

**Affective economies, autism, and ‘challenging behaviour’:
socio-spatial emotions in disabled children’s education**

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Affective economies, autism, and 'challenging behaviour': socio-spatial emotions in disabled children's education

Introduction

This paper tells a story of a small action in a fleeting moment of a morning spent in a UK special school classroom with Molly, a child with an autism diagnosis. It brings the socio-politically active sphere of Critical Disability Studies (Goodley, 2014; Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2014; Titchkosky and Michalko, 2012; Shildrick, 2012; Titchkosky 2011) and more recently, the emergent Disabled Children's Childhood Studies (Runswick-Cole, Curran and Liddiard, 2017; Curran and Runswick-Cole, 2013) into conversation with emotional geographies in education (Kenway and Youdell, 2011). It does this by drawing together the theoretical tools of Ahmed's affective economies (2004a; 2004b) to explore the interventions in the everyday lives of disabled school children.

The psychologisation and pathologisation of behaviours and emotions in childhood

It was in the psychologising of learning, emotions, and behaviour in mass education that the means by which the technologies of how an individual became 'made' was most readily enacted for children (Foucault, 1975). Psychologisation, that is, 'to make something psychological' is the process by which the moral, social and political become understood as having residence in the psychological (Madsen and Brinkmann, 2011, p.180). De Vos describes it as '...the phenomenon of how the psy-sciences became a hegemonic discourse delivering particular signifiers and discursive schemes for looking upon oneself and upon the world' (2010, p. 1). By gathering people on mass, such as the institution of schooling, Foucault explains, it

became possible to observe and delineate the commonalities and differences that created an ordered sense of knowledge, and a knowable individual (ibid). The natural sciences took these observations and mapped normality and abnormality as a matrix by which the behaviours of an individual were measured and became known (Burman, 2008), of particular significance to disabled children and their childhoods. Through the rise of psychology's interest of a child's interior was a process of biopower, 'difference was no longer marking itself unambiguously on the surface of the individual; it was receding into the interiority of the soul. It would have to be made legible' (Rose, 1990, p.14). These 'inscriptions' on/of individual children made the invisible visible, through the means of 'making' a person; categories, labels, markers of normality and abnormality gave life to the pathologisation of children deemed to hold the individual characteristics that warranted an autism label. The 'making' of a child was made possible, Rose (2008) tells us, through the 'gaze of the psychologist' (p.135). 'The child here is caught up within a complicated arrangement that transforms it into a visible, observable and analysable object, within a particular rational scientific discourse (developmental psychology) making a particular kind of claim upon our attention, a claim to truth (p.147). Where deviance had previously been mapped through moral criteria, the turn to psychology, legitimised as aligned with medicine, allowed for the classification of normality and abnormality to be delineated; through normalising development it was possible to identify abnormality (Burman, 2008, p.20). The psychologist's gaze (Rose, 1990) that used standardised testing, such as the IQ test, allowed for the moral judgements implicit in such classification of a child's normality or deviance to be presented as neutrally scientific, a claim to truth (ibid), both 'invisible and incontrovertible' through the apparatus of statistical norms impartiality (Burman, 2008, p.25). This was the technology of pathologisation which rippled in to the discourse of 'challenging behaviour' we so readily see enacted through the subjectivication of children deemed to live within spaces of disorder, such as autism.

De-psychologising and de-pathologising behaviours and emotions in childhood

Emotions are a tricky endeavour for children labelled with autism. I start here not to fall in to the dominant trope of pathologising the emotional lives of children with these labels as is the traditional discourse (see American Psychological Association, DSM-5, 2013), but instead, to actively relocate our focus away from this pathologisation. Disabled children's childhoods are surveilled, quantified and intervened upon throughout their lives (Runswick-Cole, Curran and Liddiard, 2017; Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2010; Burman, 2008; Billington, 2006) and nowhere more so than within education where descriptions of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are garnered (Penketh, 2014). For children who have attracted an autism diagnosis, this readily translates in to a surveillance and management of their emotional lives through a subtle move of collapsing experiences of emotions into behavioural symptomatology of autism (Smith, 2016a, 2016b). Interventions to improve normative social communication, and increasingly rectify 'emotional dysregulation' are common place in children's everyday educational experiences once a pathological or psychological root to a child's difference has been observed and identified . Resistance to the dominant discourse of necessary 'intervention' upon neurodiverse ways of being has been led by community activists and academics seeking to dismantle the naturalisation of the non-disabled imperative as the only developmental trajectory available to children (see Brown, Ashkenazy & Giwa Onaiwu, 2017; Milton, 2014; Loud Hand Project, 2012; Dawson, 2004). Such resistance speaks back to the discursive power of pathologisation and psychologisation that positions disabled or neurodiverse ways of being in the world as sites of particular educational reparation.

This paper reorientates our gaze away from the pathologisation of emotions and behaviour and towards an exploration of the socio-spatial mediation of emotions in disabled children's lives. This is a novel approach in research around autism and education which traditionally so readily individualises the school child and directs all attention to markers of abnormal development and calls for active, and immediate intervention to rectify such atypicality (Smith, 2016b).

Coming from a Critical Disability Studies perspective, more recently, Disabled Children's Childhood Studies rejects the call for intervention to move a child towards normative developmental trajectory, and instead calls for a recognition of the everyday humanity and potentialities of bodies and minds beyond ableist or limiting descriptions of disorder or impairment (Runswick-Cole et al., 2017; Smith, 2016a, 2016b; Curran and Runswick-Cole, 2013). Such a refocusing of our gaze gives space to consider the everyday lives of disabled children to give due attention to the ways that subjectivities are produced, reproduced and resisted on a daily basis. Through such a reorientation we can explore how the subjectivation of children labelled with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) becomes *between* bodies and spaces rather than residing within an individual child's pathology or psychology. This is vital in both the policy and practice of education when considered in the broader historic and contemporary context of abuses of those within society deemed 'challenging' through pathologisation of their everyday lives (for a contemporary UK picture see Winterbourne View: Undercover Care: The Abuse Exposed, 2011; Justice for LB, 2014; Seven Days of Action, 2017). As I will go on to show, in pathologising emotions, behaviours, and actions, disabled children become sites for the legitimising of unsolicited touch and everyday intervention. The small and seemingly mundane interactions I explore are not, by any means, abuse, but act as an exemplar of the forms of subjectivation that drip-feed a broader contemporary context in which those with autism, learning disabilities or considered 'challenging', are deemed less-than-human (Goodley and Runswick-Cole and Liddiard, 2016; Goodley, Lawthom and Runswick-Cole, 2014; Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2014). We only need look to the Seven Days of Action (2017) or Justice for LB (2014) campaigns to appreciate the bleak and dehumanising prospects individuals who are subjectivated as 'challenging' face if we do not give due and urgent attention to the ways in which their everyday lives are conceptualised, and intervened upon (Brown et al., 2017).

Storytelling as methodology and analysis

The story in this paper, written as part of fieldwork with disabled children and their families, is an integral ethnographic method, analytic practice and more. Having written of the ethical

slipperiness of storytelling as research method and practice elsewhere (Pluquailec 2017; Smith 2016a; Smith, 2016b), I stay here with a discussion of storytelling's methodological and analytic potentials. More than ever simply documenting or representing a time, place, space or event, this writing takes up the calls of Pandian and McLean (2017) to imagine,

'...a spirit of textual adventure that took writing as a practice immanent to the world, rather than as detached reflection upon the world itself....This is not the familiar image of a knower examining the things of a the world at a safe remove, or the idea of a text as a representation that stands apart from the world that it depicts. Instead, what is conveyed here is the chance for something more profound and unsettling to happen...ways of lingering with the vicissitudes and implications of empirical encounters....a means of marking and maintaining an openness to events, surprises, and contingencies, to a reality that is as much a source of questions and provocation as of answers' (Pandian and McLean, 2017, pp. 3-4).

In adopting these practices in both the writing and analysis of this story, I turn to the work of emotions. Emotions here are not an individualised, internal psychology but understood through a socio-spatial lens (Davidson et al., 2008; Davidson et al., 2005) to attend to the palpable emotions of the story at hand and those involved in its constitution. Discourses embedded within school spaces exert power over possible ways of being known for children such as Molly. From this perspective, emotions act as a '....socio-spatial mediation and articulation rather than as entirely interiorised subjective mental states' (Davidson et al., 2005, p.3), which are located in bodies and places and relationally between them. This allows for an analysis that considers the dynamic between emotion and power and the influences of the structures of schooling (Procter, 2013, p.497). Such a turn to emotion explores the affective economies at work; how emotional capital is afforded to some and denied others (Ahmed, 2004). That is not to suggest that the deployment of emotional capital results in fixed subjects, rather that it makes some emotions more possible than others. As Roche (1999, p.479) reminds us, 'children...have to make their own space in spaces not of their making'.

An attention to emotions requires the analytic means to do so. I am interested here in MacLure et al.'s (2010, p.5) writing on 'that which resists analysis', as this story did, for many months feel like just one of those moments. Finding an analytical hook for these particular stories *had* to attend to emotional work because, in returning to them time and again, I recognised them as

steeped in emotion for Molly, myself, and all involved. I needed an analysis that explored such a relation. I was drawn to Stewart's (2007) work on affect as the means to let the meaning-making from that morning 'sit' before jumping to its representation. Attending to affect '...tries to slow the quick jump to representational thinking and evaluative critique long enough to find ways of approaching the complex and uncertain objects that fascinate because they literally hit us or exert a pull on us' (Stewart, 2007, p.4). I address Jones and Holmes' (2015, n.p.) call to resist 'the suspicion of a creative analysis', manufacturing a 'sedated response' and instead to 'touch the gut of the affect'. The sedated response would be a singular explanation or exploration with a tidy and coherent coding of objects (emotions, behaviours, causes, effects). The creative analysis instead brings us back to the writer enmeshed within the storied representation, and a way of lingering with the provocations and questions that such empirical encounters generate (Pandian and McLean, 2017). This centres multiplicity in which there are any number of ways of relating to that morning and the stories told of it, which will always be an excess. In that sense, an account, and any attempt to analyse its realities, becomes a tale (Paper Boat Collective, 2017). As the Paper Boat Collective (2017) remind us, explanations that come too quickly are guilty of betrayal, '...injustice to the complexity of the world, an explaining away of things and details that don't quite fit. Fidelity to the real may consist in acknowledging that it will always exceed the account we are able to give of it' (pp.22-23). In recognising that this morning will always be an excess, I turn now to a story, a particular telling, called 'Biting in the classroom'. This is a story written of a morning I spent in a classroom in a special school with Molly. Reading, writing about, or perhaps most significantly, experiencing, 'touching the gut' of that morning demands an attention to that which emanated from, but exceeded, the assembling of the bodies in that space (Jones and Holmes, 2015); the affective economies that hung in the air.

Biting in the classroom

I arrive in the school's one-way parking system just before the morning bell behind a convoy of battered and bruised local authority buses. Children of all shapes and sizes are disembarking with assistants in tow. This is quite the operation; taxis drop older children

closer to the path and school staff ferry the children, their bodies and various equipment towards the entrance. I get to reception at the same time as the straggling students who are collected and deposited in classrooms along the corridor ahead of me. I'm asked to take a seat while the teacher gets the children settled and stop to look at the staff photo board - I scan at least 150 staff members sprawling the reception wall.

I'm greeted by a smiling teacher, Anna, who directs me back to her classroom with pace and enthusiasm. We sweep through the locked, heavy door and into the classroom. It's tiny and packed to the rafters with bodies, adults and children alike. I perch on a spare chair in the corner and spot Molly in the opposite corner just as I tune in to her ghettoblaster playing Disney hits.

'Oooh it's nice to have a change of CD today Molly!' The teacher calls out over her head. None of the other five children have music playing, I wonder if they like Molly's taste.

Each child has their own designated workspace, partitioned from their neighbour and facing outwards to the wall. Anna seems very focused, scanning the room of children. Each child is doing something different, self-directed and self-directing. The teaching assistants mill around singing nursery rhymes vaguely in the direction of one child or another whilst busying themselves with chatter between themselves.

'What's Rhett's Syndrome?' says one, flipping through a child's individual file and passing it to another assistant.

Molly's workspace has a visual timetable pinned to the wall, her CD player blasting Disney classics, a visual communication book, and a box labelled 'finished'. She sits back, crossing her legs. She leans into one of the assistant's body and drapes herself over the staff member's arm, leaning into her lap. Her attention seems to be firmly directed towards her music. 'No climbing Molly, you'll fall', a different assistant directs, shouting across the room. Molly pulls her body back to sit on her chair.

There's rarely a moment when everyone's in the room. Two new children appear through the door, one lead by the hand whimpering. 'It wasn't that bad!' Anna assures with a chipper smile crouching down to the body. She sits him at his workspace. He wails.

It's circle time. A door I hadn't noticed has been unlocked and we're led into an even smaller space that is dark and stuffily hot. An interactive whiteboard fills the entirety of one wall and a collection of tiny chairs is crammed in front of it. The children are directed towards previously assigned seats, each with an assistant sitting between them and the next child. I clamber over big and small bodies to the darkest, smallest corner of the room in order to take up as little space as possible. Anna sweeps into the room with the air of enthusiastic purpose and authority that seems to command both the children and staff's attention. The squirming bodies are reorganised and reseated when they wander. There's nowhere to go anyway as Anna has her chair directly in front of the door. Swathes of internet-based videos take us through short, focussed bursts of attention; the Good Morning song, the Thursday song, the Name Game, Gym Time. It's a seemingly endless barrage of open browser tabs. During the Hello Song, accompanied by Makaton from the adults, Molly springs to her feet, hurling herself the two meters across the room towards the screen, whooping and bashing the wrong photo assigned for her name on the screen. There's a flurry of chaos as she hits someone else's name and throws off the sequence of the activity. A quick redirection; 'It's Gym Time!' Anna enthuses switching browser tabs. Before I know it a cartoon insect is blaring 'Wind the Bobbin Up', booming through the small space.

Molly's largely left alone when she's passive in her chair, attention instead being directed towards other receptive or unruly children. Some of the children have constant physical touch from a staff member seemingly to encourage them to stay seated. This varies from tight, comforting brushing of the children's arms, which seems relaxing, to an arm across the lap for wriggling bodies.

The youtube videos stream on. Anna looks down to some paperwork, the assistants communicating in eye glances and smiles between themselves above the children's small, seated selves. A Fifty Shades of Grey advert perforates the Early Years atmosphere abruptly. Molly becomes loud and agitated. There's a sharp intake of breath and a high-pitched squeal from one of the assistants next to Molly and a wet mouth-shaped ring on the arm of her t-shirt. 'Did she bite you?!' exclaims one of the other assistants, followed by another.

'Did she?! The little....!' They're furious.

Anna takes Molly by the hand and out of room in one fell swoop. The background videos demand attention amidst the newly tense and chaotic air. The assistant that has been bitten is a substitute, shipped in from another class for the day whilst the regular staff member is off. She half smiles, playing it down, whilst commenting that it's quite painful and rubbing her arm vigorously. The other staff hurry to her aid with a barrage of instructions and advice; they send her out of the room to clean her arm and check if it's bleeding, all the while suggesting she goes to the hospital. I take the opportunity to leave the flurry of emotions too and go back to the classroom where Anna is sitting closely opposite Molly working quietly on a maths task. 'Molly likes things just ready', she turns to say to me, 'It was Mr Grey that did it!' she half-chuckles nervously turning her body back towards Molly. She leans in close now, holding her arm and her gaze, 'What are we going to do with you Molly Smith?' she exhales.

I go back into the circle time room, which still seems unsettled and tense. Without Anna in the room, the other staff seem nervous and the children are watching youtube or entertaining themselves. The bitten-substitute-assistant has more energy than the others and tries to engage the child next to her with the video on the screen. Each time an advert comes on the outside world sneaks in for 20 seconds. Molly's been returned to the room in the interim and takes her seat next to the substitute she had bitten ten minutes earlier. The mood seems less hurried now and Molly turns to lie across the substitute's body. 'I felt her tummy rumble!' she laughs.

'Ooooh she likes her food,' each of the assistants comments in turn.

Anna comes back, taking her seat in front of the door seemingly stressed and flustered.

'Would you call it physical bullying?', Anna looks up from the form in front of her. 'I have to do an Assault Form. Is it physical bullying?' she looks to the assistants.

'I definitely wouldn't say it was,' offers the substitute, 'she was happy before. It wasn't working, that's what triggered it.'

'She was angry,' another assistant tuts across the room. The other assistants mumble seemingly in agreement.

'Autistic kids don't like things to change'.

'She's not in after-school club today, I'll write it in her diary to her mum', Anna concludes.

There's an obvious division of worlds now, the staff chatting over the children's heads and the children's world of the huge screen lighting up the room.

What follows are a number of explorations of this story that coalesce around the ways in which socio-spatial emotions serve to produce, reproduce and resist particular ways of knowing and subjectivating disabled children in school spaces. In remaining faithful to the methodology and analysis of storytelling introduced earlier, none of these explorations attempts to represent or complete a singular ways of relating to the story. Instead, I focus upon highlighting the pathologisation of emotions in school spaces, taking up a Disabled Children's Childhood Studies call to refocus our attention towards potentialities and humanity in disabled children's childhoods.

Affective Economies in the school classroom

As Ahmed (2004a) sees it, an analogy of Marx's model of capital can be applied to the accumulation of emotional capital, as an affective economy. This is a recognition, not of emotions' residence in the individual's interior, but of the becoming of emotions through bodies, boundaries and surfaces. This is a particularly useful analytical line of thought to

develop in the context of pathologised childhoods in education as it allows exploration of spaces and bodies without situating emotions as residing in individual children's disordered bodies or minds. 'Affect does not reside in object or sign, but as an affect of circulation between objects and signs (= accumulation of affect over time)' (p.121). Certain signs accumulate more and more affect as they circulate, to the point that they become recognised as 'containing' affect. Taking this further in relating 'feelings' to Marx's 'commodity fetish', Ahmed (2004, pp.120-121) explains how feelings become to *look* like objects, or have residence *in* objects, only through the concealment of their social, historical exchange and accumulation. 'In this way, emotions have a 'rippling' effect (Ahmed, 2014): they move sideways, connecting bodies together, as well as backwards and forwards, connecting to traces of the past and orientations towards the future' (Procter and Hackett, 2017, p. 217). It is through this accumulation, this circulation, this exchange, that certain emotions gain weight, seemingly sticking to bodies and garnering particular ways of being known. What were those particularly 'sticky' emotions building to in terms of possible ways of knowing Molly? How did they come to be and what would they become?

The affective economies associated with pathologisation are no coincidence. Where diagnostic labels such as autism now exist, once sat descriptions of the naughty, difficult, problem child. Pathologisation has a long history with the problem child (see Rose, 1990). In work around how children 'become a problem' in education, MacLure et al. (2012) explored the complex interplay of discipline and learning that lead to children acquiring a reputation as a problem; a particularly sticky set of emotions that seem at times to be somewhat collapsed into diagnostic labels. When the practice of Early Years (0-5 years old) pedagogy, which fluxes between discipline and learning, care and control (Burman, 2008), works alongside (on?) a pathologised body, what (or who?) is it possible to be or become?

What churns through my own gut in the story of that morning of 'biting' is Rogers' (2013, p.992) poignant reminder; within education settings, 'it is fine to be different but not difficult'. What happens when one does not only *have* problems but *is* a problem (Titchkosky and Michalko, 2012)? These are the sticky emotions of an affective economy at work on a micro scale

between adults and children in Molly's school world. In a classroom of difference, in a special school of inclusion, the staff (I can only assume) were fully signed-up to an ethos of inclusive difference. They seemed to be, given their interactions with the more docile children in the classroom, the ones that embodied their difference in less physical, more malleable, more desirable ways. This is not to overstate that the pathologised child is a trapped, deterministic subject; subjectivity is, as Butler reminds us, malleable, it is 'a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint' (2004, p.1 in MacLure et al., 2012).

Through the affective economy of concealment (Ahmed, 2006; 2004a), Molly's bite *appears* to generate emotional responses that are both natural and necessary. The strength of emotion and condemnation appears without a history of moralising biting as wrong and unacceptable; as if it were an object rather than a sign (ibid). The staff's shock and fear only appear through the concealment of such moralising. Here the accumulation of emotional capital is afforded to Molly in its negative; the circulation of affective exchange in which Molly is associated with emotions of fear, disappointment, pity, anger, is so rich that its history is negated. The culmination of these small acts, a bite, a thrown object, a broken rule, has been steeped in affective relations that lead to the seemingly naturalised emotional response that came to be between Molly and the staff members in that room. The bite, its aftermath and the emotions that come to be around it neither begin *nor* end there. To reiterate, it is in *moving* that these emotions gather weight, that some become stickier than others (Ahmed, 2004). It is in the emotions that seem to stick to ways of knowing Molly that make some ways of being known more possible than others. Those sticky emotions that fail to glide over Molly do so not in a vacuum but within a wider framing of pathologisation; the economies at work in that room rely not just on affective histories between individuals but alongside diagnostic understandings of her label as autistic.

Collapsing emotion into behaviour: autism and ‘challenging behaviour’

Challenging behaviour discourse is framed by the dynamics of a relation; ‘it’, the behaviour or the person displaying it, *becomes* challenging when ‘it’ exerts itself on an other. Challenging behaviour comes into being in relation to an other. The emotional response of the other has been well documented (Hastings & Brown, 2002; Rose, Horne & Hastings, 2004; Hastings, 1995). This exertion is often itself framed within embodied emotional terms; causing harm, distress, hurting another, shouting, hitting, losing control. Such behaviours have been shown within research to be associated with negative emotions and very rarely with positive feelings from the point of view of that other (Bromley & Emerson, 1995; Hastings, 1995; Chavira et al., 2000). Within such a discourse, behaviour is a manifestation of an emotional state, most commonly understood as an excess of a negative (undesirable) emotion; distress, anxiety, confusion, frustration, anger. Behaviour, in these terms, is an externalising of an internal emotional state. These behaviours, which represent internal emotional states, are understood through an emotional recognition as ‘challenging’, that is, negative or undesirable. Choosing such a psychological (or pathological) understanding of emotions over socio-spatial conceptualisations is needed to maintain the asymmetry of power between the individual and the other (Procter, 2013). Those that do *not* display such behaviours are afforded the emotional capital in such a relation; they are recognised as controlled, rational, competent, and thus, powerful. Capital is revoked from individuals unable to contain the external manifestation of their internal states through positioning their emotions as ‘lower’ (Ahmed, 2004b); attributes of a disordered mind, pre-intentional, an impaired body (with impaired emotional competence). At best, these behaviours, read as rubbing up against emotions, are understood as an attempt to communicate. By revoking emotional capital, the individual becomes a site for intervention; how to develop emotions that are valuable, and valued as ‘higher’; that which can be re-presented as an attribute of intelligence (Ahmed, 2004a; 2004b). Within challenging behaviour discourse, this is the strategic intervention to develop ‘functional communication’ (Carr & Durand, 1985); where emotions that are recognised as legitimate and valued are rewarded through the recognition of their communicative intent. The valuing of functional

communication is the commodity fetish of emotions in action; the concealment of its historical value as a 'tool for the project of life' (Ahmed, 2004, p.4). Children who develop functional communication, which removes the requirement for bringing challenging emotional work, can gain the status of neoliberal human in the making; rational, contained, and with the potential for future independence and productivity (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2014).

Impossible/ proper emotions in schools

It appears easy to implicate emotions in and around the bite. Contained, rational humans don't bite each other, children often do. Part of the socialisation of children involves the moralising of biting one another as wrong. When a child understands something is wrong they stop (or eventually stop) doing it. Or so normative developmental psychology suggests (see Murray-Law, 2011; Claffey et al., 1994). In moralising the act of biting, Molly sat outside of the bounds of the socialised, normatively developing human. If it was driven by emotion, with intention, or desire (as opposed to 'autism symptomatology'), it was wrong. It cannot be possible that Molly wanted to bite the substitute, because this is not possible in school, it is an impossible emotion (Youdell, 2009). It disrupts the normative developmental trajectory of a child of her age that appeared to haunt the classroom of this special school. To bite is to harm and to harm is wrong. To be a proper school child is to be a moral child who understands the virtues of right and wrong (ibid).

The master translation of the affective economies at work in classrooms with labelled children, such as Molly, has been to pathologise the dynamics of such emotional relations through a particular discourse that sticks to autism; challenging behaviour. Discourses of behaviour, in relation to children with autism diagnosis, are powerful and legitimised by, and with, bodily practices in education (see for example Team-Teach, 2010). Research tells us, in fact, that children with a label of special educational needs are far more likely to be touched, or restrained, than those without (Allan, 1996). Why then is physical contact deemed legitimate in the lives of these children (Hodge, 2014) amongst a wider discourse of 'safeguarding', in which school staff are often guided by policy that explicitly forbids physical contact with a child (Piper

and Smith, 2003)? Piper et al. (2006) suggest that within Early Years settings in particular, touch is a marker of both developmental and behavioural status. They suggest that children must be seen to demonstrate an appropriate developmental and behavioural stage in order to 'earn' exemption from unsolicited touch. Molly is unable to gain such status, by virtue of the accumulated and concealed signs of her subjectivation as both fearsome and a child living in spaces labelled by disorder.

The contact between adult/child bodies in that morning tread the line of care and control with a fluctuating mix of sophistication, aplomb, fear and uncertainty. Children were quite explicitly deemed to be more manageable when sitting in a chair and physical contact deemed acceptable to meet such ends. The performance of a 'proper' school child, one that sits in its assigned chair, and directs its body towards the adult (Youdell, 2009), was as prized within this space (which theoretically recognised children's differing embodiments and accommodated them) as it was within mainstream discourses of the school child ready and eager to learn, by being *recognised* as such through the positioning of their bodies. The pursuit of the seated child, appearing ready and eager to learn, appeared high on the agenda throughout the morning. This wavered from a comforting rubbing of a child's arm to the restriction of a child's whole body with an adult arm over its lap. The blurring of when these contacts were care or control was interplayed with uncertainty about their intention and how they were received on the part of both the child and adult involved. Early in the morning, as Molly draped her body across one of the assistants, the interaction between their bodies appeared mutual and, at worst, indifferent. It was interpreted by another adult as a site of control, and an opportunity to regulate; 'no climbing Molly, you'll fall'. Here, Molly's initiation of physical contact was deemed inappropriate, the observing adult interpreting her intentions in the complex of discipline and the opportunity for developmental learning.

There seemed to be a nervousness around encounters with Molly from the assistants in general, with the exception of the newest member of staff. Perhaps this assistant's lack of experience of Molly on a daily basis was what freed her from responding to her with such apprehension. Perhaps it's what got her bitten. Where, in general, the other children

encountered all adults in the room, contact with Molly was largely left to Anna. Throughout the morning, I watched Molly being watched by one of the assistants through sideways glances that continuously checked what she was doing, how she was moving, surveilling for unpredictability. Over the heads of the children, nervous glances were shared between the adults at signs of Molly's unpredictability, a whoop, a quick unwieldy spin, each the potential sign of a 'trigger' of another 'incident'. These small acts were as MacLure et al. (2012, p.448) remind us, '...calibrated against powerful definitions, overt and tacit, of what counts as 'normal' development, orderly conduct and the 'proper' child'; marking Molly as not-quite-human or not-yet-human.

Becoming fearsome

The bite is an exemplar, it *does* something. It established, and maintains a distance (both physical and emotional) between Molly and other bodies, as fear, nervousness and unpredictability is read as difference off the surface of her body (Ahmed, 2004a). These emotions themselves were *doing* things, aligning the staff in their 'natural' collective response to her biting. Molly is read as a child to be avoided, a body to be feared. She becomes fearsome through the circulation of signs of fear, such as the bite, as discrete acts accumulate emotional resonance over time. Such a coming into being of emotions served to have material effects on the room, on Molly's body, in which their reading resulted in her segregation to another room and to the justification of unsolicited touch. She is kept at a distance as proximity then becomes imagined as potential future harm (ibid). An assault form is completed to document this. The exemplar of the bite stood for something bigger (Renold & Mellor, 2013), as the reification of Molly's subjectification as disordered and challenging. As she becomes fearsome, she becomes inhuman. The responses of the staff members become justified; she can be treated as non-human because she is non-human, her actions tell us so.

Within the blink of an eye, the deployment of emotions that may have been constituted between Molly and Anna was subject to a new framing; of bureaucratic care; the Assault Form.

Allan (1996) suggests that the gaze of surveillance children experience in school spaces is extended further upon those with Special Education Needs to include the documenting of their behaviour and their emotions. In completing the form, Anna understood the situation in a new light, 'would you call it physical bullying?' Where moments before Anna had shared affection and (a particular kind of) care for Molly, here Molly became gazed upon in ways that invoked criminal behaviour; assault. The short but significant negotiation between Anna and her staff of how best to describe the bite, within the disciplinary remit of the assault form, required the legitimising and de-legitimising of emotions that were and weren't possible in an educational setting. Situating the bite within individual, pathological understandings was the only possibility within the form's small boxes and multiple choices.

The contribution of space

Before concluding, I now briefly turn to the contribution of the space as both material and socially constituted in constructing Molly in that morning. The scene of the special school with its highly regulated atmosphere was both produced and reproduced by more than the staff and children within it, such spaces regulating and permitting some ways of being more than others. The locked doors physically dictating which bodies were permitted where and when, the highly organised, chaotic and hot environment, all contribute to the regime of the school institution that Foucault envisaged as the stage for the psychologist's gaze. As Erevelles (2000) pointedly notes, it is the welcoming of docile bodies in educational spaces that perpetuates the exclusion of disabled, unruly bodies both physically and socio-culturally. The spaces of the classroom further perpetuated the surveillance and regulation of certain bodies over others as we have seen. The routine of the youtube videos, subtly heralded as good practice in recognising particular children's dislike of change, was disrupted as the outside world of 'Mr Grey' adverts permeated the otherwise highly regimented space. This material, spatial disruption was cited as the root cause of the bite, and the justification for the further pathologisation of Molly's emotional response. It is important to recognise the embedded power of the space of this classroom, of classrooms, of special educational spaces, and the institution of schooling, as having a long social and cultural history which is more readily experienced as pathologising and

psychologising for some children more than others. Returning to the original contextualisation of this paper, one need only look to the regular, and systematic institutionalisation beyond education that many children, becoming adults face, should they be deemed to be 'challenging' (Justice for LB, 2014; Seven Days of Action, 2017). The familiarity of spaces that surveill and regulate disabled children and adults everyday lives through Assessment and Treatment Units (there are currently 165 children in the UK in ATUs and 3,000 adults) (Seven Days of Action, 2017), and the consequential premature deaths that learning disabled people face (see The Learning Disability Mortality Review, 2017) requires that the pipelines to these institutions, such as the education system, warrant careful and critical thought in relation to the discourses they potentially contribute toward. So whilst the attention of this paper has been on a brief, seemingly mundane morning in a school space, the circulation of discourses of challenging behaviour, and the affective economies analysed, point towards the pathologisation of some emotions and ways of being over others, speaking to a broader historic and contemporary picture for disabled children and their childhoods.

Conclusions: Biting Otherwise

Mobilising Ahmed's affective economies, gives us a way to relate to the socio-spatial emotion work between Molly and the staff in a different way. It allows for an exploration of how small acts are read as "standing for" a bigger problem; while the status of the bigger problem is consolidated through the iterations of the acts that exemplify it' (MacLure et al., 2012, p.455). When the emotion work of that morning is framed as being mediated by, through, and *between* bodies and spaces, it becomes possible to denaturalise the moralising of Molly's biting and to interrogate the concealment of it as a sign that subjectivates her as fearsome. If, in this way, Molly's bite is freed from discourses of challenging behaviour, individualised, naturalised emotions, then it becomes possible to recognise Molly's resistance in which the proper, contained, docile school child is the *only* possibility (Erevelles, 2000; Youdell, 2009). It may be that children, individuals, are always coming to be and be known within a 'scene of constraint'

(Butler, 2004) but as Molly's bite perhaps reminds us, where there is power, there is always resistance (Foucault, 1990) and this itself is always on the move.

Through reorientating our gaze away from the pathologisation of emotions *within* disabled children, and towards a socio-spatial recognition of the affective economies *between* bodies, there is an opportunity to recognise the ways in which children resist the pervasive discourse of challenging behaviour within school spaces. Such a refocusing of our attention gives space to consider the ways that subjectivities are produced, reproduced and resisted on a daily basis in the everyday lives of disabled children. The call of Disabled Children's Childhood Studies to recognise humanity and potentialities beyond limiting and ableist descriptions of impairment, has been utilised to contribute to emotional geographies interest in socio-spatial emotions in education (Kenway and Youdell, 2011). This has the potential to open up productive new avenues to discuss the circulation of emotion work around disabled children in school spaces and beyond.

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