
Becoming-Other: developing the ethics of integration

INNA SEMETSKY

Faculty of Education and Arts,
University of Newcastle, Australia

ABSTRACT This article analyzes the philosophy of French post-structuralist Gilles Deleuze in the context of post-formal education. The article specifically focuses on Deleuze's unorthodox approach to epistemology and ethics as future-oriented and creative, and lays down the foundations for a new ethics of integration in education derived from Deleuze's conceptualizations of 'becoming'; specifically 'becoming-other'. The call for 'a new ethic' was originally made by Erich Neumann in the troubled time of the aftermath of the Second World War in Europe. Contemporary conditions of cultural diversity point to the inadequacy of old ethical theories. The future form of educational philosophy encompasses not only resistance to the present but both the diagnosis and prognosis (creative, even if uncertain) for our actual multiple *becomings* in terms of becoming-revolutionary, becoming-democratic, becoming-pedagogical and becoming-ethical. The role of an educational philosopher becomes one of the clinician of culture; the latter described by Deleuze as an inventor of new immanent modes of existence that encompass critical, clinical and creative dimensions. The article's conclusion is that achieving genuine intercultural dialogue demands putting into practice a particular educational theory, which is defined in this article as an ethics of integration.

French post-structuralist philosopher Gilles Deleuze, whose conceptualizations strongly resonate with contemporary discourse in educational theory (Peters, 2002, 2004; Semetsky, 2006, 2008), introduced a novel model of experiential 'pedagogy' as the pedagogy of the concept in terms of creating meanings and values for our experiences and achieving novel conceptual understanding by means of evaluation of the multiplicity of events in practical life. Pedagogy of the concept can be understood as a specific model of moral philosophy grounded in unorthodox, post-formal (see Steinberg et al, 1999) education by means of learning from real-life events. Together with social psychologist Félix Guattari, Deleuze referred to their method as geopolitical philosophy or *geophilosophy*.

In his move against Cartesian, a-priori, clear and distinct ideas, Deleuze speaks of *paideia*, stating that for the Greeks, thought was not based on a premeditated decision to think: thought originates in the real experience 'by virtue of the forces that are exercised on it in order to constrain it to think' (Deleuze, 1983, p. 108), to critically reflect on itself. Contrasting *paideia* with the dogmatic mode of philosophy (which would have been 'performed' by an individual thinker contemplating universal ideas while sitting comfortably in his armchair), Deleuze (1983) comments that culture usually experiences violence that serves as a force for the formation of our thinking, and refers to Plato's famous metaphor of the Cave: a prisoner is forced to start thinking. For Deleuze, philosophy cannot be limited to contemplation or communication as aiming solely to consensus. It is uniquely a creative practice of inventing new concepts allowing us to evaluate experience, and the pedagogy of the concept 'would have to analyse the conditions of creation as factors of always

singular moments' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 12), embedded in the experiential events. Indeed, Deleuze's micropolitical *cartography* (putting events on a metaphorical map, diagramming events) represents one of the methodologies for the twenty-first-century policy agenda (Simons et al, 2009, p. 68); and Deleuze's analysis of power relations and his concept of *societies of control* has inspired a number of informed reflections (for example, Fendler, 2009), especially in the context of lifelong learning, which became a political slogan – 'a mega-theme' (Pongratz, 2009, p. 405) – in the United States and Europe alike.

Deleuze contrasts Foucault's disciplinary societies with new open spatial systems which are interconnected, flexible and networked architectures that are supplanting the older enclosures. In practice, however, these new open institutional forms of punishment, education and health are often being introduced without a reflective and critical understanding of what is taking place. Deleuze provides the following poignant vision, anticipating the spread of the institutions of perpetual training and lifelong learning:

One can envisage education becoming less and less a closed site differentiated from the workplace as another closed site, but both disappearing and giving way to frightful continual training, to continual monitoring of worker-schoolkids or bureaucrat-students. They try to present it as a reform of the school system, but it's really its dismantling. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 175)

In the same way that corporations have replaced factories, schools are being replaced by the abstract concept of continuing education. By turning examinations into continuous assessment, education itself is 'turning ... into a business' (Deleuze, 1995, p. 179). In this manner, a form of schooling becomes itself the means to provide a continuous stream of human capital for the knowledge economy. If, and when, human capital replaces *humans*, then, as Deleuze argues, *individuals* become *dividuals*, a market statistic, part of a sample, an item in a databank.

Genuine philosophy – and, by implication, genuine education – must always act critically and ahead of time, transcending the present and capturing at once what was before and what would have been after. Yet, the *present-becoming* is extremely significant precisely because it makes philosophy untimely: for Deleuze (1987, p. 11), it is our present 'experimentation on ourselves [that] is our only identity, our single chance for all the combinations which inhabit us' within the process of becoming – the process of individuation. Deleuzian 'critical and clinical' philosophy (Deleuze, 1997) presents values as future-oriented versus pre-given – that is, plural values that are as yet to (be)come when we reevaluate experience in practice. Deleuze's emphasis on the clinical aspect sharply contrasts an ethical dimension with that of moral values. If moral values are pre-given and ratified by common sense, the Deleuzian ethical dimension pushes in the opposite direction. The ethical, for Deleuze, asks the question of who we might be. And it does so on the basis of recognizing (as Spinoza did before Deleuze) that we have no real idea of who we might become or, as Deleuze and Spinoza put the matter, we do not yet know *what a body can do*.

Philosophy therefore, rather than focusing on the classical theoretical question of being, is devoted to the very *praxis of becoming* and, specifically, becoming-other. Becoming-other is established via 'diversity, multiplicity [and] the destruction of identity' (Deleuze, 1995, p. 44); it presupposes breaking out of our old outlived habits and attitudes so as to creatively 'bring into being that which does not yet exist' (Deleuze, 1994, p. 147). Deleuze's philosophy is a sort of constructivism as an invention – construction or creation – of concepts. The creative learning (not a contradiction in terms!) will have paid attention to places and spaces, to retrospective as well as untimely memories of actual and potential actions, and to dynamic forces that are capable of affecting and effecting changes, thus contesting the very identity of subjects participating in the process. For Deleuze (1987, p. 2), all 'becomings belong to geography, they are orientations, directions, entries and exits'. The constructive process of the production of new concepts, meanings and values embodies *affects* (as a yet *unthought*, non-cognitive dimension of embodied experience) immanent to this very process and (in)forming the flows of *thoughts* – that is, conceptual understanding.

Event is a multiplicity and, as such, is profoundly social and collective, therefore 'irreducible to individual states of affairs, particular images, [or] personal beliefs' (Deleuze, 1990, p. 19). One – in whose body an event is temporarily, culturally and geopolitically localized – is to be worthy of this event. For this purpose, one has to attain an ethical responsibility or, as Deleuze (1990, p. 148) says,

‘this will that the event creates in us’, functioning as a quasi-cause of ‘what is produced within us’. It is a specific event as something in the real world that ‘forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but a fundamental “encounter” ... It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering’ (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139); such *embodied* learning taking place in a singular experience embedded in this particular event when and where it starts making sense for us.

The relevance for education is paramount, as Deleuze & Guattari (1994, p. 12) note: ‘If the three ages of the concept are the encyclopedia, pedagogy, and commercial professional training, only the second can safeguard us from falling from the heights of the first into the disaster of the third’. It is the pedagogy of the concept, in art, science or philosophy alike, that must educate us, respectively, in becoming able to feel, to know and to conceive – that is, to create concepts. Deleuze’s pedagogy of the concept, as such, represents an important, even if untimely, example of ‘expanding educational vocabularies’ (Noddings, 1993, p. 5) in the concrete context of 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. Concepts and meanings are created in practice ‘as a function of problems which are thought to be badly understood or badly posed (pedagogy of the concept)’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 16). Deleuze & Guattari are not interested in concepts in order to determine what something is – that is, its static essence or being. Rather, they are interested in the concept as a vehicle for expressing a dynamic event, or *becoming*: a novel concept implicit in a particular event ‘secures ... linkages with ever increasing connections’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 37) within practical life. The unpredictable connections presuppose not the transmission of the *same*, but the creation of the *different* – the process that has important implications for education as an evolving and developing practice of the generation of new knowledge and new meanings.

Transcoding is one of the Deleuzian neologisms employed to underline an element of creativity, of invention and of crossing – traversing – borders between ‘self’ and ‘other’. Contemporary philosopher of education Nel Noddings 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 European Hasidic philosopher Martin Buber, she suggests it is an integral part of the ethics in education based on the attitude of care. The idea of confirming the other appears to be close to the very meaning of Deleuzian becoming-other, as if establishing in practice the famous Buber *I–Thou* relationship, a *dialogue*. The idea of becoming-other, as well as 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. Importantly, the idea of moral interdependence expands from individual lives to the mutual interactions of various religious, ethnic and national groups. To become capable, explicitly or implicitly, of becoming-other means to confirm the potential best in both oneself and another person, group or nation.

Thus, becoming-other has a deeply engrained ethical – indeed clinical, bordering on therapeutic or healing, element – and confirming the other should constitute an important component of moral (or values) education. It is important to strengthen the fact that education conceptualized alongside Deleuze’s philosophy exceeds formal instruction: it becomes a mode of experiential learning from real events in human culture. Deleuze’s unorthodox ‘epistemology’ borders on moral psychology. Pedagogy of the concept makes genuine learning take the form of

a transcoded passage from one milieu to another ... whenever there is transcoding ... there is ... a constitution of a new plane, as of a surplus value. A melodic or rhythmic plane, surplus value of passage or bridging ... the components as melodies in counterpoint, each of which serves as a motif for another. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 313-314)

That is, in other words, self-becoming-other in experience.

Pedagogy of the concept presents the multiplicity of concepts, meanings and values as the *a-posteriori* products of the dynamic process of becoming, comprising multiple evaluations and revaluations of experience. Experience is rendered meaningful not by grounding empirical particulars in abstract universals but by experimentation on our very *being* for the purpose of *becoming*. In order to engage in experimentation, we would abandon the idea that common sense ought to be our guide. Deleuze uses the term *common sense* in a technical fashion, to refer to the

identity that arises when the faculties (in the Kantian sense) agree with one another. We must disrupt our common sense with problems that do not yet yield answers as some univocal solutions but invite a free flow of thought in a critical and self-reflective manner within a mutual and reciprocal relation between ourselves and others. New concepts, values and meanings will have to be created as the multiple outcomes and products of an experiential living process. Deleuze suggests treating each new concept

as object of an encounter, as a here-and-now ... from which emerge inexhaustibly ever new, differently distributed 'heres' and 'nows' ... I make, remake and unmake my concepts along a moving horizon, from an always decentered center, from an always displaced periphery which repeats and differentiates them. (Deleuze, 1994, pp. xx-xxi)

The making and remaking of concepts constitutes a *creative* process, which is not reducible to a static recognition but demands a dynamic, experiential and experimental encounter that would have forced us to think and learn – that is, to construct meaning for a particular experience which is as yet presently unthought of and lacking sense. The Deleuzian level of analysis is not solely 'a question of intellectual understanding ... but of intensity, resonance, musical harmony' (Deleuze, 1995, p. 86). It is guided by the 'logic of affects' (Guattari, 1995, p. 9) and, as such, is different from a merely rational consensus based on cognitive reasoning. Still, the creative, *constructive* element in Deleuze's philosophy is always complemented by expressionism, by 'a becoming of thought [that] cries out' (Deleuze, 1995, p. 148) in affects, which both disrupt and enrich concepts, compared by Deleuze with songs. Deleuze was fond of invoking musical tropes and metaphors to enable him to articulate the dynamics of the process consisting in multiple *what the body can do!*

Yet, in the present state of society in our information age, its principal technology of confinement may restrict *what the body can do*, both explicitly and implicitly. The movements along the transversal *line of flight* (another of Deleuze's neologisms) can, however, disrupt the prevailing order of things by producing effects in terms of the Deleuzian present-becoming, which is always already collective and social. The philosophical/educational function is both *critical* and *clinical*: the present-becoming, by definition, has a revaluative and untimely flavour. Such is the role of the educator, as a philosopher who puts his/her ethics in practice as a clinician or the physician of culture; such an educator can be described as 'an inventor of new immanent modes of existence' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 113). The future form of thinking and reflection encompasses both a resistance to the present and a diagnosis of our actual *becomings* in terms of what Deleuze calls becoming-woman or becoming-minor, but also in terms of potentially becoming-democratic, becoming-pedagogical and always already becoming-other.

Reflecting on a narrow approach to education, Deleuze describes it as students looking for the answers to the problems posited by teachers, which means that pupils lack power and freedom for the construction and evaluation of problems themselves. Only a free thought is capable of realizing its creative potential. The newly created concepts, or concepts the meanings of which have been altered within experience, impose new sets of evaluation on the modes of existence, and – sure enough – for Deleuze, no thinking, no speaking and no acting is value-free. New values are to be created because life is not a straightforward affair but presents problems – real events – whose multiple solutions constitute an open field of inquiry: it is how we might further problematize a particular situation by asking self-reflective questions rather than jumping upon a pre-reflective linear solution to 'a' problem that would give a specific value to a singular experience. For Deleuze (1995, p. 103), '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'. A given moral standard simply does not enter Deleuze's discourse because pedagogy of the concept presupposes 'the event, not the essence' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 21). Event is always an element of becoming, and the becoming is unlimited.

The new *ethics of integration* that I propose not only strongly relates to Deleuze's conceptualization of becoming-other, but it is also inspired by the work of Jungian psychologist Erich Neumann (1969), who was already advocating for the creation of 'a new ethic' in the troubled time of the aftermath of the Second World War. Akin to Deleuze, Neumann was adamant that the diversity and complexity of experiential situations in real life would make it impossible to lay down strict theoretical rules as standards for ethical behaviour. The goal of traditional ethics often is, as Neumann (1969) reminds us, illusionary perfection and an adherence to the absolute

good, which necessarily leads to the appearance of some evil antagonist, a real or symbolic *scapegoat*. By contrast, new anti-dualist ethics should aim towards personal and collective wholeness and integrity; ultimately tending towards *self-becoming-other* in experience. The integration of the other contrasts with some ideal betterment and perfection by means of repressing what represents (quite likely) one's own negative side, especially when such an imperfection is projected onto the other in terms of an individual or collective *shadow*.

Instead of 'becoming-other', one's 'shadowy' qualities may very well become attributed to – or projected onto – others. The shadow psychology resists any possibility of confirming the other, it being either at the individual or collective level. Indeed, at the collective level, the symbolic shadow often encompasses those outside the moral norm of the established order and the prevailing social system. While the ego-consciousness focuses on indubitable and unequivocal moral principles, these very principles crumble under the '*compensatory significance of the shadow in the light of ethical responsibility*' (Jung, 1949, quoted in Neumann, 1969, p. 12; original emphasis). Noddings (1989, p. 75), pointing out that the 'integration is essential', refers to the shadow as a set of qualities observable in human experiences even as an individual, or 'a group, institution, nation, or culture', remain unaware of its functioning. While the old ethics is 'partial' (Neumann, 1969, p. 74), as belonging solely to the ego, the new ethics is holistic because it is devoted to recognizing our own dark and inferior side, even under the conditions of superficial superiority. The 'fate' of Roma people in the present context of twenty-first-century Europe represents an example of such partial ethics that has not changed, apparently, since the Middle Ages.

The shadow rules one-sidedly unless integrated into the whole of the personality. In the absence of integration, it may create a sealed, aggressive world denying freedom and hope to its own other, suppressed, side until – in the process of becoming-other – the shadow will start acting out spontaneously, in the form of the *dark precursor*, as Deleuze would have said, and will continue to propagate, tending towards reaching the destructive climax. Jean Baudrillard (2002), French social theorist and critic, writes in his analysis of the spirit of terrorism about the shift into the symbolic sphere, where an initial event becomes subjected to unforeseeable consequences. Such a singular event – like the destruction of the Twin Towers on September 11 or the current multiple terror threats shifting their presence geopolitically – propagates unpredictably, causing a chain of effects 'not just in the direct economic, political, financial slump in the whole of the system – and the resulting moral and psychological downturn – but the slump in the value-system' (Baudrillard, 2002, pp. 31-32) as a whole. Baudrillard (2002, p. 43) points out that not only terrorism itself is blind, but so were the real towers: 'no longer opening to the outside world, but subject to artificial conditioning' – air conditioning or mental conditioning alike. Yet, any problematic situation in real life that requires our learning as meaning making is of the nature of the experience that immanently forms 'an intrinsic genesis, not an extrinsic conditioning' (Deleuze, 1994, p. 154).

The ruthless destruction of the Twin Towers, for Baudrillard (2002, p. 33), represents the fact that 'the whole system has reached a critical mass which makes it vulnerable to any aggression', and which propagates and amplifies itself in the sequence of subsequent, even if unpredictable, events such as the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan. The UNESCO report of the Commission internationale sur l'éducation pour le vingt et unième siècle, chaired by Jacques Delors (1996), strongly emphasizes the four pillars of a new kind of education: *learning to know*, *learning to do*, *learning to live together with* and *learning to be*. The call for such a comprehensive art of *learning* is crucial, and in the UNESCO report we witness a specific approach founded on a dynamic learning process that moves away from static knowledge to the dynamic process of learning to live together with others, ultimately 'becoming-other' in a Deleuzian sense. Will the program of intercultural dialogue recently launched by the Council of Europe (2008) suffice? Or is it a utopian, even if noble, dream? True dialogue is possible only if accompanied by practical *confirmation*, by *becoming-other*. In order to create genuinely *shared* values, as emphasized in the White Paper (Council of Europe, 2008, p. 19), a deeper *philosophical* understanding of the Deleuzian process of experiential learning and 'becoming-other' is imperative.

Experiential learning presupposes an encounter with something as yet unknown, and one always 'has to invent new concepts for unknown lands' (Deleuze, 1995, p. 103), for new experiences. For Deleuze, life itself is educative: it is a long experiential process requiring wisdom in a Spinozian sense – that is, wisdom as practical and ethical, and overcoming in this process the

limitations of narrow subject-centred knowledge. Within global real-life experiences, understanding the meanings of real-life events is equivalent to constructing and learning symbolic lessons embedded in a continuous process of our experiential, and at once intellectual and ethical, *becoming*. Because experience is not confined to an individual cogito of the Cartesian subject but is sociocultural and always involves the other, becoming-other and *confirming* the other's potential better 'self' is paramount for the understanding and revaluation of singular experiences. This is what I call the *ethics of integration*, which, by necessity, encompasses three future-oriented dimensions oriented to the evaluation of experiences and events: critical, clinical and creative, in terms of creating novel – and ultimately shared – values, and healing the split between ourselves and others.

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INNA SEMETSKY is a Research Academic, Faculty of Education and Arts at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Her books include *Deleuze, Education and Becoming* (2006), *Nomadic Education: variations on a theme by Deleuze and Guattari* (2008) and *Semiotics Education Experience* (2010), all published by Sense Publishers. She has chapters in two recent international handbooks on spirituality, student well-being and values education. Her work in progress includes a co-edited volume, *Deleuze and Education*, to be published by Edinburgh University Press. Correspondence: inna.semetsky@newcastle.edu.au or irs5@columbia.edu