

Romero, G., «Deleuze: creator transmission», en *Encyclopedia of Teacher Education*, Michael A. Peters (Ed.), Education Section: Practice, Experience and Transmission in Education and Culture: Contemporary Philosophical Thinking, Section Editor: Dr. Ana Valle, New York, Springer, 2018, pp. 523-526.

Deleuze: creator transmission

Gustavo Romero

University of Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires

romero_gustavo_a@yahoo.com.ar

Introduction

The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze does not develop a philosophy of education systematically, nor a philosophy of culture that focuses specifically on the problems inherent to education institutions. However, there are numerous concepts available as theoretical instruments in order to analyze issues of education, generally, and education institutions in particular, as a function of the contemporary culture which Deleuze referred to as “society of control”. This work presents four ideas surrounding education, that is, four notions of Deleuzian pedagogy: i) the pedagogy of the concept; ii) “minor” pedagogy; iii) rhizomatic pedagogy, and iv) pedagogy of the processes of subjectivation. These four concepts are closely related to his philosophy of vitalism.

Development

Life and philosophy. Deleuze’s philosophical perspective is generally integrated by its kind of ruptures, its breaking away from the roots: the dialectics and external (transcendent) unity of the real; his philosophy is a philosophy of immanence. The real and immanent multiplicity of levels, complexities, and intensity of vital forces replaces the metaphysical idea of the external unity of reality. This ontology of vital forces is purely productive, compositional, machinic, desiring in itself. Life is the name that Deleuze gives to “being” in his “vitalist ontology”. Following in the footsteps

of Nietzsche, he proposed a “complex unity” between life and thought, through which life has the power to activate thought, and likewise –in an equally essential role– thought affirms life. This is the highly vitalistic component seen in his work: different ways of life inspire ways of thinking, and ways of thinking create different ways of living. As he states himself: “Any work of art points a way through for life, finds a way through the cracks.” And he adds: “Everything I have written is vitalist, at least I hope it is” (Deleuze, 1990). This is why his concept of culture, generally, and education in particular, is related to the institutional ways in which life increases and expands; his concern is to stimulate creation and to find routes of escape from all oppressive or weak forms of education.

A Pedagogy of the Concept. Deleuze sustains that philosophy is a discipline that creates concepts. Concepts are not formed and finished prior to philosophical activity. They have to be invented, fabricated, created. In contrast with art, which creates pieces that awaken the senses, or science, which creates functions and postulates knowledge, philosophy creates concepts. This means that philosophy is productive and innovative, not in the capitalist sense of profitable production of goods, or the innovation of fashion, but in the sense that its results –the concepts– are the continuously renewed product of theoretical construction, a work of thought, and not merely truths discovered by virtue of the common conduct of all humans. Philosophy is revolutionary, inventive, it moves precisely against dominant opinions, opposed to the hegemonic will of common sense. Thus, Plato did not discover the world of Ideas, instead he invented the concept of Idea, and with it, its corresponding world. Kant did not discover pure reason, he built a system of faculties that turn the individual into an autonomous entity. Concepts are not representations, they are creations; they do not represent reality, they *are* reality. In this respect, philosophy of education should be formed by a “pedagogy of the concept” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1991), that is, supported by the creation of concepts. If philosophy of education is generally understood as reflection, rationale, or even an examination of a wide range of opinions about education, we would have to add Deleuze’s mark, namely, the nature of creation of concepts that defines philosophy. The search for the

foundations of education tends to resort to the history of educational ideas; the importance of conceptual creation should be added to this, in order to introduce an immanent plane of conceptualization to education. Only this will allow the philosophy of education to be sufficiently radical to counteract the subjects of the *doxa*, while addressing the complexity of the educational plane both theoretically and in practice. That said, this “creation of concepts” is never a creation *ex nihilo*, instead it is an event (Deleuze et Guattari, 1991). By “event” we understand that something happens or comes about, “something” new arises, it bursts forth; not from nothing, but bursting through the permanent dialog with tradition, with history. The past, history, the ideas of philosophers, and philosophical systems, must *traverse* philosophical thinking so that it may cause events, or in other words, create concepts. Following along the lines of Nietzsche, Deleuze mentions that philosophers (and philosophy professors in institutions of education) are not and cannot be people who “polish preexisting concepts”, they cannot be passive actors in the history of ideas; instead, they are individuals who –with full knowledge of and dialog with tradition- trigger the creation of something new. This considered, tradition (which is also never closed or objective, and is instead always subject to review, perspectives, and interpretations dependent on the historical circumstances) is transformed, and this is how the philosopher/professor creates concepts. From this concrete and situational point of view, the “pedagogy of the concept” proposes considering the space of educational institutions as one of the possibility for the creation of concepts, and not a mere reproduction of the history of philosophy. It is a difficult but noble task: to produce philosophy in the institutions themselves; that is, to turn the educational arena into the principal promoter for students in the task of creating concepts, through the work of the teachers.

“*Minor*” pedagogy. This concept is based on the Deleuzian idea of “becoming”, or more precisely, “becoming-minor”. Already mentioned in *L’Anti-Œdipe* (1972), but defined as a specific concept with *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure* (1975), the term “becoming” explores the notions of imitation, of doing or being “like”, and questions adaptations to every *a priori* model. Insofar as Deleuze rejects founding

origins and teleologies, there is no defining program to start from, nor an ideal to be reached. Becomings, in the Deleuzian sense, are neither imitation nor assimilation phenomena. This requires two clarifications. On one hand, becoming is the very content of desire: to desire is to pass from one becoming to the next. Above all, to become is not a generality, there is no general becoming: it is not possible to reduce this concept, an instrument of the refined philosophy of concrete existence, and always singular, to the ecstatic apprehension of the world and its universal flow. On the other hand, to become is a reality: becomings, far from falling within the realm of dreams or the imaginary, are the very consistency of the real. In order to understand this correctly, it is important to consider its logic: all becoming forms a “block”, that is, it is the encounter or relationship of two heterogeneous terms that mutually “deterritorialize” each other. When “x” and “y” mutually deterritorialize each other, it means that “x” and “y” became something other than what they were, they were mutually modified by their relationship. The concept of “becoming-minor” implies avoiding the first contradiction: it is not a concept with a quantitative criterion. Deleuze calls “majority” that which is always in the order of the identifying and normative generality: institutions, politics, economy, culture, thoughts, and language are represented as a global and abstract set that divides them into binary oppositions, tracing an exclusion between what conforms and what doesn't conform with the majority as a norm. Meanwhile, “minority” is not defined by small numbers, as has already been clarified, but by its distance from this or that aspect of the dominant axioms. A minority is becoming that generates a “line of flight” (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980); becoming-minor is therefore finding a line of flight to the binary oppositions, to that which is imposed as dominant, to open up the game of multiplicities and transformations. In this context, a “minor pedagogy” would propose finding lines of flight with respect to a corresponding “major pedagogy”. The latter is configured in educational plans that last years, in public policies, laws, large projects and programs; in contrast, the concept of minor education is a device for thinking in schools and classrooms, for professors and students, and which operates as an educational instrument used to understand singularities, multiplicities, giving way to that which the major plans overlook or even prevent. Minor pedagogy pays attention

to the micro level and the social transformations that occur within it. To this effect, it incentivizes the creative becoming of students, creation over mere repetition, singularity over imitation. Minor pedagogy, because it conceives the educational process as a process of becoming, proposes that professors and students be “deterritorialized”; that is, that they “become others”, they are transformed, change their subjectivities, through the “minor” practices and concept creation.

Rhizomatic pedagogy and experimentation. At this point it is necessary to consider the concept of “rhizome”, and its relationship with the issues pertaining to the disciplinarization of educational knowledge. This concept, a botanical term taken into the philosophical context, is presented in the introduction of *Mille plateaux* (1980), with the title “Rhizome”, although the notion first appeared with *Kafka* (1975). It proposes a new image of thought destined to tackle an “arboreal” concept of philosophy that disfigures the act of thinking and distances us from it. The figure of the tree, deeply rooted in the earth and established as a static point that grows only upward, represents the image of philosophy in its classical conception: the roots and the trunk are the Foundation, the basis of the system, and the different branches are the ramifications of this unquestionable Foundation. Arborescent forms are trunked, they are one-directional, a principle of homogenization. A tree does not increase its connections or directions, it only requires one position, a fixed point, and it is established as a “molar line”, which represents order, homogeneity, stasis, the fixity of a point. Unlike trees or their roots, rhizomes connect any point with any other point, each line traced does not necessarily remit us to a line of similar nature, it puts systems with very different signs at play. They are formed like plants that sprout and extend and bifurcate in different directions, changing their position at every instant. They have no beginning or end, they are always a means, an “in between” along which to grow and overflow. “They are multiplicities, with various exits and entrances” (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980). The formation of the elements of a rhizome does not follow hierarchical lines of subordination; it is a system without a center, hierarchies, or prevailing meaning, defined only by the circulation of states and intensities of its components. A rhizome cannot be reduced to an all-encompassing unit or a totalizing

model. It is not formed by units, but by dimensions, or rather, movable directions. A rhizome is therefore a “molecular line” or line of flight, which exemplifies constant movement, heterogeneity, fluidity, and multiplicity. A rhizome holds within it a plan of consistency acting by agency, which is, to expand its dimensions within a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it increases its number of connections. In this sense, “rhizomatic pedagogy” criticizes the fragmentation of knowledge as observed in the scientific conception of modernity. The vertical order of academic disciplines and their assumed dependence on a common core (arboreal concept) only help to strengthen the devices of control of the evaluation and reproduction of knowledge. In contrast, Deleuze’s proposal, based on the idea of transversality suggested by the rhizome, allows the educational process to open up to the multiplicity and diversity of singularities through which it traverses. Furthermore, traditional education presents knowledge by way of a curriculum that is diluted into various subjects that have little or no interaction between them. This compromises the student’s comprehensive understanding of knowledge; in contrast, the rhizomatic notion consists of an interdisciplinary content program that facilitates students with a comprehensive and composite curriculum. On the other hand, rhizomatic pedagogy is also related to what Deleuze refers to as “experimentation”. This implies at least two ideas: i) thinking is not representing, the aim is not to adapt to an assumed objective reality, but to cause real effect, a *practice* that brings one back to life and thoughts, moves obstacles, and takes one further away and somewhere new, an “adventure”; ii) there is no real beginning other than the middle, the in-between, in the true and concrete encounter of becomings, in the encounter of teachers and students within the classroom space.

Pedagogy of the processes of subjectivation. The contributions of Deleuze to our thoughts on the modalities of control of the present educational system are fundamental if we are to understand the processes of subjectivation of social actors (teachers, students, etc.) and their practices. The central thesis of the article « Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle » (Deleuze, 1990) affirms that the disciplinary “spaces of confinement” described by Foucault (prisons, hospitals, factories,

schools, family) are undergoing a “generalized crisis”. In the last few decades, we have transitioned from the decadence of the “disciplinary society”, which extended over the 17th, 18th, and first half of the 20th century, and was the central issue of Foucault’s research, such as we see in his book *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison*, 1975. Deleuze asserts that today’s society is known as a “society of control”, and it exerted fluidly in open spaces, in a deterritorialized manner, though the use of psychotropic drugs, television, marketing, private debt, and other means. Factories have been replaced by companies, which are ductile and changing formations, and simple machines have been replaced by computerized systems of production and control. We have moved from the institutions of confinement to the open milieu, with freedom of movement as a condition for the exercise of power, or in Deleuzian terms, from the striated space to the smooth space, and from molds to modulation. Also, with reference to the modes of subjectivation, the figure of *homo economicus* has been redefined, and he is no longer a man of trade, but defines himself instead as the neoliberal entrepreneur; and similarly for the figure of the worker, who has transitioned from confined man to man in debt. In this context, the imperative organization of the educational systems to create a path for continuous education, and the introduction of a business structure at all its levels, are among the main phenomena diagnosed by Deleuze. These mechanisms of control present in the educational system promote the manipulation and maintenance of the corporate and competitive ideologies. Quantitativeness and statistics are imposed as criteria. This control is observed from the architectural design of schools to the evaluation instruments used by the teachers. To counteract these dominant mechanisms, the Deleuzian pedagogy of the processes of subjectivation proposes a search for lines of flight in this society of control. Lines of flight are expressed by establishing subjectivities supported by values other than mere competency, and proposing the balance between body and art to form creative and collective subjectivities that transform reality instead of merely reproducing it.

Conclusions.

Deleuze was a creative and passionate professor at Vincennes University for twenty

seven years. Always exploring the possibilities that eluded all repetition or reproduction in the history of philosophy, he conceived the idea of the classroom as a “research laboratory” (Deleuze, 1990). The proposal is to put the four developed concepts into practice: a pedagogy of the concept, which understands philosophy and its teaching as the creation of concepts, and not mere repetition; a minor pedagogy, which searches for singularities, becomings that modify the subjectivities of students, and not a mere reproduction of abstract curricular programs; a rhizomatic pedagogy, which explores multiple issues and makes connections between diverse disciplinary fields, rejecting the dominant hierarchies that prevent us from the task of thinking; and a pedagogy of the processes of subjectivation, experimentation with lines of flight in our societies of control, proposing the establishment of creative subjectivities, as opposed to the mimesis of neoliberal corporate marketing.

References

G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *L'Anti-Œdipe*, Minuit, Paris, 1972.

G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure*, Minuit, Paris, 1975.

G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, Minuit, Paris, 1980.

G. Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, Minuit Paris, 1990.

G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, Minuit, Paris, 1991.