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In 'Liberal Individualism and Deleuzean Relationality,' Clegg, Murphy, and Almack argue that the ability to choose has become something of a dogma in the management of intellectual disability, and one that sits badly with the heterogeneity of those with intellectual disabilities. They argue for a move away from choice as the primary ethical category to an ethics of relationality, following from the work of Deleuze and Guattari, to offer a more nuanced and stable form of care. In this commentary, I set out the theoretical considerations that Deleuze and Guattari take to underlie such an ethics, and then briefly question the focus of their uptake of Deleuze and Guattari. Although Deleuze and Guattari may indeed provide the resources to more adequately think of how to care for those with intellectual disabilities, choice remains at the core of their ethics. I argue that the acceptance of heterogeneity (and a metaphysics of the accident) that emerges from taking life rather than the human to be the center of their ethics, nonetheless leaves them better able to deal with the continuity of intellectual disability.

Deleuze writes at one point that 'Descartes' famous suggestion that good sense…is of all things the most equally distributed rests upon no more than an old saying, since it amounts to reminding us that men are prepared to complain of a lack of memory, imagination or even hearing, but they always find themselves well served with regard to intelligence and thought' (Deleuze, 1994, p. 132). Deleuze's claim here is essentially that Descartes elevates what is merely a prejudice of common sense to a philosophical principle that forms the basis of his philosophy. Descartes is critical of Aristotle's definition of man as a rational animal:

> If, in order to explain what an animal is, he were to reply that it is a 'living and sentient being', that a living being is an 'animate body', and that a body is a 'corporeal substance', you see immediately that these questions would be pure verbiage, which would elucidate nothing and leave us in our original state of ignorance.' (Descartes, 1984, p. 410)

But although Descartes rejects Aristotle's definition, he still accepts the idea that man is understood as a being defined by having a certain property: 'of all the attributes I once claimed as my own there is only one left worth examining, and that is thought' (p. 415). This metaphysical claim about what is essential to man leads easily to an ethical view of the world that ties together reason with autonomy. Here, we come to the problem of choice that Clegg et al. highlight. The three case studies all show different degrees of intellectual disability, and hence different degrees of ability to

reflectively choose their own preferences, ranging from those who are severely impaired, to those capable of coherently expressing preferences. When we derive an ethics of the human from a single characteristic, then we quickly find ourselves in the position where the heterogeneity of human beings means that those at some remove from the norm fit badly, but also that deviation from the norm is understood as deficiency. What seems to be a simple criterion for determining action quickly becomes ambiguous given the complexity of individuals' situations and abilities and, as the paper shows, even when support services do operate effectively, this is normally in spite of their explicit focus on choice. Deleuze calls the metaphysical basis for this kind of approach to the world, where existence is carved up into entities identified by properties, a 'sedentary distribution' (Deleuze, 1994, p. 37).

Much of Deleuze's work involves attempting to shift the focus of our understanding of the world from an anthropocentric view to a view centered on life. In doing so, Deleuze moves away from an understanding of life divided into species circumscribed by a set of properties towards a view of life as process and relation. At the heart of this model is the notion of ethology developed by the biologist, Jakob von Uexküll as an alternative way of defining different forms of life. For Uexküll, what defines a being is not a property or set of properties, but rather its capacities to affect and be affected. These define which features of the world an organism can engage with, or what a world for it is. The classical example of such a definition is Uexküll's definition of the world of the tick, which he claims is governed by three affects:

> He will define the animal by three affect: the first has to do with light (climb to the top of a branch); the second is olfactive (let yourself fall onto the mammal that passes beneath the branch); and the third is thermal (seek the area without fur, the warmest spot). (Deleuze, 1988, p. 124)

A Thousand Plateaus takes up this notion of defining forms of life in terms of the way the relations between speeds and slownesses of parts that determine their structure allow them to enter into encounters with some phenomena but not others. In this sense, we have the quite a different definition of life to the one found in Aristotle and Descartes, because rather than being defined by a property, the organism is instead defined—and, Deleuze and Guattari will argue, constituted—by its relationships to the world around it. Here, affect provides a way of determining classes of objects that does not rely on the notion of species. Thus, when Deleuze cites Little Hans' list of the affects of a draft horse, ('to be proud, to have blinkers, to go fast, to pull a heavy load, etc.' [Deleuze, 1988, p. 124]) he uses it to note that 'there are greater differences between a plow horse or draft horse and a racehorse than between an ox and plow horse. This is because the racehorse and plow horse do not have the same affects nor capacity to be affected' (Deleuze, 1988, p. 124). We therefore move away from the discontinuous conception of life based on species and genera. One of the central consequences of this position is that we no longer have a sharp division between human beings and other forms of life. Similarly, within a species, organisms are no longer defined by their distance from an archetypal form, but instead, differences can be positively interpreted by differences in affective relations and possible encounters. This is a point that Spinoza also makes in his *Ethics*, where he claims that 'there is no small difference between the joy which guides the drunkard and the joy possessed by the philosopher' (de Spinoza, 1992, p. EIIIP57S). Here, Spinoza points to different affects at play within the species of mankind that can be understood positively, albeit hierarchically, and not simply in terms of lack.

Such a brief sketch cannot hope to justify Deleuze and Guattari's position, or even present the most elementary of its nuances, but we can already see that such an approach will have ethical implications. As an example, Deleuze takes up Spinoza's interpretation of the story of Adam eating the fruit of knowledge. Rather than see God's commandment not to eat the fruit as a prohibition, Spinoza and Deleuze see the commandment as merely a statement of the natural consequence of eating the apple. 'This is an instance of an encounter between two bodies whose characteristic relations are not compatible: the fruit will act as a poison; that is, *it will determine the parts of Adam's body…to enter into new relations that no longer accord with his own essence*' (Deleuze, 1988, p. 22). What Deleuze

draws from this analysis is a claim that ethics involves entering into relations that fit with our natures, and avoid those encounters that tend to weaken us. Deleuze characterizes those encounters that increase our ability to be affected by the world as joyful, and sad encounters as those that reduce our ability to be affected. We can immediately see how the move to an ethics of relationality in this manner offers some advantages over a traditional ethics when it comes to treating those with an intellectual disability. Because the essence of the individual is not defined by their distance from an archetype of what a human being should be, but instead in terms of the affective relations they are able to hold, we have an ethics that fits well with the heterogeneity of those with intellectual disabilities. Different individuals are understood as having different affective possibilities, rather than different levels of degradation from an archetypal model of the human. It is an ethics of life, rather than of one species, and hence is able to deal with divergent forms of life within a species effectively. In each of the case studies provided, there is the possibility of a joyful life, because joy is an increase in power, rather than a particular state to be reached. As such, a greater openness to the world is a possibility for all life. In this regard, we might claim that, for Deleuze and Guattari, the term intellectual disability itself is problematic, because it carries within it an archetypal model of the human where deviation is conceived of as deficit.

Although a relational ethics is, therefore, a continuous ethics, and offers the possibility of recognizing the importance of situation and community in relation to providing a joyful life for those with intellectual disabilities, there are a number of potential issues with Clegg et al.'s use of it.

First, despite their formulation of an ethics of relationality as an alternative to an ethics of choice, in fact, choice remains central to the ethics of Deleuze and Guattari. Encounters can increase our ability to relate to the world, or reduce it. For Spinoza, an individual is good if they strive to organize their encounters so they agree with their essence, whereas a bad individual will be one 'who lives haphazardly, who is content to undergo the effects of his encounters, but wails and accuses every time the effect undergone do not agree with him and reveals his own impotence' (Deleuze, 1988, p. 23). The move to an understanding of the world as process, derived from Bergson and Nietzsche, shift Deleuze and Guattari away from Spinoza (as normally understood) somewhat, but they still present a similar ethical demand. The project of being open to encounters involves finding a middle path between dissolving into pure process and hence losing all individual consistency, and fixing the organization of life to the extent that all encounters become impossible. They define the ethical project as follows:

> This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on the stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 161)

The choice here is not a rational choice. It also is not the consumerist choice between different commodities that are all essentially of the same order of being that the authors criticize. Rather, what Deleuze and Guattari are suggesting is the necessity of making a choice about how we conceive of the world more generally; whether we see it as a place of static categories, or of process and possibility. Although Deleuze and Guattari offer a more gradated view of the ethical subject, moving to an ethics of relationality will not remove the need to have some understanding of choice in our ethics. In fact, given that this choice is not between objects, but between metaphysical assumption that determine what we consider an object, incorporating choice into care for those with intellectual disabilities may be even more difficult.

This leads to the second potential problem with applying Deleuze and Guattari's thought. Although Deleuze and Guattari favor relationality, the ethical impulse in their work is toward opening the way to experimenting with other forms of life. It is thus unclear whether Deleuze and Guattari would favor the kind of stable environments that often seem of benefit to those with intellectual disabilities. Such environments may well serve to forestall the kinds of experimental forms of living

that Deleuze and Guattari favor. The village life that gave meaning to Lottie's life, for instance, could be seen as a way of closing down encounters by Deleuze and Guattari. In this regard, it is worth pointing out that the key concept of their ethical theory, the body without organs, is derived from the work of Antonin Artaud, whose creativity was inseparable from his schizophrenia. This points to a revolutionary aspect to Deleuze and Guattari's thought that goes beyond simply finding more creative institutional solutions. Rather, the ethics of relationality is about creating entirely novel forms of living that break with our sedimented habits of relating to other people. Whether a more moderate ethical attitude can be developed on the basis of their work which preserves its freshness is something that can only be determined with further work in this area, perhaps looking at some of the models Guattari himself developed at the La Borde clinic.

So although the move to an ethics of life provides a basis for thinking through the heterogeneous population of those with intellectual disabilities without having to define them purely negatively, we cannot avoid the notion of choice, even if choice is now the locus of experimentation, rather than reason. Although an ethics of relationality is promising, and perhaps also points to a richer, more nuanced understanding of the world, it does not resolve the problem that autonomy of some kind seems destined to be a central moment in any ethics of which we can conceive.

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