzee hybrid is potentially possible (MacKellar 2008), then, in accordance with the BSC, we may no longer be separate species at all. In light of these problems, today, while many biologists continue to find the BSC a useful concept they *also* tend to accept, to an extent, Darwin's postmodernism: 'The word species has two overlapping but distinct meanings in biology. One meaning is embodied in the BSC definition. The other is a *taxonomical category,* just like "genus" and "family"' (Futuyma 2009: 449).

Poststructuralist theories

Although he makes only passing reference to Darwin, metaphors pertaining to speciation are amongst Foucault's favourites. Callis (2009:222) suggests that 'Foucault uses the metaphor of biological speciation deliberately: The homosexual or other-labelled "pervert" becomes seen as naturally occurring type of person who is different from (and inferior to) the unmarked non-deviant in a host of ways'.

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Within Foucauldian theory, social speciation is understood to occur through a combination of *scientific classification*, *subjectification*, and *dividing practices* (Rabinow 1984). Echoing Darwin's account of speciation, scientific classification involves making taxonomical distinctions that serve to split human populations into social species, such as a normal and an intellectually disabled population. Subjectification, meanwhile, ensures human beings come to accept the scientific classifications that have been applied to them as social identities (e.g. 'I *am* a person with an intellectual disability'). Finally, dividing practices, which serve to solidify taxonomical divisions of humanity, involve physically and/or socially separating abnormal populations from the mass (e.g. institutionalising people with intellectual disabilities). But as queer theorists have demonstrated, dividing practices also frequently involve attempts to sexually segregate discursively constituted social species — adult/child; homosexual/heterosexual; white/black; normal/intellectually disabled — through performative policing. In other words, and in yet another parallel between biological and poststructuralist theories of speciation, we tend to impose something like the BSC onto discursively constituted social species.

Foucault (1988) explicitly discusses the dangers of prohibiting sexual relations between individuals on the basis of social species (rather than adhering to a principle of mutual consent or desire) whilst outlining his now infamous opposition to absolute age of consent laws. He suggests that laws based on identity or social species (adult/child) rather than mutual consent will have a number of deleterious effects. To begin, they will act to silence children's perspectives, creating a vacuum that will be filled with a cacophony of professional voices (psychologists, social workers and so on) all claiming a right to speak for children. More broadly, he sees age of consent laws as part of a shift in legal discourse from punishing unacceptable sexual acts, like rape or sexual violence, to identifying (and simultaneously constituting) 'vulnerable' and 'dangerous' social species and then regulating sexual relations between them. This shift will culminate in widespread fear and paranoia, what Foucault calls a society of dangers:

> Sexuality will no longer be a kind of behaviour hedged in by precise prohibitions, but a kind of roaming danger, a sort of omnipresent phantom, a phantom that will be played out between men and women, children and adults, and possibly between adults themselves (1988:281).

DeleuzoGuattatian speciation assemblages

At this point, I wish to suggest that a Deleuzian ontology, and the DeleuzoGuattarian concept of an assemblage, allows us to combine biological and Foucauldian theories of speciation. This is because Deleuze, in contrast to more familiar poststructuralist philosophers, is a thoroughly materialist thinker who embraces rather than problematizes ontology.

Deleuze's materialism stresses change and difference. Everything in the Deleuzian universe is in motion, ceaselessly becoming. Because everything is continually changing, it is impossible to speak of the essence of an entity (its true identity at all times and in all places). Eternal essences are '"a kind of 'optical illusion' produced by relatively slow rates of change' (DeLanda 2006: 49). Following Spinoza, Deleuze & Guattari suggests that instead of obsessing about a body's essential identity, we should concentrate on finding out what it can do: 'We will avoid defining it [a body] by Species or Genus characteristics; instead we will seek to count its affects [meaning its capacities to affect and be affected]' (1987: 257). Because a body's capacities to affect and be affected, are always context dependant, the task of counting will necessarily be on-going. What a human body can do, for example, will vary radically depending on whether it is underwater, in space, online or offline and so on. The danger of assigning a body an essential identity (for example, 'a person with a moderate intellectual disability') is that it can become *over-coded*, and this can prevent us from thinking creatively about all the things the body could do in different contexts.

When thinking about a body's capacities to affect we can also distinguish between currently realised or *actual* capacities (for instance, a particular body labelled intellectually disabled may presently be able to communicate using five words) and potentially possible but not yet realised *virtual* capacities (for example, if the body had access to electronic communication technologies it might be able to speak more words).

In addition to materialism, while many poststructuralist theorists problematize ontology (because discourse constitutes what it presumes to describe) Deleuze embraces it. To do this he collapses the matter/discourse divide and suggests that all orders of existence – the environment, biological bodies, discursive statements and so on – are real, in that they all have effects in the material world they all

affect each other. In short, for Deleuze, material and semiotic entities 'have the same ontological status' (Grosz 1994:167). Thus existence, for Deleuze, becomes a flat ontological plane populated by different but mutually affecting material and semiotic entities. It is this ontological position that underpins the concept of the assemblage.

Assemblages consist of heterogeneous components belonging to orders of existence often considered separate (e.g. the environmental, the biological, and the discursive) whose unity comes solely from the fact that they work together as a whole. For example, a disability service assemblage might encompass buildings, bodies, discourses, and policies. An assemblage's diverse components come together over time; work together for a time to produce something; and, in time, will fall apart. Thus the disability service is not a fixed entity but a temporary becoming. Deleuze and Guattari also note that assemblages can also be thought of as made up of, and acting to enable and constrain, *flows* of, substances belonging to heterogeneous orders of existence: 'An assemblage, in its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously'(1987:22–23). For example, a disability service assemblage might encompass and act upon flows of human bodies through service corridors, and flows of digital information through the IT network.

Deleuze & Guattari are keen to stress that their concepts should be used by others in a creative fashion and, in this spirt, philosophers and social scientists have taken up and adapted the concept of the assemblage to analyse a multiplicity of social phenomena including disability (Gibson 2006; Shildrick 2009, 2014). Here I wish to propose and develop the concept of a speciation assemblage: a population of biological bodies that share a material territory and have actual and/or virtual capacities to enter into a multiplicity of sexual or reproductive relationships but whose capacities are constrained by discursive codes that sort the biological bodies into species and performative policing that serves to maintain the reproductive and/or sexual isolation of these species. To develop this concept, I wish to offer three examples of speciation assemblages: an equine speciation assemblage (donkeys and zebras in a zoo); a primate speciation assemblage (humans and chimpanzees in an age of biotechnology); and, the empirical focus of this paper, the Rathbeg speciation assemblage (humans belonging to different intellectual species that share a disability service). 'Deleuze and Guattari (1987) suggest we can analyse assemblages like these in terms of a

material/discursive continuum and a *reterritorialisation/deterritorialisation* continuum.

Because an assemblage encompasses heterogeneous components, it is useful to imagine them along a material/discursive continuum. Thus the assemblage analyst might see the equine assemblage as encompassing the material territory of the zoo, the biological bodies that inhabit it, and the discursive codes that sort them into species (zebras and donkeys). Similarly, the primate assemblage might encompassing contemporary biotechnologies, biological bodies, and discursive codes that sort them into species (humans and chimpanzees). Finally, the Rathbeg speciation assemblage might encompass service buildings, biological bodies, and discursive codes that sort bodies into a hierarchy of intellectual species.

Assemblages can also be analysed in terms of a reterritorialisation/deterritorialisation continuum. Every assemblage will contain both reterritorialisating forces, which act to conserve order, sameness and boundaries, as well deterritorialising forces that blur and subvert boundaries, allowing for processes of becoming and the proliferation of difference. Thus the equine speciation assemblage is reterritorialized by fenced enclosures in the zoo that serve to maintain a species barrier between donkeys and zebras and direct flows of equine DNA in predicable directions (more horses and zebras). But it might be deterritorialised if a donkey leapt a fence and mated with a zebra resulting in a hybrid. Similarly, the primate speciation assemblage is reterritorialised by laws that restrict the use of biotechnologies to create human-animal hybrids (e.g. House of Commons 2008). But might be reterritorialised by a covert scientific experiment resulting in the creation of a humanzee. Finally, the Rathbeg speciation assemblage, as we shall see, is continually reterritorialised through performative policing by service to prevent interspecies relations (for example, mild/moderate) but is sometimes deterritorialised when clandestine interspecies intimate relationships occur.

The Rathbeg speciation assemblage, my empirical focus for the rest of this paper, is a temporary becoming rather than a fixed entity. As such, valid question for analysis cannot pertain to its identity but rather to its making and unmaking. Thus, in the coming sections, I wish to consider: firstly, some macropolitical processes that allowed the assemblage to emerge; secondly, how the assemblage works in the present to produce suspicions of abuse; and, finally, to how it might be altered.

Macropolitical processes that created the assemblage's conditions of possibility

In many ways, our contemporary understanding of intellectual disability and sexuality are the products of what we now consider to be erroneous theories of evolutionary biology promulgated in the late nineteenth century. The nineteenth century was an age of explicit and acceptable racism, sexism and ableism in many Western societies. During this period most devalued adult groups (women, the working classes, non-whites, and people with disabilities) were hierarchically ranked, infantilised, and assigned children's mental ages in both popular and scientific discourses (Gould 1981, 1996). Paradoxically, at the same time many devalued groups (non-whites, the poor, and the intellectually disabled) were also constructed as hypersexual predators. Up until the mid-nineteenth century, devalued groups were generally infantilised through popular and political, rather than scientific, discourses (McDonagh 2008; Gould 1996) but as evolutionary theories gained widespread acceptance, eugenic scientists began to develop putatively scientific techniques for infantilising adults. The theories of evolution that underpinned these techniques, however, differed sharply from contemporary understandings, with Darwin's anti-essentialist and non-teleological account being just one amongst many conflicting theories (Futuryma 2009). Indeed, for many mainstream scientists, the races, genders and social classes were to be arranged in hierarchies of most to least evolved (Gould 1981).

Many such scientists sought to justify their beliefs through the theory of recapitulation, which held that an individual member of a species 'climbs its own family tree' (Gould 1981: 114). Stated differently, as an individual organism develops towards maturity, it will pass through a series of stages that reflect the evolutionary development of its species. Believing themselves to occupy the highest branches of humanity's evolutionary tree, these scientists reasoned that, in their embryonic and/or childhood development, they must have passed through a series of more primitive stages of human development (an African phase, an Asian phase, a womanly phase, and so on). From a contemporary perspective these beliefs were erroneous. Nonetheless they were widely accepted and allowed mainstream scientists to hierarchically rank, scientifically infantilise, and begin ascribing mental ages to a whole range of adult populations: 'For seventy years, under the sway of recapitulation, scientists. . . collected reams of objective data all loudly proclaiming the same message: adult

blacks, women, and lower-class whites are like white upper class male children' (Gould 1981: 120).

The period when recapitulation theory dominated the human sciences was also when contemporary understandings of intellectual disability began to emerge. In 1866, for example, Dr Langdon Down noticed morphological similarities between different 'types' of white idiot and the 'inferior' races, which led him to propose a racial typology of idiocy. Down suggested that, if the in-utero development of a white foetus was arrested for some reason, the result would be an evolutionary throwback: a white person who was as primitive and stupid as an African or Asian person (Gould 1981a). By staying attentive to tell-tale morphological features, Down argued it was possible to categorise white idiots in accordance with their actual racial type: the Ethiopian type, the Malay idiot, and the Mongolian type, which had the features we now associate with Down syndrome.

The shift from constructions of relative asexuality to constructions of hyper-sexuality in the late nineteenth century construction was also underpinned by recapitulation theory. In 1887, Lambroso famously argued that criminals within populations of white men were evolutionary throwbacks, innately antisocial apes in our midst (Gould 1996). Like Down, Lambroso suggested that atavists could be identified by particular stigmata including apish features, childish behaviour and cognitive impairments (Gould 1996). Because atavists were innate criminals and sexual offenders and because people with cognitive impairments were atavists, it followed that people with cognitive impairments were innate criminals and sexual offenders. Indeed, as Davis (2010) points out, within eugenic discourse all allegedly "undesirable traits" came to be grouped together. The eventual abandonment of recapitulation theory did not alter this association. Even if the feebleminded were not evolutionary time travellers, 'moral imbeciles', whose low intellect rendered them incapable of controlling their urges, would still be criminals and sexual offenders (Kline 2001).

It was also during this period that eugenic scientists began calculating statistically normal intelligence and invented our contemporary system for subdividing, hierarchically ranking, and infantilising the intellectually subnormal using IQ tests. According to Gould (1981), IQ tests, developed by the psychologist Binet, were intended not to arrange humanity into an immutable hierarchy, but to identify how schoolchildren who might benefit from extra educational supports. However, while Binet was extremely clear that his tests were not measuring intelligence, which is too complex to reduce to a single number, and cautioned that 'mental age' should *not* be taken literally,

many of his followers failed to heed the warnings. Most notably, in a 1913 journal article that illustrates how Foucauldian social species emerge through processes of scientific classification, Goddard proclaims Binet's methods to be 'a very definite and accurate' (1976: 357) measuring scale for intelligence, and goes on to use the mental age concept in a literal fashion to underpin a new quantifiable typology of feeblemindedness. Goddard proposes that an idiot has a mental age of 0–2, an imbecile of 3–7 (1976: 363). He then proposes a new category, the moron, for 'high grade defectives', with mental ages from 8 to 13. For Goddard, it is morons who constitute the greatest threat. They may look normal but they are innate criminals. Goddard wants pre-emptive action to identify the morons in our midst through psychometric testing and then to incarcerate them in institutions, not for things they have done, but for things they might do.

Psychometric testing facilitates the emergence of new social species as well as a measurable and quantifiable hierarchy of human defectiveness. But it also allows a pseudo-scientific solution to the paradox that conflicting nineteenth century discourses had produced: feebleminded adults as *both* asexual innocents and innate sex perverts. Goddard's solution, Kline (2001) suggests, is to modernise recapitulation theory by tying it to the new mental age construct. A person whose mental development is arrested before the *mental age* of nine, Goddard argues, will be an eternal innocent. However, a person whose mental development is arrested between the *mental ages* of nine and twelve – in other words, a moron – will be stuck forever at a primitive stage of development and will be 'a liar, a thief, a sex pervert' (Goddard, 1976: 366). Fascinatingly, Goddard's proposed 1913 solution to the moron problem is to incarcerate in institutions both people he understands as incurable sex perverts and those he understands as eternally innocent children. Whilst he did not foresee problems, from the contemporary perspective of paedophilia panic, the comedy of his proposal could not be any darker. Tragically, it is precisely this comedy which is performed daily in contemporary institutions for adults with intellectual disabilities.

How a speciation assemblage works in the present

Carson (2010) suggests that intellectual disability is a vastly heterogeneous classification that is subdivided into vertical types (i.e. into 'mild', 'moderate', 'severe' and 'profound') and into qualitatively different horizontal types (i.e. Down syndrome, Autism, William's syndrome). Here, I wish to contend that while horizontal types of

disability have proved historically variable – for example, the recent disappearance of the Asperger's syndrome from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* – vertical types have remained comparatively stable. While our euphemisms are constantly changing (for instance, 'morons' became 'mildly retarded'), the basic hierarchy and method of infantilisation has survived. Today, whilst nineteenth century practices of ranking and assigning mental ages to devalued genders and races are unacceptable within mainstream science, adults with intellectual disabilities remain so marked within psychiatric discourse.

At this stage I wish to turn my attention to a qualitative research project, which found the eugenicist's hierarchy also remains influential, and contributes to the production of suspicions of abuse, in a contemporary disability service (Feely 2014). As part of this project, a strategic sample of service users and providers were invited to tell their stories about the treatment of sexuality within the service. One dominant theme to emerge from the narratives was ubiquitous suspicions of sexual abuse coupled with few if any accounts of non-censual sexual relationships. This phenomenon was treated and analysed as an assemblage. The analysis involved a three step process that sought to: identify the components of the assemblage along a material/discursive continuum: map how fears of abuse flow through the assemblage; and consider how the assemblage is reterritorialised and deterritorialised.

1. Mapping components

Identifying the heterogeneous components of the Rathbeg speciation assemblage involved reading all stories relating to sexual exploitation/abuse whilst continually asking: *How are material and/or discursive forces affecting this story?* Overall stories were found to be affected by: the material/architecture spaces they occurred in; a range of information and communication technologies; embodied affects experienced by biological bodies in relation to sex (for example, 'shame', 'fear'); discourses which divide bodies into a hierarchy of intellectual species and problematise inter-species relationships (for instance, 'mild'/'normal'); discourses concerning gender, childhood, and paedophilia that operated intersectionally with the hierarchy of intellectual species; and relevant policies (for example, rules forbidding service user/provider relationships). It is important to add that only service providers spoke about services users, and judged their relationships,

in terms of hierarchical diagnoses. Meanwhile, while service users were painfully aware that there were normal people and people with intellectual disabilities, they were never told their precise hierarchical species and *had not* undergone subjectification ('I have a moderate intellectual disability'). Thus they had no way of knowing what relationships with peers service providers would deem acceptable. This was not a conscious conspiracy, simply the product of a particular historical moment when service provision remains tied to psychiatric diagnosis (whether one receives a service and which service one attends is determined by diagnosis) whilst the language used within services to address service users directly is always respectful and avoids reference to deficit-based labels.

2. Mapping Flows

The next stage of analysing narratives involved considering how fears of exploitation/abuse flow through the assemblage. In short, it seems that the sexually transmitted semiotic statuses of dangerousness and vulnerability, are passed from body to body within the assemblage as bodies coded with codes unknown to themselves ('mild', 'moderate', 'severe', 'profound') enter in and out of intimate relationships. Put differently, service users who attempt to lead an intimate life are continually infecting each other with 'danger' and 'vulnerability' in a thoroughly unintentional manner. The service provider Grace's account of the romantic history of a man called Rob provides an example of this process in action:

Grace: Lovely young man. He is also moderate intellectual disability, very independent. Again, communicates very well. Doesn't appear to have any kind of... Like doesn't appear as if he's someone with a disability. (...) There was a relationship a couple of years ago he was in with another service user. And this other service user was borderline disability and she took advantage of him. (...) And, stole some money from him, his bank account. So he is very giving, and very... When he likes someone, he'd give them everything.

Interviewer: Yeah, he's trusting?

Grace: He is. And that can be a vulnerability, you know? But Olivia, who he's going out with now, is not like that at all. She'd be very much on the same level as he would be.

Thus, whilst in a 'moderate'/'borderline' relationship, Rob is a vulnerable individual but because discourses of intelligence and gender work intersectionally, Rob is constructed as vulnerable to financial, rather than sexual, exploitation by a dangerous woman from

a higher species. However, Rob's vulnerability isn't permanent. When he enters into a new relationship with a woman 'on the same level as he would be' the danger/vulnerability dynamic collapses. This is how the statuses of dangerousness and vulnerability flow through the assemblage and, as long as these conditions hold, the flows seem guaranteed to continue.

3. Reterritorialising/deterritorialising the assemblage

The final stage of analysis involved considering how the assemblage is reterritorialised/deterritorialised and, in this section, I will present some narratives that demonstrate how this works. I will begin with stories that elucidate how the sexual isolation of the normal and intellectually disabled species is maintained.

Katie's story

The service provider Katie told a story about a service user called Gemma, a woman in her twenties. Gemma, unbeknownst to service providers and her family, posted personal profiles on mainstream internet dating sites expressing a desire to meet older men. She managed to keep her online profiles and her meetings with normal men a secret for over a year until, one day, the police knocked on the door of Gemma's family home:

Katie:	And then her mum found out.
Interviewer:	How did her mum find out?
Katie:	The police in Rathmore ((*suburb*)) were informed by Intellectual Disability Ireland ((*a disability charity*)). A guy that works for them wanted a date with a woman. So he was on the dating site himself.
Interviewer:	Yeah?
Katie:	And next minute he saw this girl and he thought: 'That girl looks like she might have Down syndrome'. (…) So he started writing to her just to see was she vulnerable or what's the story? Next minute she gave all her details: where she lived, her mobile number, absolutely everything. (…) So he was shocked. But then he started thinking: 'Oh, I've actually gone to her page. What if something happens to her? I could be implicated some way or another'. So he rang the police and the police came down to Gemma's mother's house. It was the day she had returned from hospital with a new knee!
Interviewer:	Oh Jesus.
Katie:	Oh Gemma was in shite, major shite.

It is important to note that the man who works for the disability charity and Gemma are, for a time, both legitimate subjects of the online

dating assemblage, being two adults engaging in the same activity that is putatively open to everyone over eighteen years of age. The male disability worker is searching for a partner when he comes upon Gemma's page, a virtual encounter that could have marked the beginning of a contemporary heteronormative romance. The turning point in this story, the instant when Gemma's fate is sealed, is when the male disability professional misrecognises her almond shaped eyes as the stigmata of Down's syndrome (ironically Gemma doesn't have Down's syndrome). From this moment on, the man cannot accept Gemma as a legitimate subject of the same dating assemblage as himself. Gemma ceases to be a potential date. Instead, she is discursively positioned back into the speciation assemblage from which she temporarily escaped. Within the logic of this assemblage – as a member of a lower social species who desires members of a higher social species – Gemma is necessarily vulnerable. Looking around for potential predators the man realizes, with sinking horror, that *he* is a suspect: he could be the beast. This, in turn, leads to an attempt to remove himself from the line-up of perverse suspects: '"I could be implicated some way or another". So he rang the police'. What he does not realise is that *he himself* assembled the line-up of suspects when he constructed Gemma as an inherently vulnerable body.

When the police are informed, their performativity suggests that they too understand Gemma to be an inherently vulnerable child, menaced by dangerous Others. Instead of approaching Gemma to discuss their concerns they call to her house and speak to her mother about her sexual life. These actions would be inconceivable in the case of a normal adult but are fully justifiable once Gemma becomes a child in peril. Similarly, when Katie finds out about Gemma's secret life she also reifies the construction of Gemma's body as inherently vulnerable, perpetually encircled by imaginary predators. In Katie's account of her own actions, or more accurately the account we co-construct, Gemma's vulnerability is maintained, indeed intensified, by reference to three abject characters that prowl the periphery of the Irish sexual imaginary: the libidinous black man; the dirty old man; and the online predator. The first visitation of Gemma's predatory spirit, embodied as a black man, occurs when I ask for clarification as to whether Gemma actually met any men:

Katie: Well apparently some black guy turned up to work ((*Gemma has a part-time job*)).
Interviewer: At, at her work?
Katie: Her work: looking for her.

As Katie describes how she deleted Gemma's dating profiles, the predatory spirit is materialised and embodied in a new form, becoming simultaneously an online predator and a dirty old man:

Katie: And this was going on for a year, apparently.
Interviewer: She'd been on the sites for a year?
Katie: Yah, for a year. And there's these… Like you could see the people who viewed her? Like all of these really old creepy lads? (…) Like how she wasn't…? I don't know.

Finally the story reveals that, in addition to being barred from internet dating, an unnamed person confiscates Gemma's mobile phone:

Katie: ((*Shocked and hushed tone*)) Imagine though? You couldn't keep up with them at all could you?
Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. There you go.
Katie: And she's no phone or anything now.

We have no way of knowing if any of suspects described in this story actually had any desire to harm Gemma. There did not have to be actual danger to produce the explosion of terror described; it is the construction of Gemma's body as inherently vulnerable that *produces* the fear and paranoia and makes everyone a suspect. The paranoia produced by rudimentary semiotic structures, in turn, justifies a massive response. In this story, employees of two different disability services, the Irish police force and Gemma's mother form a temporary coalition. This motley crew may be motivated by a genuine desire to protect a vulnerable person from what they understand to be a type of paedophilic abuse. However, it is easy to forget amidst the panic and paranoia, that Gemma has been silenced; her desires have been discounted; the very possibility that she could have a relationship with a normal person has been rendered utterly unthinkable. The authorities feel it is both justifiable and necessary to do whatever it takes to force Gemma out of mainstream dating. This, in turn, reterritorialises the speciation assemblage.

Cillian's story

Sometimes the 'normal'/'disabled' boundary does not have to be policed by the authorities and reterritorialisation works through neurological and somatic processes which occur *within* the biological body of a person labelled disabled. Cillian, a service user, is generally resistant to discourses which constrain, infantilise, and desexualise

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bodies coded as disabled. However, when he begins telling stories about personal experience, we catch glimpses of how these discourses can, at other times, be internalised, provoking self-surveillance. In this story, for example, Cillian describes attending a mainstream Irish heterosexual nightclub, a material-semiotic assemblage soaked in alcohol and over-coded by slurred gendered discourses and staggered embodied practices of heterosexuality:

Cillian: And then there was times that I was nightclubbing (. . .) that I was kind of anxious to go up to a girl because I have a disability and if they say something, well sexual to you, you wouldn't know what it meant.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Cillian: Or said something nice to you: you wouldn't know whether it was taking the piss out of you or what.

Within an assemblage account the relationship between ableist discourses and the anxious affects Cillian describes is complex. Presumably many men readying themselves to approach women will experience disagreeable embodied affects and find themselves thinking about their own imagined inadequacies. For Cillian, it is his status as an intellectually disabled man that leads him to doubt his competence as a sexual subject. He explains that even when he *does* summon the courage to approach girls in the nightclub, he remains haunted by *his knowledge* of the discourse of clinical psychiatry's pathologising power/knowledge of him:

Cillian: Like, when I did go and talk to a girl? I'd just get. . . Like, people talk to a girl when they're drunk? But like when I'm talking to a girl: I'm not drunk when I'm talking to a girl. But I'm afraid she'll find out: 'Oh he has a disability. I don't think he'll be a good husband, or a good boyfriend, or fiancé.'

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Cillian: 'And he won't be able to stand up for himself. He probably wouldn't know how to treat a woman' and stuff like that.

Whilst elsewhere Cillian recounts resistance, here he describes a distressing psychological and somatic process of projecting the discourses which disqualify him from valued sexual subject positions (lover, boyfriend, husband) onto the normal girl he is speaking to whilst experiencing unpleasant affects he terms 'fear' and 'anxiety'. Throughout his story, Cillian has not been identified as a disabled man nor rejected as a partner. Cillian can and does pass (he is precisely the type of man who the eugenicist Goddard feared). The distressing thoughts and the intolerable affects described occur *within* Cillian's body. Thus the prohibitions which over-code the speciation

assemblage, forbidding interspecies relations, are rhizomatically entangled with biochemical events within Cillian's body (the release of epinephrine from his adrenal gland) as well as the embodied sensations he experiences (the pounding of his heart and the trembling of the pint glass in his hand). These processes encourage Cillian, and perhaps other people like him, *not* to pursue relationships with members the normal species. This too will reterritorialise the speciation assemblage.

William and Bernie's stories

At this stage I turn to how the speciation assemblage works to maintain and restore sexual isolation between the intellectual disabled species (mild/moderate/severe/profound). William's story describes his attempts to have a relationship with a woman in his training centre. He acknowledges transgressing a species barrier but it is of the horizontal rather than the vertical variety – i.e. William has a general intellectual disability, whilst his girlfriend had Down's syndrome:

William: I met a girl: great! She had Down syndrome but she wasn't bad looking. (…) Sarah Quinn her name was.
Interviewer: Oh, I know Sarah. Sarah's a good looking girl.
William: I went out with her for about a year.

Problems begin to arise for the couple when service providers decide the relationship is illegitimate:

William: I'm more advanced. They said the girl I was with wasn't advanced enough (…) I went out with a girl in the training centre. (…) And they weren't very happy.

William's initial reaction is resistance. He refuses to accept service providers' construction of his relationship as exploitative and defends his right to date a peer in a training centre for people like him:

William: But it's like: 'Why am I here if I'm more advanced?' You know? 'Should I be in some other place?'
Interviewer: Yeah.
William: So I didn't listen to them.

However, while William exercises discursive agency and resists subjectification as an exploiter, he goes on to describe how ubiquitous surveillance both inside and outside his training centre

made an intimate relationship impossible. He is clear he felt compelled to end the relationship:

> Interviewer: So did you end up breaking it off with Sarah? Or did. . .
> William: Oh, I had to. (. . .) Hard thing really, 'cause I liked her.

In another daycentre, service provider Bernie tells a story of a couple of service users, in a similar but more serious predicament to William, who had a series of secret encounters 'on site' in the day centre before staff learned of their affair. Bernie expresses somewhat ambivalent views:

> They're two consenting adults *chronologically,* but the fact that he was mild and she was moderate? Was she really a consenting adult in her own right? So there was an awful lot of to-ing and fro-ing and an awful lot of investigation and everything. So as a result, emm, the male service user, obviously, was transferred to a different service.

Here the male becomes a possible rapist by reference to legal discourse (specifically, the construction of statutory rape) and the female is infantilised by reference to psychiatric discourse. The 'chronological' ages of the respective parties can be discounted, and separation becomes necessary, because the male body is 'mildly' disabled and the female body 'moderately'.

It is extremely important not to suggest that coercive sexual abuse of, or amongst, adults with intellectual disabilities does not occur, but this was not reported in participants' stories. Rather allegations were almost always made by a third party (a service provider or parent) and premised on a breach of a species barriers or a subjective judgment about a couple not being 'on the same level'. Indeed when illegitimate couples are separated, both parties are often described as hurt or confused. But efforts to separate the species are not always successful and, at this point, I turn to a story about deterritorialisng the assemblage.

Katie's Story

If one has been labelled intellectually disabled but can pass then relationships (albeit short-term) with members of the normal species become a possibility. Katie, for example, tells a story about a young man called Damien who is in a long-term relationship with an

older woman. This relationship does not have a sexual component and Damien finds celibacy difficult:

Katie:	So Damien was getting really frustrated because he was found shagging some young one behind Cost Crushers ((*supermarket*)).
Interviewer:	Holy crap!
Katie:	A customer! ((*Laughs*))
Interviewer:	A customer he met in Cost Crushers?
Katie:	He says they just got chatting and he says to her: 'Do you want to come around the back?'
Interviewer:	((*Laughing*))
Katie:	And he was late home. So Jessica ((*his partner*)) went up to Cost Crushers to see if she could find him. And she caught him in the act!
Interviewer:	With his pants down?
Katie:	But she forgave him. ((*Chuckle*)) She did forgive him.
Interviewer:	And the young one, was she someone with a disability he knew?
Katie:	Nah, not at all. She was just a regular customer. And I was thinking: 'Fair play to him'. ((*Laughing*)) I bet every other young lad in the country would love to go Cost Crushers and get lucky like that! I was well impressed now ((*Laughing*)).

It then becomes apparent that Damien's disability has not just ceased to deny him access to sexual subjectivity. Ironically it *is* his disability, specifically his literacy issues, which opens up the line of flight out of the speciation assemblage:

Katie:	I was like: 'Where did it happen?' And he said: 'Well I was down the aisles like, you know?' I think he wanted to make a curry, so he was in the Uncle Ben's aisle.
Interviewer:	((*Laughing*)).
Katie:	When he got chatting to this girl. And he had the jar… He couldn't understand something about the sauce: if it hot or mild or something.
Interviewer:	Right.
Katie:	It was a literacy thing. (…) So he asked this person and they got talking…

This story reminds us that the species barrier between normal and intellectually disabled is not impermeable. But it also reminds us that, in a speciation assemblage, discourses of disability and gender operate intersectionally and a story that subverts ableist discourses can simultaneously reify gendered discourses in predictable ways. To explain, despite Damien's infidelity, Katie and I co-construct his actions as a cause for celebration. This contrasts sharply with our earlier response to Gemma's attempt to meet normal men on dating sites.

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Whilst Damien's escapes from performative policing, overall more stories illustrate reterritorialisation than deterritorialisation. This is, perhaps, inevitable as service providers can only recount incidents they know of. But in any case, the stories arising from a speciation assemblage inevitably raise the problem of whether to read them as instances of deterritorialisation or reterritorialisation: they are almost always about both. For example, William and his girlfriend Sarah dated for a year before the authorities intervened; Gemma was involved in online dating for a year before she was caught and so on.

Conclusion: unsettling the assemblage

I have argued that, within the specific material context of the disability service, the entanglement of psychiatric hierarchies of deficit with discourses around sexual vulnerability has created a speciation assemblage that will continually produce suspicions, allegations, and investigations regarding abuse. How then might critical disability studies challenge the eugenicist's hierarchy of humanity?

Our contemporary conceptual framework for producing a hierarchy of normal and defective human beings and then infantilising the latter, as well as many discursive fears around disability and sexuality, are in many ways the inventions of minds that held erroneous beliefs regarding biological evolution. Contemporary evolutionary biologists are unequivocal that 'essentialism and evolution are incompatible' (Ereshefsky 2007:9). However, whilst essentialist thought is out of favour in the material sciences, it survives within the human sciences. As Davis (2010) has shown in the nineteenth century the essentialist concept of the ideal was effectively replaced by the statistical norm. Today clinical psychiatry continues to utilise this neo-essentialist framework to position certain human beings as embodying flawed copies of the norm.

The association of evolutionary biology with eugenics and socio-biology has contributed to an understandable aversion to it amongst disability scholars. Davis (2010:7) notes, for example, that evolutionary theories have served 'to place disabled people along the wayside as evolutionary defectives'. However, as Grosz (2004) found when she began critically engaging with Darwinism, evolutionary theory may actually prove very productive for those that seek to challenge essentialist thought. From a critical disability perspective, to demonstrate that the essentialism underpinning clinical psychiatry's obsession with normal/abnormal distinctions is potentially considered untenable within the material sciences, to which psychiatry aspires,

may prove significantly more damaging than constructionist critiques that are often dismissed as unscientific.

There is no reason, aside from a century of reification and naturalisation, to accept the eugenicists' hierarchy of humanity and their mental age concept; or to settle for new euphemisms ('How dare you call him an imbecile: he is moderately retarded!'; 'How dare you call him moderately retarded: he is a person with a moderate intellectual disability!'). The entire system of scientifically classifying difference as defect can be dismantled given enough political will. It would, of course, be naïve to believe that an end to mainstream scientific practices of hierarchically ranking humanity into intellectual species alone would bring an end to disablism. Nonetheless, for many living with these labels, it might constitute a welcome development.[2]

Notes

1. There is widespread confusion in Ireland, at present, regarding the legal status of sex with or between people with intellectual disabilities at present.
2. Thank you to: the research participants, the Connect People Network, Margrit Shildrick, and the peer reviewers.

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