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Non-Violencing:

Imagining Non-Violence Pedagogy with Laozi and Deleuze

Abstract

This paper explores the challenges of non-violence as an educational subject. Conceptually framed by David Loy's (1988) nonduality, this cross-cultural conversation between Laozian and Deleuzian viewpoints articulates reforming non-violence into non-violencing within educational discourse. Non-violencing is a shift that opens up space to theorise non-violence as open-ended, uncertain, and dynamic. One author utilises Laozi's Taoism, uses water as an illustration and examines yin-yang cosmology to illustrate the continuum of violence/non-violence. Proceeding from the notion of non-action (*wuwei*, 無爲), he argues that non-violence is not the opposite of violence, but it is a form of active action by not doing. The other author draws from Deleuze to connect non-violence to the concepts of haecceity, minoritarianism, and multiplicities. Together, we postulate that non-violence is not a thing. Instead, we consider it in its gerund form to be a particular kind of activity performed to prevent violence in whatever relational patterns it may take. This open-ended space created by non-violence facilitates imagining a fresh approach to human interactions. In promoting this cross-cultural conversation, the William Joiner Institute Teacher Initiative Project (TIP) is highlighted as an exemplar program emphasizing the uncertainty, incompleteness, and paradox of the violence/non-violence duality and non-violencing pedagogy. This cross-cultural, philosophical study will provide educators with salient epistemological and pedagogical frameworks with which to advance the field of non-violence education.

Keywords: Non-violence education, cross-cultural conversation, Taoism, Deleuze and Guattari.

Orientation and the Context of This Paper

Schools, like all social institutions, have elements violence occurring within and around them. For Americans, the spectre of mass school shootings, such as at Columbine High School in 1999 and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018, elicits constant fear, while around the world bullying and fights among students are commonplace. School faculty exhibit violence through corporal punishment and suspension. Moreover, the curriculum itself is often rife with violence – historical accounts of conquest and imperialism from the ancient Romans to the modern-day United States are taught alongside literary depictions of harm and injury, such as the murders and battles throughout *MacBeth*. This prompts us to question, what is the space for teaching non-violence within schools? What new perspectives might we take to open possibilities for non-violence education? In what ways would a cross-cultural conversation across time and place generate a provocative way of rethinking non-violence education?

We begin our argument by asserting that violence is not a thing. Rather, it is a categorical determination about activity in the world. In other words, violence itself does not harm any person or thing, but we do know that violence has occurred because we can discern its effects. This view opens up a kind of ontological multiplicity (Mol, 1999, 2002) whereby violence is performed through particular practices. For instance, school shootings can refer to any number of the 1,376 shootings that have occurred in United States schools since 1970 (K-12 Schools Shooting Database, 2019), typically denoted by specific details such as types of guns used, whether the shooter was a student at the school or not, and so on. Further, any single school shooting is known and attributed in numerous ways: the psychology of the shooter, the sequence of events, the weaponry used, the casualties inflicted, the testimony and emotional impact on survivors, and so on. These enactments of school shootings create an

ontological multiplicity in which the reality of the violence is an entanglement of various ways of knowing that it occurred.

Our first step here is to mirror the initial move: non-violence is not a thing but an epistemological problem. If defined simply by the absence of violence, such a category teeters on the edge of meaninglessness, in that it is constructed around no typical presence. That is, we cannot say that non-violence has been done because no one has been harmed. Rather, to identify and then teach non-violence as an educational subject, it requires a conceptualization that renders non-violence as distinct from the absence of violence. We seek a sense of non-violence that imagined, pondered, experimented with, and practiced.

Drawing from an epistemological concern on non-violence, the two authors in this paper coin the term non-violencing to distinguish a purposeful effort from the formulated, normalised, and a priori notion of non-violence as codified practice. We resist the binary of violence and non-violence with the use of this term, non-violencing. By articulating the concept in its gerund form, we consider non-violence as a particular kind of activity intended to prevent, diminish, or remedy violence, whatever relational form it may take in the space between the current situation and a future outcome. In particular, our paper is conceptually framed by a nondual approach to creating non-violence pedagogy with the use of cross-cultural conversation. In his book, *Nonduality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy*, Loy (1998) introduces the notion of non-dual thinking and action drawing from Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, other bodies of thought. The binaries of subject-object, body-mind, God-human, and thoughts-actions are dismantled in the negation of dualistic thinking. Persuaded and framed by Loy's argument, this paper is grounded upon challenging any East-West binary in constructing ideas about non-violence pedagogy as part of a conjoined dialogue.

Building from this context, we initiate a conversation from the perspective of each of these two traditions to generate a cross cross-cultural dialogue. After reviewing existing

educational research on non-violence, the two authors extend its discourse drawing from Loazian and Deleuzian perspectives, often incorporating metaphor and comparison to push our discussion into new, unexpected directions. In theorizing non-violencing, one author uses water imagery from the TTC and applies the notions of non-action (*wuwei*, 無爲) and yin-yang cosmology. In articulating non-violencing, the other author adopts the Deleuzian concepts of haecceity, minoritarianism, and multiplicities. Both of us review the William Joiner Institute Teacher Initiative Program (TIP) (<http://joinerteacherinitiativeprogram.weebly.com/>). At the end, we advocate for creating and imagining non-violencing pedagogy in education.

Cross-Epistemological Grounding on Non-Violence Pedagogy

We argue that non-violence is not a thing but an epistemological concern. For us, this indicates that violence is no longer a consistent category of action, but rather a vast collection of specific actualizations of harm, apparent from their effects. The range of the concept here is so broad as to test the limits of the imagination, but it does allow us to discard the notion that human violence is primal, pre-existing, essential, or a natural part of the world. Violence is, rather, a relation carried out in a specific socio-political situation. From this perspective, the notion of non-violence is problematised.

As rendered in the examples of Mohandas K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., non-violence is principally a restrained manner of acting in the face of state violence; it is a public, demonstrably moral way to negate power that is realised through violence (Sharp 2005). This form of non-violence—as purposeful repose—persists because of its celebrated successes. Can it, though, help us to think about other relations of violence, e.g., public and private, immediate and long-gestating, pre-accomplished and future, acute and diffuse? Indeed, the non-violence of Gandhi and King took place in the context of confrontations that led to dramatic violence, while by contrast, violent intentions can fizzle out without

confrontation. Instead, we recognise non-violence as a purposeful effort to meet the ontological multiplicity of violence in ways that attempt to configure situations such that harm is pre-empted, lessened, or redressed in the past, present, and/or future.

As the embodiment of cross-epistemological conversation, we coin the notion of non-violencing pedagogy as it emerges from Deleuze and Loazi philosophies and challenges the conventional approach to non-violence pedagogy. From the Deleuzian vantage, concepts are always in-development as they affect and arrange relations in the world. Deleuze argues that instead of determined, fixed forms populating the world, things are in a continual state of “becoming”. This is a processual sense of change that is always in the middle of reorganizing connections, which is “a characteristic of the very production of events” (Deleuze and Parnet 2002, 26). Deleuze posits that becoming is constant, and that the change of particular elements of a situation brings about a new situation, which is itself in the process of becoming something else. Inspired by the Deleuzian notion of becoming, we theorise that non-violencing is a haecceity, an emergent individuation in the continual flow of events without prediction. The fluidity of events, whether violence or non-violence, creates a non-anchored notion of this-ness.

The fluidity of haecceity is reminiscent of Taoist philosophy of *wuwei* (無爲)-- namely, non-action approach to leadership and social transformation with the emphasis on less, timely intervention, effortless action, selfless action, and ultimately returning to Natural Law (Author, 2015). Wuwei philosophy is considered as the basic principle of Laozi (also rendered as Lao Tzu and Lao-Tze), which appears in his text entitled *Tao-Te-Ching (TTC)* published during the Spring and Autumn Period in ancient China (772-481 BCE). In explicating wuwei philosophy within TTC, water is often used. For example, water is powerful owing to its soft and flexible characteristics. In advocating the paradoxical power of water, Lao Tzu (1963) states, “There is nothing softer and weaker than water. And yet there

is nothing better for attacking hard and strong things (236) .Wei-wuwei (爲無爲: the action of non-action), as the most active action, is powerful in its minimal intervention and non-prefixed interpretation of an event or a possible resolution (Loy, 1988). The wisdom in this fluidity is effective in the face of seamless, authoritarian interventions to resolve conflicts. The emphasis on the process and spontaneity of water in Taoism offers an imaginative space to coin the term non-violencing. Overall, non-violencing is ongoing, shifting as it does the dynamics in constructing the meanings of the violence/non-violence dichotomy linguistically, socially and politically. Unlike technological approaches to minimising a violent act, a diverse frame of non-violence is crucial to imagine the singularities of non-violence education. Non-violencing as *wuwei* (non-action) challenges earlier notions of violence/non-violence by emphasising spontaneous, open-ended, and active actions. Grounded upon these two distinctive intellectual heritages, we situate our articulation on non-violencing pedagogy within existing literature in the field of both cross-cultural conversation in education and non-violence education in the next section.

Cross-Cultural Conversation and Non-Violence Education

In 2015, the *Journal of Philosophy in Education (JOPE)* published a special issue paying attention to cross- and inter-cultural conversations between the East and the West. In its introduction, Todd and Ergas (2015) explore what educational and contemplative practices extend in-depth philosophical conversation. Methodologically, the editors invite scholars who are committed to the conversation on building bridges between the East and West Asian traditions. They underline this philosophical dialogue as “an ongoing conversation” (168) in defining and embodying multiple modes of contemplative practices. By avoiding any bifurcated, essentialised division between the East and West, the editors stimulate discussion and open new perspectives for philosophical inquiry.

Concurring with Todd and Ergas's (2015) argument, we adopt a methodological approach to a philosophical concept appears in this special issue. Culham (2015) explores the meaning and relationship of intuitive knowledge and virtue founded upon ancient Greek and Daoist perspectives. In a different *JOPE* volume within the same year as Todd and Ergas' (2015) edited volume, Hung (2015) theorises on humanism and humanistic education, drawing from early Daoism and Derrida's deconstruction. Hung revisits the Confucian ideal of *ren* and the rationality embedded in traditional humanism. In the early Daoist tradition, an ontological approach to self is *non-I*. Derrida challenges and repositions the meaning of self and logocentrism. By creating the phrase, "to be *as* not to be" (430, emphasis in original), Hung connects Daoist understanding of *non-subject* and Derrida's aporias of "... to come."

Similarly, Eppert et al. (2015) respond to the contemporary emphasis on the intersubjective turn in theorising contemplative and transformative education. In introducing and juxtaposing Shambhala Buddhism, Daoist philosophy, and Zen Buddhism, these authors initiate intercultural conversation and extend the openness to different ontologies, epistemologies, and ethics, which ultimately provide a pedagogical implication for social change—that is, "the nondual ground of basic goodness" (276). In this paper, we revisit non-violence pedagogy with the use of two distinctive philosophical traditions: Taoism and Deleuze. In creating a new concept of non-violencing pedagogy as a gerund form, we underscore the openness and flexibility this theorisation advocates and as Hung's research on humanism illustrates. Consenting to Eppert et al.'s (2015) argument, our inter- and cross-cultural conversation extends educators' endeavours to advocate social transformation for the common good, not grounded upon the market-driven logic of meritocracy and competition.

Grounded upon this methodological passion in cross- and inter-cultural conversation, we enrich the current dialogue about non-violence education. The extant literature in non-violence education offers innovative approaches to non-violence pedagogy drawing from

multiple angles. In his article, *The Inner (and Unavoidable?) Violence of Reason*, d'Agnese (2015) revisits Heideggerian notions of truth and being with the use of *aletheia*—that is, world disclosure and the discovery of existential truth. D'Agnese re-reads Heidegger and identifies his approach to *aletheia*, which transcends inner violence (such as the history of genocide and war) towards the call for “existential responsibility” (435). In applying this hermeneutic approach to violence, d'Agnese claims that a proper response to education is not a thing to establish; rather, it is a task involving “ever-ended-endeavors” (451). According to him, it is crucial to remain open in the presence of others; applying a previous definition and foundation is another version of epistemological violence.

Similarly, Kester and Cremin (2017) draw from the genealogy of and categorise different modes of peace education. Drawing from the theories of Galtung, Freire, and Bourdieu, Kester and Cremin organise major approaches to peace education by illustrating multiple modes of violence manifesting in education and society: direct violence, cultural violence, structural violence and post-structural violence. These authors also arrange four aspects of violence in terms of negative peace and positive peace, or rather, articulating what happens when the negative aspect of violence is removed and peace is present. For instance, the presence of restorative justice and the promotion of diversity is positive peace under the concept of structural violence. The equilibrium between peace theory and practice is that positive peace is the presence of the second-order reflexivity that these authors support for the study of post-structural violence. Ultimately, Kester and Cremin (2017) suggest field-based reflexivity in peace education.

Another salient approach to non-violence pedagogy stems from a philosophical analysis of heroes who devoted their lives to peace making and non-violence education. Waghid (2014), for example, reviewed Nelson Mandela's legacy for non-violence education. Waghid interpreted Mandela's legacy with the use of deliberation, compassion, and

reconciliation. This approach is interwoven with Mandela's educational philosophy of responsibility for others and creating a community of thinking. Overall, we explore the possibility of opening a methodological space for non-violence pedagogy with the use of inter-and cross-cultural conversation between Taoism and Deleuze. Additionally, given this intellectual space, we attempt to create a different approach to non-violence pedagogy going beyond providing a proper scope and sequence for a non-violence (or peace) curriculum.

A Taoist Perspective on Non-Violencing

We pay attention to a process-oriented, open-ended approach to actions in theorising non-violencing drawing from a Taoist perspective. A water image is used to illustrate a fluid, a constantly moving element of non-violencing. Additionally, we introduce yin-yang cosmology and *wuwei* (non-action) philosophy to theorise our approach to non-violencing pedagogy.

Non-violencing as open-ended, fluid movement

There is nothing softer and weaker than water. And yet there is nothing better for attacking hard and strong things. For this reason, there is no substitute for it. All the world knows that the weak overcomes the strong and the soft overcomes the hard. (Lao Tzu, 236).

In theorising non-violencing, we utilise relational and contextual characteristics of water. In TTC, water is used to illustrate Great Tao, and we connect the notion of non-violencing with this water image. Water is characterised by where it is located and how it is channelled without any pre-fixed shape and direction. No shape, colour, or flavour pre-exists before water is contained in a certain context. In the same way, non-violencing adopts the fluidity and openness of water while resisting a fixed, normalised approach to violence/non-violence. By using this water image to depict non-violencing, we investigate the

sociopolitical standpoints of those whose benefits are highlighted, whose stances are recognised, and whose perspectives are normalised within a given society.

In Chapter 34, Laozi mentions, “The Great Tao flows everywhere” (Lao Tzu 1963, 160). This relational and interdependent aspect of water is heuristic. Non-violencing embraces this unpredictable nature of water and how water flows in all directions. Water poses ontological questions not based on “what” violence/non-violence “is.” Rather, the questions are about “how” violence/non-violence operates in a very particular sociopolitical context without a pre-assigned, stereotypical approach. The interrogation of the process and context of actions are parallel to the way water flows provisionally and co-dependently, being neither predictable nor fixed. The nothingness of water in terms of its colour, shape, and direction is how we characterise non-violencing as an un-predetermined process, not the outcome or a thing.

Water embraces everything and purifies in given, sufficient time. Water is open to change; it is always ready to become something new and flexible, depending on where it is and how it flows. Water flows freely and an unplanned manner. We connect water’s characteristics with those of non-violencing. Non-violencing is *becoming* in the same way that water is spontaneous and unpredictable. This is a process-oriented understanding of non-violence rather than outcome-oriented judgment of what violence or non-violence is. Sociopolitical and cultural approaches to non-violencing leave a space for pondering such contextual knowledge by avoiding this duality of “violence/non-violence.” Water does not follow a conventional notion of being strong. Water does not possess shape before meeting other objects. Laozi highlights that supposedly weak components of no shape and no direction paradoxically enable water to become much stronger than other fixed objects such as rocks or metals. This paradox of being weak and then becoming strong is what we propose non-violencing as an important pedagogical strategy. By not having a pre-planned, fixed,

didactic curriculum in conventional non-violence education, non-violencing curriculum envisions open-endedness and flexibility in defining meaningful curriculum. Water soothes the tensions generated by other elements, such as earth, water, wood, and metal in yin-yang cosmology. Similarly, non-violencing curriculum aims to nurture every student and to flow in multiple directions meeting a sociopolitical need.

Indeed, water is paradoxically weak yet strong in that “[it] benefits all things and does not compete with them” (Chan 1963, 142). The strength of water is not from a rigid element of masculinity to be the top out of competition. On contrast, its strength is originated from water’s flexibility and inclusiveness. Non-violencing is not definitive nor can be labelled with the use of nominal elements. The first chapter of the *TTC* begins with the ontological paradox that “The Tao (Way) that can be told of is not the eternal Tao; the name that can be named is not the eternal name” (Lao Tzu 1963, 97). Whatever name is attached to define Tao, it is not Tao anymore. Like Tao cannot be defined with names or things, non-violencing is not a list of events or a thing to remember. Like water flows over the surface of space without pre-given certainty or pre-determined judgment, non-violencing emphasises a sociopolitical, cultural aspect of human interactions to decide being or not-being violent.

Non-Violencing drawing from yin/yang cosmology and *wuwei* (non-action)

Non-violencing is not a thing. Rather, it enacts a nonduality and a moving beyond the violence/non-violence division. Non-violencing points to its continuity as Being. Water flows in tension without labelling entities with the use of good/bad dichotomies. Non-violencing is a dynamic with which to examine this progress in-the-making. A yin-yang cosmology is a symbolic tool to theorise non-violencing from its constant moving and shifting.

The balance and shift between yin and yang is utilised to explain the birth and existence of universe. In the traditional East Asian philosophy, the universe is formed out of void (*wuji* 無極) filled by the primordial energy called *qi* (氣). *Taiji* (太極) is generated from

the void and then *taiji* transformed into the yin and yang vital forces (Lin, Oxford, & Culham, 2016). As Figure 1 illustrates, yin-yang is always complementary and shifting. The circle is comprised of two intertwined halves of dark (yin) and light (yang). Two dots in each of these halves represent yang within yin and vice versa. Yin-yang is a great example of nonduality of being (Louis 2003).

[Insert Figure 1 around here]

In theorising non-violencing, the authors highlight constant movements and changes in yin-yang to construct the realities and practices of violence/non-violence. The movement of becoming illustrates the unpredictability of predictability as well as the predictability of unpredictability. Non-violencing exists in this paradoxical space of in-betweenness. The dividing lines between yin and yang seem certain, but they never are. The line exists in motion. The yin-yang relationship is symmetrical in representing different elements of the world: yang does not exist without yin and vice versa. Because of the discursive notion of violence/non-violence, neither can be understood as nouns; for doing so leads to the tendency to create a fixed understating of them in binary terms, with non-violence as good and violence as bad. We accordingly argue for a reconsideration of the tensions among multiple interest groups within a particular sociopolitical context. In her book, *Nonviolence and Education: Cross-cultural Pathways*, Wang (2014) presents an interview with a Taoist mentor who does not divide water into good and bad. Water is water regardless of its quality; it does not itself contain a good/bad value. Likewise, neither violence nor non-violence itself can be defined in terms of good/bad. Their interdependence certainly explains the relationality of our being. Also, there is a prophetic (hopeful) message that yin and yang are equally important in existence, unlike the dichotomy of good/bad or normal/abnormal. A non-violencing curriculum thus investigates this interrelationality of violence/non-violence to avoid offering a stereotypical, normalised approach to non-violence education. In describing

water, no pre-given value exists before its discursive construction. Similarly, the value of non-violence and violence is constructed socio-politically, and a non-violencing curriculum interrogates the construction of the “negativeness-positiveness” of violence/non-violence in analysing political episodes and their circulation among people by language.

This open-ended, descriptive and flexible action of non-violencing is connected with the embodiment of *wuwei* (non-action). Basically, we postulate that non-violence is not the lack of violent acts epistemologically informed by *wuwei* philosophy. Literally, *wuwei* refers to not-doing or non-action. However, realities and beings in Taoism consider *wu* (non) as a cosmological being, rather than the lack of *you* (existence). The emphasis on *wu* in *wuwei* as cosmological being leaves room for possibilities, and it highlights its value. Most notably, uselessness is introduced within the context of *wu* (無之以爲用); “Doors and windows are cut out to make a room, but it is on its non-being that the utility of the room depends. Therefore turn being into advantage, and turn non-being into utility” (Lao Tzu 1963, 119). *Wu* (non-being) is meaningful, because it enables an object to fulfil its purposes. The vacancy in a cup provides space for water. Non-being exists as possibility. In the words of Parkes (1987), what we “gain is Something, yet it is by virtue of Nothing” (121)—nothing, that is, that can be put to use. By virtue of emptiness, we challenge existing conditions for pursuing “what for” and “in order to,” which establish instrumental relationships among people (Parkes 1987). In the mainstream Western culture, educators believe that more is good. This philosophy of *wu* introduces educators about the value of less is more. Nothing is more than void or emptiness. It is a potential of being.

This recognition of *wu* as being (i.e., invisible nothingness and emptiness) shifts the discourse on non-being or non-action beyond the status of lacking something or being useless emptiness. The concept of *wuwei* provides an alternative lens through which to theorise non-violencing as not “void” or “empty” of violence. Rather, informed by *wuwei*, non-violencing

is an “opening action” for the common good with possibilities (Heim 1984, 317). Non-violencing aims to shift the directions of discourse in comprehending non-violent acts—that is, active action in response to violence followed by minimal intervention. In *wuwei* philosophy, the best doctor is not someone who treats illness with extraordinary skills. Rather it is the one who prevents illness by taking no action of surgery or minimal, timely intervention before one gets really sick. No action is the best action in this sense. By placing emphasis on *wu* (non) as being in *wuwei* philosophy, we interpret non-violencing as a non-impositional, timely and creative action to the contingencies of a particular situation. This interpretation of non-violencing in terms of *wuwei*'s openness and possibilities for action challenges the notion of fixed or predictable actions about violence/non-violence. Informed by *wuwei*, non-violencing is openness, the flexibility of action followed by Natural Law.

As such, non-violencing challenges any binary understanding of violence/non-violence. If “non”-violence is interpreted as the lack of violence, the spontaneous, open-ended and non-teleological but evolutionary character of human interactions in confronting challenges may be overlooked. Like the paradox of taking actions through non-action, non-violencing exists where softness overcomes seemingly solid and strong things. Water resolves conflicts embedded in strong things through its flexibility and provisionality. Non-violencing pays attention to a *wuwei* philosophy in which the paradox of taking no actions indeed serves as active action towards “violence.” By taking no-actions, everything is done. As *wuwei* is not predetermined but challenges existing values with its ultimate openness. Similarly, non-violencing highlights the values of openness and the flexibility of human interactions and imagines different approaches to possible “violence” through open, less impactful interventions.

A Deleuzian Perspective on Non-Violencing

The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze published a range of works from the 1950s through the mid-1990s on studies of historical philosophers to examinations of media. Proveti (2012) argues that Deleuze was a philosopher of life, meaning that in his works, Deleuze often took up problems about how things come to be, how they become differentiated, how they evolve, and how they find expression. This focus on life was chartered by a radical empiricism by which Deleuze continually attempted to describe specific, particular material relations in new, provocative ways. In some cases, Deleuze did this by exploring and reconfiguring the works of earlier philosophers, such as Spinoza and Nietzsche, and in other instance collaborating with non-philosophers, such as Felix Guattari, to propose surprising new ideas. As we take it, the general thrust of Deleuze's work is an attempt to rethink the world as a vital, dynamic arrangement of connections and becomings.

We seek to examine non-violence in ways that avoid idealising the concepts and reinforcing the hagiography of its most celebrated practitioners. Rather, we approach non-violencing as a perplexing problem laying in the space between the present situation and some future outcome. That is, how can we describe practices and principles of non-violence in the midst of continual becoming? We take non-violencing to be an experimental endeavour to navigate process of becoming to pre-empt, end, or remedy harm without the use of violence. These specifications in the definition of non-violencing create space for practice and pedagogy, which cannot be found in a simplistic notion of non-violence as action without resulting harm. It is the effort to address violence without causing harm and the embrace of the uncertainty of the result that marks out non-violencing as a concept.

Non-violencing should be distinguished from a situational approach, which would involve assessing the rightness or effectiveness of non-violence based on an analysis of its immediate context. Non-violencing, rather, is known empirically through the answers to such

questions as whether there has been an attempt to pre-empt or lessen harm, or how such an effort has played among immanent relations. In this way, non-violencing is built from the experimental act of non-violence. Its rightness—the answer to the question of whether harm has been prevented or mitigated—is distinct from its factness—whether non-violence was done. This leaves open the possibility that non-violencing may result in violence, a potential that must be embraced when we posit that all non-violent endeavours are kinds of experiments. As noted above, violence is a categorical determination, while non-violencing is an effort to stop or redress violence. That non-violencing may lead to violent results is a complexity that must be embraced both in practice and pedagogy. This uncertainty is a necessary spectre, an inescapable possibility that must be incorporated into the effort.

Nor is non-violencing fully captured by the notion of praxis, for no theory-action dialectics are required of an attempt to prevent harm. There are non-violence orthodoxies, of course —*Letter from the Birmingham Jail* (King 1994); *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Gandhi 1983); *Waging Non-Violent Struggle* (Sharp 2005)—but these documents are deeply bound up in the contexts of their creation. The practices of power and violence are known and analysed in the service of non-violent protest. The spaces of uncertainty are particular to their historical moment, making the specifics of their non-violent theorizing similarly bound.

Writings on non-violence generally operate on three defining characteristics: purity of relation to self, fidelity to non-violent principles, and a pragmatic approach to non-violence. The purity of relation to self, exemplified in Thich Nhat Hanh (1993), positions non-violence as action derived from a harmonious and full embrace of oneself, and it makes the work of non-violence in the world an extension of one's inner life. Others prioritise the purity of non-violent principles and fidelity in realizing these ideas in the world. We might look to Tolstoy (1987) as the modern wellspring of this approach, since his orthodoxy, cultivated in the

context of Christian thought, was a major influence on Gandhi and King. The pragmatic rendering of non-violence emphasises that which occurs as the defining characteristic of non-violence; as Sharp (2005) and other arch-strategists argue, we know non-violence by the ability to deploy it in the service of struggle towards a better world.

There is, however, a broader image of non-violencing that better renders the non-prefigured, emergent, uncertain nature of the work of non-violence. This is non-violencing as a kind of haecceity, “consist[ing] entirely [of] relations of movement and rest between molecules and particles, capacities to affect or be affected.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 261). The notion of haecceity was adopted by Deleuze and Guattari from Duns Scotus, and it was useful for them as a way to distinguish the transcendent categorical identification of the world – the “that-ness” of things – with the specific, contingent existence of things in the world – the “this-ness” of things. In *Dialogues*, Deleuze frames this as “An hour, a day, a season, a climate, one or several years – a degree of heat, an intensity, very different intensities which combine – have a perfect individuality which should not be confused with that of a thing or a formed subject” (Deleuze and Parnet 2002, 92). He further elaborates:

H[a]ecceities are simply degrees of power which combine, to which correspond a power to affect and be affected, active of passive affects, intensities.... Nothing becomes subjective but hecceities take shape according to compositions of non-subjective powers and effects.... What is a young girl or a group of young girls? Proust describes them as moving relationships of slowness and speed, and individuations by hecceity which are not subjective (Deleuze and Parnet 2002 , 92-93)

For Deleuze, events assemble through “concrete individuations that have a status of their own and direct the metamorphosis of things and subjects” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 261). This is never deterministic, though. In regards to non-violencing, the concept is one element “in the assemblage of which they are a part, independent of the form of their concept

and the subjectivity of their person” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 291). Non-violence is an indeterminate activity in an ongoing change in relations. It is an attempt to affect how “this” relates to “that” so that harm, immediate or future, is less possible and the event is known as non-violent.

Then, how do we get to non-violencing? How do we articulate some notion of a non-violencing pedagogy? If we take non-violencing as a kind of intentional activity to make harm less likely and is characterised by a high degree of unknowability, what might work in this arrangement? What is the best course of action? What has happened before that might suggest what I do now? What can I imagine doing in this moment? Such an approach rejects a categorical non-violence education. Non-violencing is enigmatic; it is an experiment with social relations that is as specific as it is speculative. How could we ever teach this kind of incalculable improvisation, particularly in the highly structured institution of schooling?

From a Deleuzian perspective, the identification of non-violence with two historical figures, namely Gandhi and King, imparts a metaphysical consistency to the concept. Thus, there is a “whatness” and determined, generalised criteria for non-violence idealised from the circulating memories of these individuals. We end up with a codex with which to assess the true nature of an event—is this non-violent or not?—that obscures the specific, historical situation from which it emerged. From a slightly different perspective, many of the non-violent events that Gandhi and King organised, indeed some of the best known, ended up involving significant violence. This was in some instance anticipated and even, at times, part of the strategic manoeuvre. In 1963, King remarked that the protests in Birmingham, Alabama

“were the non-violent movement coming of age. This is the first time in the history of our struggle that we have been able to, literally, fill the jails...I’ve always felt if we could fill the jails in our witness of freedom, it would be a magnificent display of the

determination of the Negro and a marvellous way to lay the whole issue before the conscience of the local and national community” (*King: A Filmed Record...Montgomery to Memphis*, 1970).

This entanglement between the violent and the non-violent – that the non-violent might provoke a violent response, which could further the aims of non-violent protest – helps make porous the distinct between the two modes, both in tactics and values. The violent and non-violent are bound up with one another in process of becoming.

It helps to think in small terms, to take a “minor” approach, as Deleuze and Guattari (1986) have written. A signature component of a “minor” approach is that it is opposed to the transcendent, the universal, and the general; it is a way of philosophizing in the “cramped space” (17) of life. A minor literature, a concept that these scholars elaborated in the context of Kafka’s work, has certain distinct characteristics:

- a. “in it language is affected with a high degree of deterritorialization.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 16). That is, elements of language (words, utterances, speech, text) become divorced from common usage, from the typical set of relations that give them meaning and utility.
- b. “everything in [a minor literature] is political ... its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics” (17).
- c. “in it everything takes on a collective value” (17). For Deleuze, value is the critique of ideas through life, a concept derived from Nietzsche. The collective value of a minor literature, in its cramped space intimately close to a life in some dense instant, critiques general ideas and ideologies (truth, morals, anything transcendent) from a real-life perspective.

Laurie and Khan (2017) have brought this concept of the minor into the active political space of culture with the term “becoming-minor.” For them, “becoming-minor”

indicates the ethical work of living in “cramped spaces,” in which all action is political and connected to other becomings; all becomings rely on an exchange between territories that rearrange relations among their elements. In this sense there is a geography to becoming and non-violencing, both in that it is spatial and that it reckons relationships between positions as they move through space. This is non-violence understood, not through the transcendental, but through minor philosophy bound to the moment and place. Non-violencing action requires an intimate embrace and parsing of the immediate situation to find the elements being exchanged in the process of becoming. A minor approach frees non-violencing from its twin figureheads and allows it to circulate so that it may be played in experimental, imaginative ways.

Cross-Cultural Conversation on Non-Violencing Pedagogy

How do educators imagine and implement non-violencing pedagogy? In illustrating the characteristics of non-violencing pedagogy, two authors in this paper analyse a non-violence educational program drawing on Taoist and Deleuzian perspectives. This involves the William Joiner Institute Teacher Initiative Program (<http://joinerteacherinitiativeprogram.weebly.com>), which works with teachers to promote a world without war by facilitating critical readings of textbooks, by creating innovative, experiential learning opportunities, and by bringing veterans into schools to speak directly with pupils. A summer writer’s workshop creates a sense of community committed to responding creatively to war and its social consequences. Noteworthy here is the manner in which stories are used (being critiqued, brought to light, and told) to counter the presentation of war in history curricula. These stories are not intended to replace parts of the curriculum, but rather to present counterpoints and contradictions and to reveal ethical and moral dilemmas. This project is charging teachers and pupils to respond to and re-envision war in the future through the circulation of stories in schools. Based on the ways in which the TIP is

practiced in education, the authors provide three outstanding elements of non-violencing pedagogy in the TIP: unpredictability and uncertainty, destabilising the “is-ness” with the Tao paradox, and the openness of the non-violencing pedagogy.

Uncertainty and unpredictability

According to Kosek (2009), the openness to uncertainty is crucial in learning about non-violence. Uncertainty is related to visceral reactions about ethical issues that cannot be narrowed down with the use of right/wrong dichotomy. There is always open space for nondual perception, thoughts, and actions about certainty and uncertainty (Loy 1988). The certainty of uncertainty or the uncertainty of certainty represent the paradox of Taoist version of Being and non-Being. Contexts matter in decision-making. Relationships among gendered, racialised, and classed subjects matter in considering the context of events. Non-violencing pedagogy thus addresses teachers’ familiar dilemmas of creating space to prepare pupils for what is not yet known. In our formulation, the challenge is how to articulate a non-violencing pedagogy that engages pupils with an epistemological uncertainty, with the kinds of not knowing due to the importance of sociopolitical context in any decision-making process. Openness and flexibility are key components of this pedagogy like the fluidity of water entails. This pedagogy involves not imparting a corpus or specific knowledge, but rather fostering a faculty for uncertainty, unpredictability, and even unanswerability. In the TIP, pupils are encouraged to explore and deliberate the alternatives and uncertainties that they face in dealing with wars and social conflicts. For example, in the unit on “Why Men Love War,” Bill Britton at St. John’s Prep designed a curriculum to explore many complex, challenging ideas about wars (<http://joinerteacherinitiativeprogram.weebly.com/lesson-plans>). Pupils read two texts: Carl Malants’s memoir “What it is Like to Go to War” and Evan Thomas’s article “Why Men Love War.” Guideline reading questions inspire high-school pupils to read the texts critically and to be open to uncertainty. Citing Roosevelt’s

speech, pupils are asked to connect WWI with the 9/11 attacks from the angle of the utility of the war. Pupils also explore whether the lust for war is atavistic. These questions encourage pupils to be open to uncertainty rather than seeking definite answers like in a multiple-choice test to respond to wars historically.

While examining programs, discussions and workshops in the TIP, educators imagine a capacity for entertaining ambiguity and multitudinous possibilities. This imagined capacity is not only the quality of individual pupils. Rather it is a capacity for being open to uncertainty is at once personal and collective, and it is developed by puzzling out the unknown. Further, the introduction of uncertainty into the into the processes of learning presents the possibility of developing new tools (Deleuze 1992) to interrupt the exertion of control that is characteristic of contemporary society. In Delueze's formulation, control operates as a "self-deforming cast" (4) that continually modulates in response to the actions of individuals; in its way, this conception resembles the way in which an individual's Internet browsing history is used to shape what they see online or the way in which computer adaptive tests are used in schools to create assessments tailored to individual pupils. The "coils of the serpent" (3) squeeze tighter the more one struggles within existing systems of control.

When this openness to uncertainty is injected into pedagogy as an epistemological facet of non-violencing, notions of control are framed as issues of discernibility and knowability. That is, in social settings driven by organs of control, efforts at non-violence face the pitfall of becoming controlled by taking predictable, already-understood forms. Even in the absence of overt, direct violence, resistance is thwarted by its own repetition. For example, the TIP encourages first-hand experiences and critical reflections in understanding the notions of control involved in war and the refugee experience. In the program called "Youth to Youth Symposium: War and the Refugee Experience," pupils who have experienced war and refugee status share and exchange their lived experience with other

pupils

(https://www.umb.edu/news_events_media/events/youth_to_youth_symposium_war_and_the_refugee_experience). Their lived experience is similar to and/or different from what social media has reported. Through this symposium, youth participants embrace the feeling of discomfort and uncertainty. Furthermore, they become the social media, letting their voices circulate in public.

The social media activism campaign, the teach-in, the protest march—all of these can be upended if accounted for in advance, thereby paradoxically reinforcing the power of the social media corporation, the school, or the police when activists do what is expected. The openness to uncertainty and unknowing creates the space for new tools to be crafted and placed in the hands of pupils and that develop unpredictable possibilities from a productive ignorance.

Destabilizing the “is-ness” with the Tao paradox

Non-violencing pedagogy seeks to create a shared imagination, one that fosters the ability to envision aspects of non-violence that exceed a nominal description. The very first chapter of TTC indicates the impossibility of naming Tao and the ontological paradox of naming: "the name that can be named is not the eternal name" (Lao Tzu 1963, 97). The Tao that can be described *as it is* is not the true one. Tao itself is timeless and limitless. The linguistic, symbolic limitation always exists in illustrating the being and experience of Tao. Once one can name and label what Tao is, it is no longer Tao. Individuals only know of its existence.

In implementing a non-violence curriculum, educators are tempted to use prescriptive, universalised contents, confining what it “is” and what it should be. Taoism teaches us that just as naming Tao does not represent the Being of Tao, neither does a generalised, stable version of a non-violence curriculum illuminate the art of it. We accordingly theorise non-

violencing by reflecting on the paradox of Tao, which exists without naming. This theorisation is valuable if the notion of non-violence becomes open-ended and flexible depending on the specific sociopolitical context in which a “violent” act takes place. Being open to this paradox, that is, the impossibility of naming non-violencing pedagogy, enables teachers to release their pedagogical imagination in teaching non-violence.

As part of the TIP, there is an interesting project, “Transferring Military Uniforms into Handmade Paper” (<https://www.combatpaper.org/>). This project asks participants to imagine the stories and experiences of veterans imbued in the fabrics and woven threads. With this first-hand experience, participants encounter war and the military in an innovative way. Throughout the project, participants are expected to extend and challenge collective beliefs about militarism and wars. An exchange between veterans and civilians is embedded in this project, and a sense of community is highly appreciated. In teaching non-violence, pupils act out the roles of historical actors who brought into the practice of non-violence. In addition to this well-known approach to teaching non-violence, the aforementioned handmade paper project opens the possibility of including different versions of experience in teaching the outcomes of wars with direct interactions with veterans.

Another advantage of the Tao paradox in non-violencing pedagogy is to include multiple teaching-learning resources in addressing the *how* of non-violence. The TIP collects poetry in teaching and reflecting on war and conflict around the world. With the title of *Jerusalem*, Naomi Shihab Nye writes, “I’m not interested in/who suffered the most./I’m interested in/people getting over it” (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/54296/jerusalem-56d2347ab7a20>). Maxine Greene (1995) constantly emphasises the need to release the imagination with the use of art. Imagination is to “look at things as if they could be otherwise” for the common good (16). Like Nye’s poetry, pupils pose new questions and unanswerable questions in dealing with

social conflicts and war, particularly the Palestine conflict and political connections about this conflict from mainstream US perspectives and those of others. We expect that teachers can become open to new pedagogies in teaching non-violence beyond any normalised, standardised approach to teaching it. Embracing this paradox of Tao avoids any attempt to create a normalised, pre-fixed curriculum for teaching non-violence. This openness to new pedagogies does not support nihilism that we cannot teach non-violence education. Rather, we suggest the use of multiple pedagogical strategies not easily distinguishable on the basis of either events or figureheads. This interwovenness recalls the simultaneous coexistence of yin-yang. Absolute this-ness (haecceity) or that-ness does not exist in yin-yang cosmology; rather, constant pushes and tensions within this arbitrary division generate new Being from relative co-being and co-existence.

Towards Open-Endedness in Non-Violence Education

The open-endedness and complexity of Tao is another imaginary space not limited to Being within linguistic, ontological barriers. A non-violencing curriculum embodies the spirit of Tao, encouraging educators to consider the non-nominal possibility of describing Tao and non-violent/violent acts. Similar to other innovative educational discourses, we are mindful of normalising or romanticising our suggestion for non-violencing curriculum. Complexity always exists and we acknowledge that some students may use this flexible approach to non-violencing pedagogy as a means to promote violence. In theorising imagination, Greene (1995) always underscores the negative consequence of releasing the imagination by creating an atomic bomb or other incidents. We provide several curricular examples that educators imagine and embody non-violencing curriculum and move towards openness in the field of non-violence education. Non-violencing pedagogy is housed in this philosophy of openness of teaching violence and non-violence. Beyond listing events and historical figures with the

use of the good/bad dichotomy, non-violencing pedagogy presents a continual stream of problems and uncertainties to teachers and students.

In his book *Mahatma Gandhi on Violence and Peace Education*, Allen (2007) has challenged simplistic, misleading approaches to non-violence education according to which peace and non-violence are conceived as the opposite terms of war and violence. Rather, Allen argues, Gandhi's approach to non-violence sustains the value of challenging dominant philosophical perspectives by imagining and embodying alternatives in education. A Gandhian approach to non-violence education thus encourages teachers to revisit dominant concepts by creating innovative alternatives with the flexibility and open-endedness to respond to contextual circumstances (Allen 2007). We subscribe to Allen's argument for non-violence education in the form of a non-violencing curriculum that challenges the predominant curricular approaches to civic education, which apply a normalised approach to non-violence as if it were the antonym of violence. We disrupt the current curricular practice to non-violence education in particular by listing desirable actions for the promotion of social justice and equity.

The other example of non-violencing pedagogy is a critical examination of the contextual circumstances of history. In his book, *Acts of Conscience*, Kosek (2009) closely examined a group of American Christian activists opposed to US entry into World War II. The most alluring part in the work is that while these activists drew on Christianity as inspiration for non-violence, they approached the actual work of non-violent activism as an uncertain problem. For them, non-violence activism was a reflexive cycle of deliberate planning, action, review, and reconsideration. This approach seems Deleuzian, which is a way of reading the world with love and constant experimentation to see what happens. It is concerted, cyclical attempts at non-violent becoming. It questions, "what action(s) will change relations such that we are becoming non-violent?" Dare I say, they are non-

violencing, looking to conjure the line, the betweenness, that realises the desired new arrangement. In a personal conversation, Kosek shared a curriculum activity. He was working with a group of secondary pupils from Cyprus, and he was tasked with teaching them about the Montgomery bus boycott. He decided to have the pupils role play the African American community. Kosek set the historical scene, gave them background on the key actors and their principles, and then asked the pupils to decide upon an approach. What non-violent tactic would help to desegregate the city and to promote civil rights? In this activity we see the same notion at work as in Kosek's book. He was very directly asking pupils to apply non-violence in a historical situation that we theorise as part of a non-violencing curriculum.

Furthermore, a non-violencing curriculum is distinctive in considering the paradox of actions embedded in *wuwei* philosophy, according to which not doing is the most active action. The open-endedness of a non-violencing curriculum, similar to the Tao, creates a space to ponder innovative, imaginative actions in responding to human concerns when reacting positively or negatively to a specific event. This perspective recalls Allen's (2007) suggestion that a Gandhian approach be applied to non-violence education that is always responsive to a specific context with open-endedness and flexibility. The art of a non-violencing curriculum resides in acknowledging the unknowingness of Being and the unpredictability of human actions while recognizing the importance of flexibility and open-endedness when it comes to action, re-action, and non-action.

Additionally, where non-violencing has the potential of haecceity—a virtual possibility to be actualised in doing—we cannot be certain about a non-violencing pedagogy. Where there is no set practice for non-violent action, there is no set method to teach, no clear criteria for analysis, or rubric to assess results. What we have instead is destination without a map. For Deleuze, this is not a bad position to be in, but rather one of liveliness and attentiveness, an opportunity to make oneself a “healthy body” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987)

that does not repeat figures or merely let them pass through, but instead engages with the world and produces, in an individual's own way, new patterns, unanticipated lines, and departures that affirm life in their very creation. Unexpected and experimental ways of doing are desirable. This brings us to a foundational pedagogical problem regarding how to think about that which is unknowable and to teach that which is unknown. In asking these questions, we have argued for a non-violencing pedagogy as an imaginary and provocative place to embrace the unknowable, the unknown, and unknowingness as a potential launching point for exploring new approaches to education that involve examining familiar notions in different ways and transforming our taken-for-grantedness into ongoing inquiries.

But none of this is to say that what is taught determines what is learned by students. As we have described possibilities for a non-violencing pedagogy and presented examples that we believe illustrate the concept, we cannot ensure the teaching will ultimately foster non-violence. This is because we cannot know all of the contexts in which this teaching will occur, nor will we know all of students' desires, ideas, and experiences they bring to the learning environment. But as noted above, what marks non-violencing is the attempt. Following Deleuze, we see the activity as an experiment in the world: we may hope for non-violence, but we must watch closely to see the outcome.

Implications for Non-Violence Education

Applying the process of cross-cultural conversation, the two authors theorise and enrich approaches to non-violence education. We created the term of non-violencing to challenge a normalised understanding about non-violence education. Non-violencing pedagogy is a distinct discourse for revisiting non-violence and education amid the political and sociocultural climate of generating harmful acts against the common good. Two authors with different epistemological and ontological traditions of Laozian and Deleuzian thoughts had the common ground of dismantling bifurcated understandings of violence/non-violence

in terms of a clear-cut distinction between violence and non-violence as a thing. Each of us respects different approaches to the similar ethical commitment for shifting discourse in the conventional approach to non-violence education. We believe that using the good/bad binary in comprehending human interactions (with harmful acts) does not actually transform pupils' thinking and their actions; instead, we should seek learning experiences marked by uncertainty and openness to create the possibility for students to ponder and explore.

Our cross-cultural conversation provides a tool for reconceptualising non-violencing to a continuum of human behaviours and the contingencies of human interactions. We highlight the value of excavating not-well-circulating epistemologies, such as *wuwei*, in extending conversations about non-violence pedagogy. Embracing multiple perspectives with open-endedness is a great practice of non-violencing, in that it minimizes any epistemological violence due to legitimising a particular set of knowledge. We do not seek to unmoor non-violence from questions of morality, ethics, and justice. Instead, we attempt to open a new avenue for non-violence education by posing non-violencing as a concept. This introduces elements of indeterminacy and unexpectedness into the effort towards non-violence, which creates new grounds for examining our intention and learning about non-violent movements in the past.

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