

**Movement, mindfulness and ‘otherwise than being’:  
Exploring liminality in educational practices**

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**The seeing and the said**

A myth exists which describes how an ancient Chinese artist Wu Tao-Tzu once painted a mural, clapped his hands and disappeared into his painting (Lindqvist, 2012). How did Wu Tao-Tzu project himself into his painting? How did he embody and enter the representation which he depicted? We draw upon myths for many reasons, one being “it is a game that transfigures our fragmented, tragic world, and helps us to glimpse new possibilities by asking ‘what if?’” (Armstrong, 2005, pp. 8-9). To make sense of, shape meanings and transcend new and unprecedented situations requires not just inquiry, but imagination as well. If we seek to foster ‘open capacities’ (Passmore, 1980) within our educational practices, then it is incumbent that we also project ourselves into the unknown. Closed capacities are categorical, open capacities are liminal; whilst both are integral to learning, the latter possesses the capacity for transformation. Integral to this transformative process is transcendence, which “denotes a supersession of the given, the accepted, the familiar, or the weight of circumstance” (Aboulafia, 2010, p. 3)

Liminality is defined as existing in the ‘interstices’ (Bhabha, 1994), or within an ‘interval’ (Manning, 2009); a position of not just ambiguity but alterity as well. The premise of this paper is to explore how the interplay between cosmopolitanism and transcendence can enrich our understandings of liminality in educational practices. The intensification of globalisation via travel, trade and communications has led to a greater focus upon the interrelationship between cosmopolitanism and education, inviting an exploration of how we move. These new configurations are informing new ethical questions and horizons, highlighting the importance of mindfulness in education and how we relate to the Other. Since cosmopolitanism and ethics are transitive and temporal, any movement and mindfulness beyond current practices must recognise the positioning of transformation within education: “Levinas makes our subjectivity a historical process of essencing, with no fixed and final essence.” (Zhao, 2011a, p. 6). The notion of immanent transcendence is utilised to capture this interplay between our being and beyond: “Insofar as life’s essence goes, transcendence is immanent to it (it is not something that might be added to its being, but instead is constitutive of its being)” (Simmel, 2010, p. 9)

Extending this motif of transition, embodiment and alterity, I draw upon the work of Emmanuel Levinas. The rich terrain of his work *Otherwise than Being* (2008) frames this inquiry of how we can mindfully move beyond ‘the seeing’ of face of the Other, as well as ‘the said’, in educational practices. Drawing upon educational theory, non-representational theory and Buddhist notions, a heuristic ‘Educational Sayings’ is proposed which articulates the interrelationship between learning, caring and complexity. Building upon prior explorations of the interrelationship between Levinas and education (Strhan, 2012; Zhao, 2011a, 2011b; Egea-Kuehne, 2008; Todd, 2003; Biesta, 2003), the argument of this paper has implications for how cosmopolitanism and transcendence are framed in educational practices. Going beyond ‘the seeing’ and ‘the said’ in education, requires us to re-examine ‘the sayings’ amidst our encounters and responsibilities.

## Encounter

Wu Tao-Tzu painted a scene containing temple gates which engaged viewers in its familiarity; what became *unfamiliar* was the movement of the temple gates opening to let the artist in, then closing behind him (Lindqvist, 2012). From my reading, this myth richly symbolises the liminal and transformative power of art:

... whether art soothes or awakens, casts shadows or brings light, it is never merely a clinical description of reality. Its function is always to move the *whole* man, to enable the 'I' to identify itself with another's life, to make its own what it is not and yet is capable of being (Fischer, 1971, p. 14)

This description of art also signifies the potential power of encounters within educational practices. Don't we hope that education is more than just 'clinical descriptions of reality'? Don't we wish that education be 'moving' – allowing learners to identify with another's life? Don't we seek learning which engages, empowers and opens up new possibilities? Simmel (2010) describes how the invention of the telescope and microscope disrupted and reorganised 'our world of perception'. The 'world of perception' within learning and teaching is similarly being disrupted by the intensification of travel, trade and communications; these networks are connecting, accessing and informing students from a myriad of local and global dimensions. However, in this process of seemingly seamless connectivity we must be mindful not only of the direction and content of these globalised networks, but also its cosmopolitan implications for learning, encountering and responsibility. Within educational practices, how are we configuring our encounters with the Other?

Amidst the rapid movement of globalisation and cosmopolitanism, explorations of Levinas's notion of encounter can be understood as relating to the Buddhist notion of *anicca*, or impermanence: "The transient character of all things mental and material is an emphatic assertion found throughout the Buddhist doctrine" (Gnanarama, 2000, p. 25). This notion of impermanence and transience corresponds with a dynamic and transcendent approach towards educational practices. In expanding upon Passmore's (1980) notion of 'open' and 'closed' capacities, an encounter can only be predetermined, categorised or pre-empted if it is a closed encounter; whereas an open encounter is one which fosters capabilities, expression and ideas. Biesta (2011) states: "if teaching is to more than just the facilitation of learning or the creation of learning environments, it needs to carry with it a certain notion of transcendence" (p. 364). Carrying this opportunity for transcendence involves a risk, for encountering the face of the Other means being vulnerable and open to what this difference will unfold; in the words of Levinas (2008) "A face is a trace ... an invitation to the fine risk of approach ... the expression of exposure, saying" (p. 94).

Encounters within learning can be interpreted in both material-temporal and social-temporal ways. Materially, time passes via the administration of exams, certificates awarded, timetabling and yearly photos. Socially, the tempo of encounters within school are signaled by hands in the air, bells ringing, students filing through corridors, running on the grass, kicking balls in the air. Yet these movements of learning are often illustrations of the familiar. What about meetings which are *unfamiliar*? What makes us stop, like the artist Wu-Tao-Tzu, and consider the full possibilities of this current encounter? How can we become attune to the Other? Following on from the notion of transience, "The sum total of the teaching of Impermanence is that all component things that have conditioned existence are a process and not a group of abiding

entities” (Gnanarama, 2000, p. 27). The movement of encounters does not always imply a seamless flow – movement can often be characterized by ‘disjuncture’ and ‘intervals’ (Appadurai, 1996; Manning, 2009). Though they may not be starkly marked or loudly audible, it is within these moments that we encounter liminality in educational practices. Biesta (2003) articulates how “pedagogy is not about handing down truths to the next generation, but about creating opportunities for children, students, newcomers to respond and, as a result, come ‘into presence’” (p. 64). Acknowledging impermanence, the movement and encounters of learning, opens up the ‘sayings’, or temple gates, beyond the seeing and the said.

*Anicca*, or impermanence, helps to illustrate the transient and changing dimensions of both cosmopolitanism and educational practices; “When one sees things as they really are, one realises that life is a mere flux conditioned by internal and external causes” (Gnanarama, 2000, p. 27). A common undercurrent to both globalisation and cosmopolitanism is their fluid and changing dimensions. For instance, Appadurai (1996) articulates a range of global cultural flows: ideoscapes, ethnoscapas, mediascapas, financescapas and technoscapas. Each of these ‘scapes’ informs the movement of education in different ways, for example: the ideoscape of neo-liberalism is influencing education in new and unprecedented ways; shifting ethnoscapas are apparent in the expansion of service learning, study abroad, academic mobility and international schools; whilst mediascapas have expanded the local and global narratives which learners are engaging with. These overlapping flows are informing the processes of cosmopolitanism: “the internal transformation of social and cultural phenomena through self-problematization, self-transcendence and pluralization. It is in the interplay of Self, Other and World that cosmopolitan processes come into play” (Delanty, 2009, p. 75). It is amongst the interstices of these processes that liminality, and the possibility for transcendence, emerges.

Acknowledging the flow and flux of education allows us to recognise the liminal spaces which may open up within these encounters. Todd (2001) proposes ‘learning from the Other’: “insofar as I can be receptive and susceptible I can learn *from* the Other as one who is absolutely different from myself” (p. 73). Furthermore, as pedagogical encounters expand online, the philosophy of Levinas resonates even further; for example, an “ethical online pedagogy requires paying attention to ways in which interactions across difference promote relationality, humility, criticality, and responsibility” (Zembylas & Vrasidas, 2005, p. 77). Furthermore, exploring encounters in education requires us to understand the dynamic and creative dimensions of educational practices. Zhao (2011a) describes how “Levinas’s account of individuation is intersubjective and dialectical. Such an account takes into consideration individual growth, sees children’s coming to be as a historical possibility without a final end, and thus allows creativity, difference, and transcendence” (p. 5). As the pressure for accountability and transparency creates more extrinsic and explicit borders, it is crucial that intrinsic and ephemeral borders are given space; this can assist in counteracting tendencies which directly (and indirectly) thwart creativity, difference and transcendence. Foregrounding the unfolding of growth corresponds to *anatta*, or no-self, as the “Buddhist theory of egolessness teaches that neither within the body nor within the mental phenomena and external phenomena can be found an entity, self-existing, immutable substance called ‘Self’” (Gnanarama, 2000, p. 41). From this perspective, learning is a mutually constitutive, situated and transitive process – both immanent and transcendent.

The myth of Wu Tao-Tzu (Lindqvist, 2012) describes how an artist crossed the border between a real world and a virtual world. This intriguing narrative provokes us to imagine the range of physical, material, social, cultural and temporal boundaries which we can potentially cross. Myths help point us towards such moments of liminality and transcendence where we are “lifted momentarily beyond ourselves” (Armstrong, 2005, p. 8); such encounters provoke insights and possibilities of not only new ways of being – but our responsibilities as well.

### **Responsibility**

Wu Tao-Tzu responded to his painting with a clap of his hands, the temple gates of his painting opened and he entered (Lindqvist, 2012). The message I take from this is, instead of simply standing in front of stagnant representations and imposed depictions of educational practices, we must respond to our encounters with the Other by opening up spaces for dynamic encounter and responsibility. Biesta (2003) describes how “learning *from* Levinas precisely opens up a dialogical space where pedagogy becomes – or can remain – an event rather than being a pre-programmed process. Learning, in this view, is not about the acquisition of knowledge or truth. It is about response and responding” (p. 64). This immanent responsibility interrelates with the transcendence of our encounter with the Other. As such, transcendence involves

... our capacity to anticipate and deliberate about alternative courses of action and then to select a course. In so doing we not only transcend our circumstances but engage in a process of self-determination. I argue that the capacity for deliberation and choice are not mysterious. They are in fact features of the social development of the self (Aboulafia, 2010, p. 5)

Responsibility requires us to traverse boundaries, to be mindful that unease and distress exists and to be mindful of our actions. Taking responsibility for our practices, and the being of others corresponds to the Buddhist notion of *dukkha*. Gnanarama (2000) describes the words ‘suffering’ and ‘unsatisfactoriness’ as the most commonly used words for *dukkha*; a state described as “the general insecurity of our experience” (p. 30).

Responsibility arises from recognising *dukkha* in our response to the Other. The three dimensions of *dukkha* are described as being: intrinsic suffering/painful feeling, suffering in change/pleasant feeling and suffering due to formation/feeling of equanimity (Gnanarama, 2000). This feeling of unsatisfactoriness relates to *anicca*, or impermanence, as we respond (and become responsible) within continually changing circumstances. In the context of education:

... if we understand human subjectivity as the dialectic of being and not-being, as Levinas does, then it becomes a historical process of becoming that is formed and reformed, regenerated and re-gathered for the purpose of justice, and is constantly being disrupted, suspended, and inverted by the presence of the Other (Zhao, 2011a, p. 5)

This impermanence and unsatisfactoriness is also strongly embedded in the processes of cosmopolitanism. Delanty (2009) describes how: “cosmopolitanism emerges out of shifts in the moral and political self-understanding of society and as such is a form of immanent transcendence whereby societies undergo change as a result of internal transformation as they respond to external and especially global challenges” (p. 89). Responsibility means responding

to *dukkha* and the associated moral and political processes which inform justice in our lifeworlds.

Suffering, or *dukkha*, relates to the grasping of five aggregates: materiality, feeling, perception, mental formation, and consciousness (Gnanarama, 2000). Within educational practices it is our responsibility to recognise the unsatisfactoriness which potentially emerge from such graspings. For example, let us return to the material encounters of learning (exams, awards, classes); these are all potential sites for *dukkha*. Similarly, social encounters in school (classroom discussions, playground games) are further encounters where suffering can unfold. The probability and possibility of *dukkha* should not be viewed as wholly negative; rather, more as a growth in awareness and perceptibility from which responsibility can be fully taken when such encounters unfold. The unpredictability of the interplay between encounters and responsibility is an admission, rather than admonition: “Both educators and students will not know and will not have the comfort of destiny. There will be no destiny, only the call from the Other that disrupts the complacency of our ego and the unbending demand for responsibility that we are perpetually inadequate to fulfill” (Zhao, 2011a, p. 6). Drawing upon Levinas, Todd (2008) suggests:

... respect, dignity and freedom, which have become signs of humanity, are not bred from within, but in relation to the disturbing and provocative event of being confronted by another person. It is here, in this provocation, where I see the promise of education itself. For it allows into education the difficult prospect of responding to others as an actual *practice* of justice (however incomplete such practices might be) without deferring it to some future that will one day arrive (p. 9)

To ‘go beyond’ is the definition of transcendence which has been utilised in this paper. The imaginative threshold which allowed Wu Tao-Tzu to transcend his painting resonates with this theoretical inquiry of liminality in educational practices. Mythology “is not about opting out of this world, but about enabling us to live more intensely within it” (Armstrong, 2005, p. 3). Liminality occurs in the opening up of this imaginative threshold. If educationalists are concerned about fostering responsibility for the Other in teaching and learning, it is proposed that we also need to transcend our representations and depictions via openness to new encounters.

### **Educational sayings**

Wu Tao-Tzu went beyond ‘the seeing’ and ‘the said’ of his painting by embodying it and becoming part of ‘the saying’. His disappearance does not symbolize absence, but rather presence and embodiment of his practice: “If transcendence has meaning, it can only signify the fact that the *event of being*, the *esse*, the *essence* passes over to what is other than being” (Levinas, 2008, p. 3). Within education it is similarly important to go beyond the representation of our practices; foregrounding the embodiment of our practices allows us to go beyond surface, neo-liberal encounters:

It may be that, in Levinas’s understanding of ethics, its connection to the encounter “face-to-face” with the Other, and its movement towards justice, all found at the root of education, there is a promise: that of the possibility of a “just” education – the possibility of integrating this understanding of ethics and justice in an education which appears increasingly bureaucratic and self-serving (Egea-Kuehne, 2008, p. 35)

Drawing upon this foundation, a heuristic ‘Educational Sayings’ (Table 1) is now introduced. “Since the scene of teaching for Levinas takes place in discourse, an understanding of the nature of language must underlie our thinking about education” (Strhan, 2012, p. 12). According to Levinas (2008), if we go beyond ‘seeing the face’ and ‘the said’ – there is the ‘the saying’. If we seek to authentically respond to the Other, to be responsible, then we must move beyond our current practices by being mindful and open to new practices and possibilities. To reach this level of saying, in Levinas’s terms, “we suppose that there is in the transcendence involved in language a relationship that is not an empirical speech, but responsibility” (2008, p. 120). ‘The saying’ stems from the openness and liminality which precedes our transcendence. Learning from Levinas, in Biesta’s (2003) terms, is “not to be found at the level of content (the ‘what’, the ‘said’) but at the level of performance (the ‘how’, the ‘saying’)” (p. 64). This heuristic outlines how educational theory, non-representational theory and Buddhist notions can enrich our understandings of liminality in educational practices. By foregrounding a ‘quality of relationality’ (Todd, 2001), the heuristic offers a novel way to frame how we locate movement, mindfulness and ‘otherwise than being’ within education. It presupposes that: “We can be creative: we can be free in the way we respond to the Other, but we are not free to avoid our responsibility. Education can become a process where we, in our coming to be, are constantly led beyond whom we already are” (Zhao, 2011a, p. 6).

Table 1: Educational Sayings

<b>Movement</b>	<b>Mindfulness</b>	<b>Otherwise than being</b>
<b>Experiential continuum</b> (Dewey, 1938)	<b>Caring</b> (Noddings, 2004)	<b>Complexity</b> (Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2000)
<b>Practices</b> (Thrift, 2008)	<b>Embodiment</b> (Thrift, 2008)	<b>Hybrid assemblages</b> (Thrift, 2008)
<b>Anicca</b> : impermanence (Gnanarama, 2000)	<b>Dukkha</b> : unsatisfactoriness (Gnanarama, 2000)	<b>Anatta</b> : no-self (Gnanarama, 2000)

#### *Movement*

*Educational sayings* recognises the importance of movement in educational practices. The seeing and the said are stagnant and based upon the past, whereas ‘sayings’ are dynamic, current and future-oriented. This acknowledgement of the transience of our practices is supported by the diverse perspectives of non-representational theory and the Buddhist notion of *anicca*. Thrift (2008) highlights *practice* as a key feature of the movement which underscores non-representational theory: “as practices lose their place in a historical form of life, they may leave abandoned wreckage behind them which can then take on new life, generating new

hybrids or simply leavings which still have resonance” (p. 8). This understanding of the movement of practices accords with the Buddhist notion of *anicca*, or impermanence: “So long as one fails to see things as processes in motion, one will not understand transient nature of all phenomena” (Gnanarama, 2000, p. 27). Recognising impermanence, transience and movement within our practices frames how *educational sayings* can be fostered: “Regarding communication and transcendence one can indeed only speak of their uncertainty” (Levinas, 2008, p. 120). The immanent transcendence which characterizes both cosmopolitanism and *educational sayings* relates to this notion of indeterminacy, impermanence and dynamism. For instance, Delanty (2009) describes the ‘cosmopolitan imagination’ as a process of self-constitution, self-confrontation and incompleteness. Stemming from this, how we view ourselves and the world is part of an ongoing, unfolding process. Similarly, within educational practices this acceptance of impermanence relates to “education as a site of *implied ethics*” (Todd, 2001, p. 71). That is, ethics cannot be pre-determined or explicated in anticipated response; true ethics only emerges in the authentic encounter with the Other. In the broader context of cosmopolitanism, this impression of movement and impermanence is also strongly apparent; Delanty (2009) views cosmopolitanism as “an orientation that emerges out of social relations and discursive transformation” (p. 252).

The implications that these notions of impermanence and practice have upon education is to frame teaching and learning as a dynamic process:

If teachers and educators can do anything at all in this sphere, it is definitely *not* the creation or production of responsible subjects. What education might do is to keep open the possibility for a genuine questioning and, even more importantly, to keep open the possibility for students to really respond (Biesta, 2003, p. 67)

Dewey’s (1938) notion of ‘experiential continuum’ resonates with the interplay of immanence and transcendence: “The two principles of continuity and interaction are not separate from one another. They intercept and unite. They are, so to speak, the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience. Different situations succeed one another. But because of the principle of continuity something is carried over from the earlier to the later ones” (p. 44). This nexus of stability and novelty relates to the inherent manifestation and movement which takes place within such encounters: “Life is at once flux without pause and yet something enclosed in its bearers and contents, formed about individualized midpoints, and contrarily it is therefore always a bounded form that continually oversteps its bounds; that is, its essence” (Simmel, 2010, p. 9).

### *Mindfulness*

Another dimension of *educational sayings* is ‘mindfulness’. Mindfulness in education is a nuanced concept which can easily be overlooked amidst the complex pressures of contemporary educational practices. But what does being mindful mean? Mindfulness, in the context of this paper, is informed by cosmopolitanism, the Other and transcendence; it is mindful of others, wellbeing and open to possibilities. Within this concept of mindfulness the dimensions of both peace and conflict are interwoven: “Levinas casts goodness in terms of violence because there is an inevitable affliction or pain and a consequent experience of suffering, which admits of the difficulties – and indeed traumas – that incur in facing difference” (Todd, 2008, p. 8). This foregrounds the thoughtfulness and openness required to respond fully to the Other in educational practices. I view Thrift’s (2008) description of embodiment, another aspect of non-representational theory, as resonating with this idea of

mindfulness; “Embodiment includes tripping, falling over, and a whole host of other such mistakes. It includes vulnerability, passivity, suffering, even simple hunger ... In other words, bodies can and do become overwhelmed” (p. 10). Mindfulness recognises the tensions and complexities which can occur from such encounters. Furthermore, the choice to face these problems in an effort to overcome them, rather than ignore them is central to mindfulness. The Buddhist notion of *dukkha* (suffering or unsatisfactoriness) relates to this notion:

When we come face to face not only with the world of experience, but also with our inner feelings, aspirations and proclivities, we are confronted with all sorts of problems. The non-recognition of the stark realities of life is indeed not a reason to ignore the facts of vicissitudes of life (Gnanarama, 2000, p. 56)

Exploring the idea of suffering, or unsatisfactoriness seeks to highlight the spectrum of tensions which should compel both our responses and encounters within educational practices. On a macro scale, the cosmopolitan challenges of war, violence and suffering have become more prominent via the intensification and accessibility of media: “The frequency of images and information about suffering can lead to its normalization or can lead to moral outrage” (Delanty, 2009, p. 99). How conversations about such events are framed and facilitated in classrooms will influence how learners respond to encounter the Other. Similarly, recognising and responding to the personal suffering of peers, or other members of the school community also requires considered and mindful responsiveness:

... the task of education becomes to unmask our ego and to urge both students and ourselves to listen to the deep sound of our responsibility to the other. We have to follow the unease of the self in the face of the other to affect the very formation of our own being (Zhao, 2011b, p. 243)

The features of unsatisfactoriness and embodiment which characterize ‘mindfulness’ reintroduces the notion of caring into educational practices. Noddings (1984) has elaborated an educational philosophy which foregrounds the notion of caring; this “involves stepping out of one’s own personal frame of reference into the other’s” (p. 24). Such a situated and transcendent response resonates with Simmel’s (2010) paradox: “the boundary is unconditional in that its existence is constitutive of our given position in the world, but that no boundary is unconditional since every one can in principle be altered, reached over, gotten around” (p. 2).

#### *Otherwise than being*

The “vast spillage of things”, which Thrift (2008) describes in non-representational theory relates to how “things become part of hybrid assemblages: concretions, settings and flows. In this approach, things are given *equal weight*” (p. 9). Such a perspective opens up the scope of understanding how cosmopolitanism and transcendence interplay amidst our embodiment of educational practices. The immanent transcendence of *educational sayings* is based on its communicative dimensions of immediacy, responsiveness and dialogue. Todd (2001) describes how: “It is only when we learn from the stories that Others have to tell that we can respond with humility and assume responsibility. When we teach with ignorance, we create a path toward an ethical horizon of possibility rather than a fixed destination (p. 73). This context of ignorance corresponds to the Buddhist notion of *anatta*, or no-self: “The impersonality of all existence has been established on the basis of continual self-consuming process of arising and passing of bodily and mental phenomena ... there is no entity which can be taken as self in terms of ‘this is mine’, ‘this am I’ ... and ‘this is my self’” (Gnanarama, 2000, p. 41). To be open



and authentic to dialogue with the Other is to be within a liminal space with no presuppositions. Being responsive and fully engaging within this communicative encounter does not preempt solutions to problems; rather, it opens spaces for 'problem posing' (Freire, 1972) through the sharing of ideas and exploration of perspectives. Intersubjectivity is central to *educational sayings*, as is interdiscursivity and indeterminacy: "Communication is an adventure of subjectivity, different from that which is dominated by the concern to recover itself, different from that of coinciding in consciousness; it will involve uncertainty" (Levinas, 2008, p. 120). The liminality amidst 'being', and 'otherwise than being' is closely interwoven; these interstices and intervals inform the transformation between our actual and potential practices. Simmel (2010) describes how: "The future does not lie ahead of us like some untrodden land that is separated from the present by a sharp boundary line, but rather we live continually in a border region that belongs as much to the future as to the present" (pp.7-8). Resonating with this, Aboulafia (2010) states that it is: "not to deny the weight of habit, custom, temperament, and circumstance. It is to claim that individuals are capable of helping to define their own narratives and select courses of action that are dependent on their deliberations and choices" (p. 8).

Stemming from the insights of Levinas, *educational sayings* seeks to open up the complexity of practices beyond the seeing and the said. A core theme that Davis et al (2000) describe as being part of teaching in complex times is that "knowing always spills over the perceived boundaries of the knower. Humans are not self-contained, insulated or isolated beings, but are situated in grander social, cultural, and ecological systems" (p. 7). Aboulafia (2010) describes how: "We do not simply 'transcend' such factors as if by magic. But what we have the capacity to do, which is woven into the "nature" of the self, is to transcend our given circumstances in various ways and thereby transform ourselves" (p. 5). Immediacy, responsiveness and indeterminacy are central to this heuristic, aspects of which are becoming more marginalised within education:

...regulations are not instituted in ways that acknowledge communicative ambiguity, nor the transcendent quality of communicative openness. Instead, institutions are concerned solely with the content of what persons say and do, not with the quality of relationship these utterances and deeds help create and sustain (Todd, 2001, p. 72)

Educational practices are situated within an intensified cosmopolitanism which has expanded not only the range of encounters, but the complexities of responsibility as well. Authentic, mindful responses to these unfolding situations can open up new ways of being. If we recognise that "cosmopolitanism is a form of world disclosure that arises out of the immanent possibilities of the social world for transformation" (Delanty, 2009, p. 53); I propose that *educational sayings* are a form of communicative disclosure that arises out of the 'immanent possibilities' of the Other for transformation. Central to this dialogic and dynamic process is the notion that: "there can be no teaching without a notion of transcendence but also there can be no philosophy of education without an idea of transcendence" (Biesta, 2011, p. 364).

### **Beyond essence**

Wu Tao-Tzu's disappearance does not symbolise a rejection or annihilation of self. I view this liminal moment as an embrace, rather than an escape; this involved "passing over to the being's *other*, otherwise than being. Not *to be otherwise*, but *otherwise than being*" (Levinas, 2008, p. 3). The artist transcended 'the seeing' and 'the said' of his mural painting, by becoming part of 'the saying'. His transcendence symbolises that there are moments where we are 'beyond essence' (Levinas, 2008), liminal and in Buddhist terms 'no-self'. This myth of Wu Tao-

Tzu invites us to embody our practices as well as the multiple and virtual dimensions of our 'otherwise than being'. If we seek to foreground cosmopolitanism and ethics within education, then our relationship with the Other needs to similarly be embodied, open up and transcend our current practices: "arising out of the encounter or interaction with the Other, moral and political evaluation occurs" (Delanty, 2009, p. 252). Levinas's notion of 'otherwise than being' formed the basis of this inquiry, drawing upon educational theory, non-representational theory and Buddhist notions to explore liminality in educational practices. It is not suggested that we negate what we see or have said; rather, the intention is to move beyond this and encourage the dialogism of *educational sayings* which are situated, embodied and hybrid. Dimensions of these sayings are: learning is informed by the interplay of practices and impermanence; embodied approaches to caring in education are mindful of suffering; and, moments of no-self relate to complexity in education and hybrid assemblages. There will always be the representationalism of 'the seeing', the essentialism of 'the said' – the premise of this paper articulates how educational practices should foreground the transcendence of 'the saying'. We can only imagine what Wu Tao-Tzu encountered on the other side of his painting, as we can only imagine what responsibility means until we encounter 'the-one-for-the-other'. In art as in mythology, Armstrong (2005) states, "we entertain a hypothesis, bring it to life by means of ritual, act upon it, contemplate its effect upon our lives, and discover that we have achieved new insight into the disturbing puzzle of our world" (p. 10). I claim that education can also foster these imaginative acts through reframing encounter and responsibility. By moving beyond essence, being mindful of the Other – therein lies the liminality of educational practices.

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