



# Exploring the Future Form of Pedagogy

# 12

## Education and Eros

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### Contents

Introduction .....	194
What Is Exopedagogy? .....	194
Deleuze's Pedagogy of the Concept .....	196
The Pedagogy of Becomings .....	199
Conclusion .....	201
References .....	202

### Abstract

This chapter addresses the future form of pedagogy and explores a related educational theory. The chapter, first, reflects on exopedagogy as a form of post-humanist education. Second, the chapter positions exopedagogy in the context of Gilles Deleuze's philosophical thought and his pedagogy of the concept. Education as informed by Deleuze-Guattari's transformational pragmatics is "located" in experience, in culture, and in life. As grounded in praxis, education necessarily includes an ethical dimension. Such cultural pedagogy is oriented to the "becomings" of human subjects and has an affective, erotic aspect. The feminine 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 the educational policy agenda of the twenty-first century. Future educational leaders as "people to come" are themselves produced via the creative forms of experiential becomings, including "becoming-woman." In conclusion, the chapter asserts that people to come in education should be able to use imagination to cross the limits of the present and tap into the future.

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© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2020

P. P. Trifonas (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research in Cultural Studies and Education*, Springer International Handbooks of Education,

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-56988-8\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-56988-8_7)

193

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**Keywords**

Affect · Exopedagogy · Culture · Deleuze · Eros · Becoming

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**Introduction**

This essay explores the future form(s) of pedagogical practice and educational theory with reference to three sources. It reflects on exopedagogy – a 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) which represents 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 the educational policy agenda of the twenty-first century (Simons et al. 2009).

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**What Is Exopedagogy?**

The term “exopedagogy” indicates an alternative form of education that exceeds 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 the boundaries of narrow rationality and takes education out of its habitual bounds. Exopedagogy is “located” in culture, in experience, and in life; as such it appears to partake of Nietzsche’s gay science that would be affirming *life*, rather than neglecting the alternative possibilities for/of life and education. It is a somewhat Dionysian rejuvenation of life that allows for transgressing habitual limits by means of what Lewis and Khan dubbed *savage imagination*, which 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 fixed norms, thereby problematizing the notions of *norm* and *normal* altogether. The borderline between normal and abnormal and 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 like the archetypal Mowgli. In the broader social and political discourse, the *homo ferus* is traditionally an excluded element in uncritical compliance with established law and order; yet the humanist education provided to Victor was conducted precisely in accord with the anthropocentric machine. Still, goes the argument, because a persistent surplus as “a residual stain” (Lewis and 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 the “zoomorphic imagination” (p. 69) that could have exposed it to a much broader epistemology and a specific grammar of the feral including *survival skills* or *play* as a suspension of the ban on “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 and Kahn 2010, p. 73). In the continual effort to resist “the lure of the anthropological machine” (p. 74), Lewis and Kahn present the “reptoid hypothesis” and relate it to David Icke’s 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 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 (dis)orders and (dis)identifications” (Lewis and Kahn 2010, p. 79). Such a “no-man’s land” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 293) which is located in-between habitual categories of commonsense discourse is an ideal place for multiple experiential becomings representing:

an extreme contiguity within a 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 and 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 and 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 and 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 modes of thought. The act of imagination necessarily represents a “*resonance* between sensations and sense, cognition and affect” (Lewis and Kahn 2010, p. 2). It is exopedagogy that would have embraced a resonance between thought and affect, thereby creating a paradoxical “thinking feeling” (p. 2) embedded in the new world of strange hybrids that appear foreign to mainstream humanist discourse in education. Imagination expands the world only narrowly realized in cognitive thought; it carries an affective, feeling-tone, quality.

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## Deleuze’s Pedagogy of the Concept

It is along such a resonating line, filled with affects – 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 and Kahn 2010, p. 98) and thus acquire a novel ability “to hear, to see, and to feel the appearance of difference” (p. 98), therefore becoming 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 subsequently dare to produce the “divine violence” (Lewis and 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, is replaced with the newly created concepts that embody difference and lead to novel understanding. According to the myth, it is *Praxis*, the goddess of Love, who created a series of experiential encounters for the human Psyche before she could unite with her beloved, the divine Eros, therefore blurring the boundaries between the human and divine domains. 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 “the monster appears as an

important conceptual category” (Lewis and Kahn 2010, p. 2). The monstrous may seem to be something mystical, but it cannot be reduced to being just an illusion. *Monster* is the ubiquitous symbol for the always already demonic alien, the generic Other, an a priori excluded foreigner or 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. 137): *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 nonconscious component of learning is significant at the level of holistic practices comprising education and human development (e.g., 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 or I hate’ instead of ‘I judge’” (Deleuze 1989, p. 141). The multiple valences of love and affect embody “de-subjectification” (Lewis and Kahn 2010, p. 146) which 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 oneself, is our only identity, our single chance for all the combinations which inhabit us” (Deleuze and Parnet 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, as Foucault puts it, 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) 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 and 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 and 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 and Guattari 1987, p. xvi) disrupts the 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 machinic becoming” (Ansell-Pearson 1997, p. 4) is equivalent to “affectivity” (p. 4); and the process of becoming is always filled with affect, desire, love, and 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 being capable of eventually reconciling that which analytic thinking habitually perceives dualistically as 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” (Deleuze 1995, p. 103) into an uncertain territory of unfamiliar encounters and 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 always actuality, what’s coming into being, what’s new, what’s taking shape” (Deleuze 1995, p. 106) in *praxis*.

Deleuze’s model of experiential informal learning is based on the explication of subtle signs, such as involuntary memories similar to those awakened by Marcel Proust’s famous *madeleine* (cf. Bogue and Semetsky 2010), images, or esthetic and artistic signs as potential sources of meanings in accord with “the logic of sense” (Deleuze 1990). This logic exceeds 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 a 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 esthetic 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 artifact with the “inoculating trace of the faery [as] a utopian promise” (Lewis and Kahn 2010, pp. 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 create a theory/practice nexus, which is often missing from present-day 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. Becoming-animal is the very first assemblage embedded in the Deleuze-Guattarian transformational pragmatics associated with post-humanist education and partaking of “exopedagogy as a teaching and learning about the monstrous” (Lewis and 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 derived from learning by experience and in experience.

An unorthodox, informal, pedagogy is represented by the very becoming of human subjects that takes place in real-life encounters and exceeds a solely cognitive *Cogito*. Becoming-other – such as becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming-minor, becoming-child – often expresses itself in the mode of *silent* discourse (Semetsky 2010b) along the affective lines of flight 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 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.*

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## 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 toward the future, toward our experiential growth as becomings. For Deleuze, it is *becoming-woman* that represents “the key to all the other becomings” (Deleuze and 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. (Lewis and Kahn 2010, 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 that “the uncanny return of the other within the familiar is a site of great ambiguity, a paradoxical location that speaks to the limits of enlightenment reason” (p. 62). Yet it is within this paradoxical and uncanny location that the habitual dichotomies break down, thereby defying the supposedly illogical and monstrous status of the other by transforming the old and creating new assemblages based not on the dualistic opposition but on the inseparability of self and other, subject and object, cognition and affect, nature and culture, and human and nonhuman.

Emphasizing *care* as a feminine alternative to character education, Nel Noddings (1984/2003) presents the ethics of care in sharp contrast with the paradigmatic model of 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’s 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 establishing an intensive and affective relation that can allow us to “go from ‘limited sympathy’ to an ‘extended generosity’” (Deleuze 2003, p. 167).

This relational and integrative “capacity for ‘empathy’” (Noddings 2010, p. 6) is a prerogative of what Noddings calls *the maternal factor* as the natural instinct of mothers to care about and love their children. Such sympathy as an ability of “feeling with” (Noddings 2010, p. 73) is an effect that represents a feminine path to morality – at once symbolic and real “becoming-woman” at the level of action. Noddings (2010) expresses 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 empathic 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 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 the 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 and Kahn 2010, p. 103), itself becoming the very threshold capable of bringing “nature and culture together in its net” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 236). Significantly, in the framework of 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 and Kahn 2010, p. 112) that can open up new configurations, scramble ideological codes and moral norms, and create new sensory experiences over and above reductive empirical science.

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## 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 the “connection between imagination and utopia that brings out the foundations of both in human development is of particular significance for educational theory” (Peters and Freeman-Moir 2006, p. 3) and pedagogical practice. Among the new affective configurations established in practice, in experience, in life, will be exopedagogy which exceeds critical pedagogy oriented to the production of critical consciousness. As incorporating affects, love, and Eros, this form of pedagogy is oriented toward creating new modes of different – *altered* – states of consciousness by means of training our senses to perceive beyond given data and “to revision our relations to nonhuman life” (Lewis and 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*. These people as would-be educational leaders and policymakers are themselves produced by experimentation; they belong to “an oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic, and irremediably minor race. . . They have resistance in common – their resistance to death, to servitude, to the intolerable, to shame, and to the present” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, pp. 109–110). The people yet to come will appear only via the creative forms of experiential becoming: becoming-animal and 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 in love will become as necessary as teaching facts. Exopedagogy represents the very training of love in practice and as such gains a new urgency in education and in the whole of culture. 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 the educational policy agenda of the twenty-first century (Simons et al. 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 toward the “confrontation with its repressed excess” (Lewis and Kahn 2010, p. 13). Exopedagogy therefore is *both the means and the end* to a particular post-humanist *vocation*, irreducible to the teacher’s profession as a plain 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 to cross the limits of the present and tap into the future, thereby potentially converting the “monstrous” into the “magical.” The alternative topologies would reverse categories; and what narrow rationality delegates to the realm of the monstrous may actually showcase itself as *enchanted*. The resignation and melancholia pervading the current system of education may turn into affirmation and joy. The beast can become beautiful by virtue of love.

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*A version of this essay was originally presented at the 2011 Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia Annual Meeting, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand.*

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