

Exploring the Future Form of Pedagogy: Education and Eros

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Introduction

This paper explores the future form(s) of pedagogical practice and educational theory by reference to three sources. It reflects on exopedagogy – a recent neologism coined by Lewis and Kahn (2010) – and connects this form of post-humanist education with the model of experiential and experimental transformational pragmatics derived from Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy with its concepts of *becoming-animal* and *becoming-woman*. Education, which is grounded in experience, in *praxis*, necessarily encompasses a moral or ethical dimension in contrast to theoretical knowledge, which is “normatively neutral” (Schnack, 2009, p. 16). Incidentally, in Greek mythology *Praxis* was also another name for Aphrodite, the goddess of love who was instrumental in the story of Eros and Psyche.

Pedagogy for the future demands educators to become what Deleuze and Guattari called “people to come” and to assume a leadership role (cf. Semetsky, 2010a) grounded in the relational dynamics of the ethics of care (Noddings 1984/2003) representing a feminine and maternal (Noddings, 2010) approach to education. The qualities of care and love associated with the concept of Eros as the affective dimension of experience should not only form the basis of education for the future but can make this rather utopian future our present ethos in accord with educational policy agenda of the 21st Century (cf. Simons, Olssen & Peters, 2009).

What is exopedagogy?

The term “exopedagogy” indicates an alternative form of education exceeding a solely human dimension. In contrast to anthropocentric education, exopedagogy represents a form of *post-humanist* education. This radical form of cultural, experiential and post-formal, pedagogy transgresses boundaries of narrow rationality and takes education out of its habitual bounds. Exopedagogy is “located” in culture, in experience, in life; as such it appears to partake of Nietzsche’s gay science that would be affirming *life* counter to neglecting the alternative possibilities for/of life and education. It is a somewhat Dionysian rejuvenation of life that allows for transgressing the habitual limits by means of what Lewis and Khan dubbed *savage imagination* that typically does not “belong” in formal instruction constituting a sole form of pedagogy in accord with what Giorgio Agamben has described as an anthropological machine in education. Anything outside such a machine would be described as plainly “monstrous” and as such abnormal.

The concept of the “monster” is the major qualifier to designate a precise line of division between what contemporary collective “scientific” consciousness perceives as binary opposites, such as human and nonhuman animals, or normal and abnormal. It is exopedagogy that allows us

to escape quantitative measures and disciplinary forms associated with prefixed norms thereby problematizing the notions of *norm* and *normal* altogether. The borderline between normal and abnormal, between human and nonhuman becomes blurred. Paradoxically, a prime example of anthropocentric pedagogical practice is, for Lewis and Kahn, a classical case study of the feral child Victor, the real-life wild boy of Aveyron as the archetypal Mawgli. In the broader social and political discourse the *homo ferus* is traditionally an excluded element in uncritical compliance with the established law and order; yet the humanist education provided to Victor was conducted precisely in accord with anthropocentric machine. Still, goes the argument, because a persistent surplus as “a residual stain” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 43) of the primal division cannot be incorporated into the stable symbolic order, the “educated” subject of this very order is left outside “zoomorphic imagination” (p. 69) that could have exposed it to the much broader epistemology and a specific grammar of the feral including *survival skills* or *play* as a suspension of the ban on the “social scapegoating” (p. 68).

Entering the paradoxical space that opens when the dualism between binary opposites such as human versus nonhuman is abolished or at least suspended leads us into the “reptoid” territory as a province of the uncanny “UFOther” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 73). In their continual effort to “resist the lure of the anthropological machine” (p.74) Lewis and Kahn refer to David Icke’s “reptoid hypothesis” as regards the alien conspiracy theory for the purpose of further combating the humanist assumptions of “normal” pedagogy. They investigate the possibility of the formation of new human/reptoid alliances toward peace unencumbered by the counterforces of humanistic and/or superstitious nature alike. They notice that the allegory of the alien is not limited to the cultural sphere but has been taking decisively political overtones.

In contrast to the categorical definition of the alien within the mainstream liberal discourse, the close encounter with the UFOther conceptualization would have opened up a range of new possibilities precisely because of being (non)located in the imaginative zone existing “betwixt and between worlds” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 79). Such a “no-man’s land” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 293), which is located in-between habitual categories of common-sense discourse is an ideal place for multiple experiential becomings representing:

An extreme contiguity within coupling of two sensations without resemblance or, on the contrary, in the distance of a light that captures both of them in a single reflection. ... It is a zone of indetermination, of indiscernibility, as if things, beasts, and persons...endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation. This is what is called an *affect* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 173).

The presence of a zone of indiscernibility constituted by blurred affects transforms pedagogy into an open set of pragmatic tools, psychological interventions and artistic creations. Such educational philosophy would not conform to the schematics of the progressive and uninterrupted building-up of knowledge toward some higher ideal end. Progress of the latter kind, for Deleuze and Guattari, would represent “the submission of the line to the point” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 293) as a return to representational thinking and the idea of the correspondence theory of truth. Instead their philosophy is concerned with:

[A] line of becoming [which] is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle. ... A line of becoming has only a middle. The middle is not an average; it is fast

motion, it is the absolute speed of movement. A becoming is neither one nor two; ... it is the in-between, the border or line of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 293).

Referring to Hardt and Negri, Lewis and Kahn posit the savage form of imagination as a real material force that can carry us across the boundaries of space, time, or habitual pre-existing knowledge and the modes of thought. The act of imagination necessarily represents a “*resonance* between sensation and sense, cognition and affect” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 2). It is exopedagogy that would have embraced a resonance between thought and affect thereby creating a paradoxical “thinking feeling” embedded in the new world of strange hybrids that appear foreign to the mainstream humanist discourse in education (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 2). Imagination expands the world only narrowly realized in cognitive thought; it carries an affective, feeling-tone, quality.

Deleuze’s pedagogy of the concept

It is along such a resonating, filled with affects, line – the line of flight or becoming, as Gilles Deleuze called it – that we can break away from being “trapped in a five sense prison” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 98) and thus to acquire a novel ability “to hear, to see, and to feel the appearance of difference” (Ibid.), become aware of the subtle presence of novelty that strikes us as uncanny. It is an alternative form of perception – a perception in *becoming*, for Deleuze – that represents a sensorial alteration, which must take place in order for exopedagogy to actually begin and respectively dare to produce “divine violence” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 101) embedded in the process of becoming-other.

Deleuze scholar Ian Buchanan remarks (in Semetsky, 2008) that Deleuze qualified education as an *erotic*, voluptuous experience, perhaps the most important one can have in life. Erotic becomings are expressed via *affects* that reflect the objective structure and intensity of experiential events. For example, Deleuze explains the *intensity* of reading as “reading with love” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 9), with affect: it is *affect* due to which the reproduction of the same as a feature of formal pedagogy becomes replaced with the newly created concepts that leads to novel understanding. According to the myth, it is *Praxis*, the goddess of Love who has created a series of experiential encounters for human Psyche before she could unite with her beloved, the divine Eros therefore blurring the boundaries between the domains of human and divine.

It is when habitual dichotomies are under threat or become suspended, such as the categories of us versus them, destruction versus production, private versus public, or sacred versus profane, that “monster appears as an important conceptual category” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 2). The monstrous may seem to be something mystical, but it cannot be reduced to just being an illusion. *Monster* is the ubiquitous symbol for the always already demonic alien, the generic Other, an *a priori* excluded foreigner or a stranger. It represents a figure of “radical difference” (p. 74) embedded in those experiential encounters that, as Deleuze would say, produce a shock to thought and as such “spill over beyond whoever lives through them (thereby becoming someone else)” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 127): *becoming--other*.

When we encounter something in real experience which is so intense that it causes a shock and forces us to think – to reflect on this very experience – this encounter is not yet conceptually present to us. We are permeated by affects that we simply *feel* at the level of the body, outside of one’s conscious awareness. A non-conscious component of learning is significant at the level of

holistic practices comprising education and human development (de Souza, 2009; Semetsky, 2009, 2011). Affective forces express our innermost intense and as yet a-conceptual feelings among which Deleuze prioritizes love: he presents the immanent evaluations of experience in the affective language of “I love” ...instead of ‘I judge’” (Deleuze, 1989, p. 141).

The multiple valences of love and affect embody “de-subjectivation” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 146) that can defy the control of power. *Becoming-other* is always a condition of possibility that involves “the harshest exercise in depersonalization” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 6), and “experimentation on ourselves is our only identity, our single chance for all the combinations which inhabit us” (Deleuze, 1987, p. 11). It is in the affective conditions in real experience when the desire for knowledge can become intensified to the very limit. As Deleuze says:

Once one ventures outside what’s familiar and reassuring, once one has to invent new concepts for unknown lands, then methods and moral systems break down and thinking becomes...a “perilous act”, a violence, whose first victim is oneself (Deleuze, 1995, p. 103).

Such a perilous act of thinking is embodied in the maximum intensity of experience as “*a power to affect itself, an affect of self on self*” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 101; Deleuze’s italics) that leads to our learning from experience and becoming-other. For Deleuze, rational Cartesian consciousness as the sole constituent of thought is insufficient because what is yet unthought-of is equally capable of producing practical effects at the level of practice. Deleuze considered the unconscious of thought – as yet unthought-of at the cognitive level -- to be just as profound as the unknown of the body, at the level of affects and encounters. As an unconscious desire in contrast to one’s conscious will, an erotic element of *affect* is fundamental for Deleuze’s philosophy. Even as a concept inhabits our experience (for Deleuze & Guattari it is a *living* concept) in its as yet unconscious -- or *virtual* – form; still the ethical task remains “to set up ... to extract” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 160) the very “sense” of this empirical event as the newly created concept in our *actual* practice.

An intensive capacity “to affect and be affected” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xvi) disrupts moral codes that permeate society. Society begins to function on “its power to be affected. The priority of the right or the good does not enter into this conception of openness. ... What is open ... is the expression of power: the free conflict and the composition of the field of social forces” (Hardt, 1993, p. 120). Thinking through affects brings an element of non-thought into a thought; such a forceful, as if physical, intensity of an encounter with an affect marks the passage between the experiential states of the body, which is defined by Deleuze, borrowing from Spinoza, as both physical and mental, corporeal and incorporeal. Accordingly, the body’s power and its capacity for action undergo transformation and change. The process of becoming grounded in experience, in life, in *praxis* is creative and “ethical ... as opposed to morality” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 114) with the latter’s simple dualistic division.

Tapping into “the virtual and immanent processes of ... becoming” (Ansell Pearson, 1997, p. 4) is equivalent to “affectivity” (1997, p. 4); and the process of becoming is always filled with affect, desire, love, Eros. Incidentally, in Plato’s *Symposium* Diotima the Priestess teaches Socrates that Eros or Love is located *in-between* lack and plenty – that is, precisely between the two, supposedly binary, opposites that therefore become united by love. Eros is a spirit or daimon

that, importantly, can hold two opposites together as a whole, therefore capable of eventually reconciling that what analytic thinking habitually perceives dualistically as the irreconcilable opposites.

Eros, in the process of what Deleuze called de- and, subsequently, re-territorialization, necessarily leaves the domain of the philosopher-kings. It “steps outside what’s been thought before ... ventures outside what’s familiar and reassuring” (Deleuze 1995, p. 103) into the as yet unknown future that we ourselves create in our very experience. Thinking, enriched with desire, “is always experiencing, experimenting,... and what we experience, experiment with, is ... what’s coming into being, what’s new, what’s taking shape” (Deleuze 1995, p. 104) in praxis. Deleuze’s model of experiential informal learning is based on the explication of subtle signs (such as, for example, involuntary memories similar to those awakened by Marcel Proust’s famous *madeleine*; cf. Bogue and Semetsky, 2010), images, or aesthetic and artistic signs as potential sources of meanings in accord with the “logic of sense” (Deleuze, 1990).

This logic exceeds a narrow instrumental reason: it is a “different logic of social practice [represented by] an intensive and affective logic of the included middle” (Bosteels, 1998, p. 151): the paradoxical and erotic “logic” of love, caring relations and affects. It is the *included middle* that appears as monstrosity or incomprehensible magic to the habitual dualistic way of thinking with its scientific rationality and strict moral algebra of good versus evil or right versus wrong. Lewis and Kahn (2010) refer to the magical world of the “faery” as the ethical and aesthetic response to overcoming the limits, which tend to be deliberately sustained and maintained by the active anthropological machine. They contrast “faery” as plainly a cultural artefact with the “inoculating trace of the faery [as] a utopian promise” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 103-104) and even faith. Supporting new utopian visions, Lewis and Kahn call for a new exo-revolution informed by the project of exopedagogy that would have created theory/practice nexus, which is habitually missing within the present secular education.

Faery is a phenomenon associated with spirits and magical experiences; and represents an indigenous, psycho-spiritual assemblage of *becoming-animal* – the concept articulated by Deleuze and Guattari. The becoming-animal is the very first assemblage embedded in the Deleuze-Guattarian transformational pragmatics associated with post-humanist education and partaking of “exopedagogy [defined] as a teaching and learning about the monstrous” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 38). Becoming-animal is a link affecting human forces as “having an understanding, a will, an imagination” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 117); it is not a lower form but an important phase in human development derives from learning by experience.

An unorthodox, informal, “pedagogy” is represented by the very becoming of human subjects that takes place in experience and exceeds a solely cognitive *Cogito*. The becoming-other – such as becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming-minor – often expresses itself in the mode of silent discourse (Semetsky, 2010b) along the affective lines of flights that defy propositional language and conscious discourse. Affect is an erotic element that takes priority over syllogistic judgments and contributes to the creation of novel concepts. Learning from experiential encounters produces a shock to thought; this “knowledge” can only be felt experientially and “grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139). It is an affect that provokes erotic desire as a love for knowledge in the form of the experimental becoming of novel concepts when new understanding blends together with an evaluative aspect

and we become able to create a particular meaning for – or make sense of – a singular experience. *Such is Deleuze's pedagogy of concepts.*

The pedagogy of becomings

The pedagogy of the concept represents an important example of “expanding educational vocabularies” (Noddings, 1993, p. 5) in the concrete context of the often conflicting experiences constituting contemporary culture. For Deleuze, a concept is always full of critical, creative and political power that brings forth values and meanings. Becoming-animal is not the only hybrid concept of post-humanist education which is oriented towards future, towards our experiential becomings. For Deleuze, it is *becoming-woman* that represents “the key to all other becomings” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 277) and through which they all pass. Lewis and Kahn (2010) draw from Marx's reading of the ancient Greek myth of Medusa and notice that:

Monstrous animality is gendered female, indicating a sense of connection between patriarchy, anthropocentrism, and superstition. Medusa was once a beautiful young virgin who participated in the cult of Athena. Poseidon, who could not resist her beauty, brutally raped Medusa, which led to her ultimate banishment as a monster. If, as Julia Kristeva...argues, women are the original strangers, then Medusa is the ultimate foreigner (p. 26).

Indeed rational and predominantly patriarchal thought tends to privilege the masculine “‘hero’ capable of ‘taming’ or ‘killing’ the irrational beast using the tools of reason” (Lewis and Kahn, 2010, p. 5). The proverbial beast always already represents a threat, a fear of “the uncanny return of the other [as] a site of great ambiguity, a paradoxical location that speaks to the limits of the enlightenment reason” (p. 62). Yet it is within this paradoxical, uncanny, location that the habitual dichotomies break down thereby defying the supposedly illogical and monstrous status of the other by virtue of transforming the old and creating new assemblages based not on the opposition but on inseparability of self and other, subject and object, cognition and affect, nature and culture, human and nonhuman.

Emphasizing *care* as a feminine alternative to character education Noddings (1984/2003) presents the ethics of care in sharp contrast with paradigmatic moral education because what is fundamental to it is a self-other *relation* rather than an action of the individual autonomous moral agent. She remarks that the contradictory and paradoxical attitudes we often take toward others constitute one of the great mysteries of human life. Borrowing the term *confirmation* from Hasidic philosopher Martin Buber, she suggests it as an integral part of the ethics of care in education. The idea of confirmation appears to be close to the very meaning of Deleuzian becoming-other, as if establishing in practice Buber's *I-Thou* relationship. The idea of becoming-other, as well of confirmation, emerges from our awareness of moral interdependence, that is, self-becoming-other by means of entering into another person's frame of reference and taking upon oneself the other perspective. In the context of education, to become capable, explicitly or implicitly, of becoming-other, means to confirm the potential best in both oneself and another person by means of establishing an intensive and affective relation that can “integrate sympathies” (Deleuze, 2003b, p. 21) between ourselves and others.

Such relational and integrative “capacity for ‘empathy’” (Noddings, 2010, p. 6) is a prerogative of what Nel Noddings calls *the maternal factor* as a natural instinct of mothers to care

about and love their children. Such “*sympathy* as an ability of ‘feeling with’” (Noddings, 2010, p. 73) represents a feminine path to morality; a “becoming-woman” at the level of action. Noddings (2010) expresses a hope for the convergence between traditional and feminine ethics in education; the latter naturally grounded in caring relations. She points to the maternal, feminine, capacity for “reading the emotional state, needs, and intentions of others” (Noddings, 2010, p. 170) and notices that with appropriate guidance such emphatic capacity can be brought to a high level. She presents an *excellent* system of education as a system that purports “to open opportunities – never to close them” (Noddings, 1993, p. 13).

The verb “to open” is significant and can be applied to the open minds or open borders alike. Indeed, for Deleuze it is precisely “an open society [which is] a society of creators” (Deleuze, 1991, p. 111). Michael Peters notices that the creation of “the open society” (Peters, 2009, p. 303) is a transformation of the whole of knowledge economy. Exopedagogy therefore is always a form of feminine eco-pedagogy and as such transgresses many of “contemporary forms of anthropocentric domination and destruction of complex natureculture assemblages” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 103), itself becoming the very threshold capable of bringing “nature and culture together in its net” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 236). Significantly, in the framework of the present-day standardized education, “faery” pedagogy – faery being neither self nor other but located in the *Imaginal* (using philosopher Henry Corbin’s term), yet real, world along the very line of flight or becoming – represents “a form of decisively political poetics” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 112) that can open up new configurations, scramble ideological codes and moral norms, and create new sensory experiences above and over reductive empirical science.

Conclusion

Examining the utopian tradition and the role of education in affirming its value in society, Peters and Freeman-Moir (2006) call for the future generation of educators to embrace imagination through which individuals can be transformed and the collective consciousness expanded. They are certain that it is the “connection between imagination and utopia that brings out the foundations of both in human development [and] is of particular significance for educational theory” (Peters & Freeman-Moir, 2006, p. 3) and pedagogical practice. Among new affective configurations established in practice, in experience, in life, will be exopedagogy that exceeds critical pedagogy oriented to the production of critical consciousness. As incorporating affects, love and Eros, this form of pedagogy is oriented towards creating new modes of the different – *altered* – states of consciousness by means of training our senses to perceive beyond the given data and “to revision our relations to nonhuman life” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 114).

Deleuze and Guattari speak of those who can put in practice the transformational pragmatics and create real changes as a *people to come*. This people as would-be educational leaders and policymakers are themselves produced in virtue of experimentation; they belong to “an oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic, irremediably minor race. [These people] have resistance in common – their resistance to death, to servitude, to the intolerable, to shame, and to the present” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 109-110). The people yet to come will appear only via the creative forms of experiential becoming: becoming-animal; becoming-woman. The future form of pedagogy necessarily partakes of becoming-woman because of the priority of relations

and affects. The uncanny confrontation with its own other is a precondition for such a sensorial alteration.

Training of love will become as necessary as teaching facts. Exopedagogy, according to Lewis and Kahn (2010) represents the very training of love and as such gains a new urgency. The qualities of care and love associated with the concept of Eros should not only form the basis of education for the future but can make this rather utopian future our present ethos in accord with educational policy agenda of the 21st Century (Simons, Olssen & Peters, 2009). Connecting the trope of love with the figure of St. Francis of Assisi (following Hardt and Negri in *Empire*), Lewis and Kahn interrogate his “passion” as diasporic and germinal, itself paradigmatic of the pedagogy of the monstrous, of the different. St. Francis is the epitome of a paradigm shift towards the “confrontation with its repressed excess” (Lewis & Kahn, 2010, p. 13). Exopedagogy therefore is both the means and end to a particular post-humanist *vocation* irreducible to teacher profession as plainly an occupation -- but taking over the whole space located out of bounds yet permeated with a new vision of untimely love together with the new image of thought and future-oriented education.

The facilitation of creativity and emergence thus belongs to a particular, and necessarily paradoxical, type of educational leadership that Deleuze would describe as an inventor of new immanent modes of existence, crucial for educational futures. People-to-come-in-*education* will be able to use imagination so that cross the limits of the present and become able to tap into the future, thereby converting the “monstrous” into “magical”. The alternative topologies would reverse categories; and what narrow rationality delegates to the realm of the monstrous may actually showcase itself as *enchanted*. Resignation and melancholia pervading the current system of education may turn into affirmation and joy. Beast can become beautiful by virtue of love.

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