The Educational Significance of Suffering:

Philosophical and Cultural Perspectives

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Abstract

This thesis aims to address the educational significance of suffering by exploring its foundations in philosophical thought. Several distinct theoretical approaches to suffering are identified, each of which is found to highlight certain features while neglecting or minimizing others. First, the materialist view is explored as a mechanistic approach to education that seeks to teach methods of control and therefore avoid suffering given their threat to physical and material health. Second, the rationalist view of suffering is addressed to highlight a more cognitive approach to learning, where suffering is similarly avoided because it is seen to interfere with the mind's capacity for reason. Third, a view of suffering grounded in progressive educational thought is explored, which takes greater concern for emotional and spiritual dimensions of human suffering. It is argued that although each of these views highlights an important dimension of suffering, each of them results in an educational conception according to which suffering is for one reason or another an impediment or obstacle to valuable learning. As such, each of these conceptions fails to account for significant ways in which suffering can actually contribute in a positive way to educational growth. The thesis concludes with an exploration of recent philosophical work that emphasizes embracing experiences of suffering, in order to explore the potentially positive value for suffering in education. It is argued that philosophers of education and educational practitioners should critically consider approaches to suffering which allow for their positive educational significance: of learning through suffering.

Résumé

Cette thèse a pour but d'adresser la signifiance de la souffrance en explorant ses fondements dans la pensée philosophique. Plusieurs approches théoriques distinctes sont identifiées, chacune mettant en valeur des facettes spécifiques tout en omettant ou minimisant d'autres. En premier lieu, la pensée matérialiste est explorée comme approche mécaniste à l'éducation qui cherche à enseigner des méthodes de contrôle, donc évitant la souffrance étant donne la menace à la santé physique et mentale. En second lieu, la vision rationaliste de la souffrance est adressée afin de mettre en valeur une approche plus cognitive à l'apprentissage, où la souffrance est aussi évitée car elle est perçue comme une interférence à la capacité de l'esprit à raisonner. En troisième lieu, une vue de la souffrance ancrée dans la pensée éducationnelle progressive est employée, qui elle apporte une plus grande préoccupation aux dimensions émotionnelles et spirituelles de la souffrance humaine. Chacune résulte en une conception éducationnelle selon laquelle la souffrance est pour une raison ou une autre un obstacle à l'apprentissage précieux. En soi, chacune de ces conceptions n'arrive pas à couvrir d'importantes façons dont la souffrance peut contribuer positivement à l'épanouissement éducationnel. La thèse se conclut avec l'exploration de travaux philosophiques récents qui mettent l'emphase sur l'adoption et l'appréciation des expériences de souffrance afin d'explorer la valeur potentiellement positive de la souffrance en éducation. Il est soutenu que les philosophes de l'éducation et les praticiens éducationnels devraient considérer de façon critique les approches à la souffrance qui laissent place à la signifiance éducationnelle positive de l'apprentissage à travers la souffrance.

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Introduction: Suffering and Education

The Purpose of this Thesis

The thesis addresses a single question from different perspectives – what is the educational value of suffering? Hopefully, it is in answering this question that the complexity of the relationship between suffering and education is revealed. In order to do so, this thesis examines several philosophical and cultural perspectives that have been previously explored by scholars, who also seek to understand the educational value of suffering.

In approaching the question of how and why suffering might have educational value, I do not presume that there is a single, clearly identifiable and justifiable answer to the question. As a complex phenomenon, it would seem that the views of pain and suffering are mediated through experiences, and given this, there cannot exist one universal interpretation or view. Instead, this thesis will approach the study through sociocultural lenses, and, as with many attempts to understand or comprehend, humans have questioned the role of human suffering by forming structures with which to understand it. Further, and similarly, I do not assume that the value of suffering can be ascribed as a binary good or bad, positive or negative. It is certain that the sociocultural views of pain and suffering, and their corresponding manifestation in an educational setting, are variable, and while many of these views suggest a certain negative connotation for the experience of suffering, it is not the purpose of this thesis to ascribe judgement to the experience of suffering itself. Rather, I hope to engage in a conversation about the potential value of suffering in the educative experience. Along with many of the authors whose views I discuss herein, I view the relationship between education and suffering

as complex and multi-faceted. In order to illuminate that complexity, I rely heavily on

approaches to the study of pain and suffering as mediated by cultural and social lenses.

Clarifying the Scope of the Thesis

Regarding the scope of this thesis, I would like to comment on the lack of discussion on

the politics of suffering. I acknowledge and appreciate the views of suffering that relate to more

politically inclined conversations of human oppression, injustice, inequity and inequality. I am

aware that these more politically discussed forms of suffering are pervasive, and all oppression

requires our collective attention and some would suggest that these forms of oppressive

suffering are never educationally valuable. For example, Megan Boler's work considers specific

experiences of suffering related to the role of emotions, and the historically oppressive gender-

narratives governing emotionality. Boler (1999) describes emotions in two dimensions:

"Emotions as a site of social control" and "Emotions as a site of political resistance" (p. v). While

both these dimensions act as platforms to discuss emotionality, and for the purposes of this

thesis, lend themselves well to understanding the educative significance of suffering from an

emotional view, Boler's distinctive political descriptions of emotionality are outside the scope

of this thesis inquiry. Similarly, much of Zembylas' scholarly work takes on a political dimension,

where he expresses his concern for issues of discrimination, equality and equity and connects

them to education by advocating for reflective practices such as "critical emotional reflexivity"

(Zembylas, 2008), "discomfort pedagogies" (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012) and becoming aware

of the "subversive power of affective economies in the classroom" (Zembylas, 2007). Both

authors, and many others, identify suffering as a political issue, whether in larger society, or

within the western education system. While I agree with many of these concerns and critiques

that view suffering as educationally deficient, or even entirely negative, I must admit that I believe there is still learning that is available through these experiences. Never is oppressive suffering warranted, but always does it teach us something about the human experience. That being said, I do not feel that I can adequately or graciously discuss this political dimension of suffering; therefore, I will leave them to writers, thinkers and scholars who can teach more fully about the complexity of suffering in those forms. The reader should be made aware, this thesis largely ignores these political questions in order to focus more on how philosophical ideas of suffering influence understanding of the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of educational theory and practice. I do hope that this thesis demonstrates that experiences of suffering humble us to learn the lessons of our humanity. This is not meant to suggest that we should always live in the despair of our brokenness and weaknesses; rather, I hope to suggest that these experiences might be helpful and fruitful for recognizing goodness, truth, and beauty.

The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first part explores perspectives that view suffering as an impediment/obstacle to learning, and hence as something that needs to be managed, controlled, eliminated, overcome, transcended, etc. (chapters 1-3). The second part (Chapter 4-5) explores some contemporary perspectives that take a more positive view of suffering – viewing at something that contributes positively to learning, or as a necessary and ineliminable part of the process of education.

In chapter one, I attempt to explore how the phenomenon of suffering has been experienced, questioned and defined historically and socioculturally. These views of suffering

have changed over time, but it is the sociocultural and historical views of suffering that provide

context for the questions of suffering's educational value. Studying these views allows for the

understanding of how education has responded to suffering in various ways, taking its cues,

primarily, from its broader societal landscape. Education has further reinforced these views by

being compliant, non-radical, and, I argue, non-human. It has been compliant by believing these

views of suffering to be true, offering zero counter narratives, it has been non-radical by

following these narratives with little resistance or dissent, and it has been non-human, by

ignoring the very ontological nature of human experience, that suffering is natural, mysterious,

and complex.

Chapters two and three structure the discussion of control in a two-part process. First, I

explore one aspect of the Cartesian dualism, the body as the locus of pain and suffering, and

second, the mind as the locus of control over suffering and pain. These are not opposing views;

rather, they are complementary by suggesting that pain must be moderated and controlled. In

chapter two, I describe what I call the 'materialist' view of suffering, and explore some of its

educational consequences. The materialist view is derived from the mind/body dualist notion

proposed by Descartes, which I contend still motivates the understanding of human experience

in Western society today. The rising ideologies of science and technology have created a

landscape of humanity that believes in the narrative of control over the physical body. As such,

experiences of suffering are regarded as a limitation to one's ability to control. Education

endorses this belief, of suffering as a threat, because it highly values empirical knowledge,

where truth and knowing are dependent upon the "scientific mind" and success in education is

dependent upon mastery. Further, the advancement of medicalization has generated the belief

that suffering is a source of limitation or disability. Education encourages this belief by isolating students whose ability to learn does categorically fit under "normal", and whose medical or physical limitations cause stress on the system of education in the material form of finance.

Chapter three explores a second conception of suffering – labelled the rationalist view of suffering - where the mind/body dualism concept perpetuates a belief that our mind is a detached reality from the physicality of our experiences. In contrast to the materialist view, which locates suffering in, and views it as a threat to, the physical body, the rationalist conception of suffering locates the phenomenon of suffering within the rational self. Correspondingly, the rationalist understanding of suffering tends to highlight perceived threats to cognitive educational goals or aspirations.. Rationalism posits a culture of belief in the ability to reason, with education mirroring this belief by upholding forms of knowledge that are most logical, or reasoned by the mind. Tacit dimensions of knowing (experiential knowing) are valued little, and suffering can be seen as an impediment in one's ability to reason and to rationalize. Although the rationalist conception locates highlights the intellectual, rather than the physical, dimensions of suffering, it nevertheless converges with the materialist view insofar as it represents suffering as educationally worthless or worse.

Chapter four marks a transition in this thesis, moving from an examination of negative cultural and educational representations of suffering, towards a theoretical perspective that provides a more complex picture, which gestures towards the possibility of suffering's positive educational value, though without quite realizing this possibility. In this chapter, I explore how the emotive aspects of our human experience may help us to find a more reconciled view of suffering, as the physical and metaphysical dualism becomes integrated through our

experiences of feelings and emotions. With the recent rise of therapeutic practices, there has developed a new obsession with happiness, self-esteem, and socio-emotional wellness. Suffering is accepted in these emotive spaces, but the goal remains to manage these experiences of suffering through various strategies and practices. Education follows this lead by encouraging teachers to remain neutral in their own beliefs and emotional responses, and by discounting experiences of suffering as influential in students' daily learning, but by including positions such as "school counselor" or "school psychologist" to specialize in the management of these experiences. Further the spiritual view, while often hidden behind the secularisation of education, is demonstrated through certain practices that have gained in popularity in education. These practices suggest that, educationally, there is a goal to help students through experiences of suffering (despair, anxiety, depression), yet they are masked by New Ageist ideology, and are aimed at managing, instead of embracing suffering.

Chapter five attempts to describe new approaches to embracing suffering as educationally valuable. Instead of teaching forms of control, where suffering can be avoided with tools that safeguard the physical body, or by teaching forms of management, such as emotion regulation, yoga, mindfulness meditation, where suffering can be acknowledged, yet its value minimized, these new approaches extend beyond the previous notions of suffering, instead, offering a view that sees suffering as positive for learning. By valuing the very way of existence itself, the notions of *being* and *becoming* demonstrate that it is our human experience that seeks to value suffering. Educationally we might learn that our very existence calls us to learn. This type of learning through experience is similarly depicted by the concept of tacit knowing - where the fullness of knowing is explored through experience. Embracing

suffering, in this way, provides opportunity to regard suffering as valuable. Similarly, the educational significance of suffering might be found in its drawing our attention. Being attentive, often associated with the focusing of the mind, is alternatively viewed in this section as a way of becoming attuned to our experience. Drawn from the life and work of Simone Weil, this approach to understanding the educational significance of suffering allows us to find a posture that might teach us the value of our experiences. Finally, the third approach is helpful in recognizing suffering as an opportunity to embrace ethical responsibility. A humanistic approach will be explored where our relationship to the world, and to others, offers educational significance when we respond to the suffering we see. Certain pedagogies, with an ethical orientation, are being implemented in schools today, such as a pedagogy of discomfort, and a pedagogy of unknowing, which illustrate a humanistic response to suffering. Each of these approaches provides a more complex, less simplistic, way of viewing suffering, which work along with the human experience, instead of against it.

The purpose of looking at these different perspectives is to, firstly, show how some influential perspectives distort and oversimplify the relationship between education and suffering. Secondly, despite these faults, a careful examination of these views pays off with insights that can be incorporated into more complex and sophisticated views.

The Justification

The central question that ties together the five chapters that comprise this thesis – what is the conceptual and normative relationship between suffering and education? – has recently enjoyed renewed interest from philosophers of education. These queries, among others, are addressing various ethical, moral, philosophical and ontological aspects of the education

process, and all seem to propose that there is some positive educational value experiencing

suffering (Mintz, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2017; Roberts, 2013; Saito, 2008; Urrutia-Varese,

2015; Zembylas, 2005, 2007, 2008; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012,). It is the overall goal of this

thesis to follow the work of these scholars, with the hope of highlighting the complex and

multi-faceted relationship between suffering and education.

Chapter 1: Sociocultural Views on Pain and Suffering

Pain comes already interpreted for us by our social and cultural background. (Morris,

1991, p. 29-30)

This chapter examines scholarly literature on suffering and education, with a special

focus on the scholars who understand pain and suffering from a cultural point of view, rather

than as primarily a physiological or neurological phenomenon. This choice, to study a cultural

perspective on suffering, was purposed in directing the study towards a more nuanced, and

complex understanding of suffering's educational purpose. A sociocultural lens helps to allow

for a wide range of interpretations of suffering, instead of narrowing the focus to specific

interpretations, such as a medical lens.

Two themes arise from this literature review. The first theme concerns certain critical

views on the contemporary interpretation, or understanding, of suffering. Here, authors write

critically concerning the dominant contemporary ways in which experiences of suffering are

culturally mediated. The second theme examines alternative approaches and views of suffering.

Scholars note the historical and cultural ways in which suffering has been interpreted and

viewed, and how these views play a role in the larger societal understanding of suffering's

value. These two themes synthesize current literature concerning suffering as a sociocultural

phenomenon, demonstrating that education has responded to these cultural views by

addressing them in a variety of ways. The chapter concludes with a discussion concerning the

potential relationship between the 'end' of education and the 'end' of suffering. These ends

serve as a guide for individual and collective interpretation and meaning of the experiences of

suffering and their potential educational significance.

Critical Views on the Contemporary Understanding of Suffering

> Pain is always historical – always shaped by a particular time, place, culture, and
>
> individual psyche (Morris, 1987, p. 6)

For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to note that the term suffering might be

interpreted as pain, trauma, illness, despair, discomfort, frustration and anxiety, among others.

The phenomenon of suffering is experienced uniquely by individuals, and interpreted through

many lenses, such as historical and sociocultural background, religious beliefs, philosophical

understandings, and familial traditions. Accounting for each of these variances in interpretation

would result in many different views of suffering, each one demonstrating certain values or

principles concerning the experience of suffering. The literature examined in this chapter

accounts for interpretations of suffering as socio-culturally and historically manifested.

The medical view.

Morris (1991), asserts that "pain is as elemental as fire or ice" and that it is one of the

most "basic human experiences that make us who we are" (p. 1). Morris' expressed aim is to

"restore the bridge between pain and meaning" by exploring the "historical, cultural, and

psychosocial construction of pain" (p. 1). Specifically, he is critical of what he regards as a

"modern, Western, industrial, technocratic… culture of pain" that has persuaded us to interpret

and experience pain as an entirely medical problem (p.1). In challenging this reductionist view,

Morris seeks to revive and recover an older, historically informed narrative that highlights the

"conflict between medical and nonmedical understandings of pain" (p. 7).

Morris proceeds on the basis of four major claims. The first claim is "that chronic pain

constitutes an immense, invisible crisis at the center of contemporary life" (p. 5). According to

Morris, pain is "visible" when it occurs as a result of specific, identifiable conditions or diseases

such as AIDS, cancer, etc.; but, more often, chronic pain hides in culture, going unrecognized

and unattended. Morris's second claim is that dominant medical practices and assumptions in

Western societies obscure the culturally mediated and constructed dimensions of pain. As he

puts it, " traditional Western medicine…has consistently led us to misinterpret pain as no more

than a sensation, a symptom, a problem in biochemistry" (p. 5) According to Morris, modern

medicine has erased the memory of a time where suffering was viewed as "redemptive" or

possessing "visionary powers" (p. 125). Thus, his third claim further contextualizes this

misinterpretation by suggesting that "our present crisis is in large part a dilemma created and

sustained by the failures of this traditional medical reading of pain" (p. 5), whereby

"unnecessary surgery and misdiagnosis" and the "depersonaliz[ation]" of pain are concealed by

medicine's "machinery of high-tech prowess" (p. 174). Fourth, and finally, Morris ends with the

hopeful claim that the modern crisis of invisible, culturally concealed, depersonalized chronic

can be challenged. Each of these claims implies something specific about how culture has

viewed suffering. Morris' first claim implies that we, as a Western society, have refused to pay

attention to the experiences of chronic sufferers, and that their suffering has not been a

societal priority. His second and third claim point to the dominance of a medical interpretation

of suffering that has dehumanized the experience of suffering, foregoing its potential for value or redemption. Morris' final claim, and much of the purpose of this thesis, is to challenge these cultural views of pain and suffering, and "by taking back responsibility for how we understand pain we can recover the power to alleviate it" (p. 5).

Morris sociocultural description of suffering as exclusively a "medical problem" (p. 2) is similarly explored in the work of Scarry (1985), in which she introduces a cultural view of pain highlighted by the "quiet revolution" heralded in the 1960s, that "transform[ed] centuries of medical thinking about pain" (p. 139), where previously cultural views held that pain was most clearly a symptom. On Morris's account, traditional Western views treat pain as a symptom, by which he means that pain is portrayed as a biochemical phenomenon, experienced as a brute physical sensation. However, from Morris's perspective, this apparently common sense biological view of pain as a physical 'symptom' is in fact a culturally constructed conception of pain. And like any cultural construction, this view of pain carries and conveys certain meanings, but also obscures and occludes other meanings or ways of experiencing (and also teaching and learning about) pain and suffering. According to Scarry, the Western cultural view remodelled this view so that pain might be considered the illness itself.

Morris and Scarry show how the medical view is a culturally constructed view of pain and suffering. Their contribution has been to contribution is to show how this 'acultural' conception of pain and suffering is deeply misleading. Specifically, the primary aim of the medical view has been to reduce pain to a purely physical problem, represents a particular, narrow view of pain and suffering. In overcoming it, the medical view has conceptualized pain as something to be diagnosed, and then resolved. Its complexity and nuance is abstracted from

the experience itself, pointing again to the absence of any meaning in the experience of

suffering. Finally, both authors' describe several accounts of the medical view of suffering,

which infer the idea that we must control our physical bodies, through medical means. When

pain arises, we seek medical treatment instead of looking to its potential value or meaning in

our lives. Morris and Scarry attempt to point to a more nuanced understanding of pain that

"emerges only at the intersection of bodies, minds and cultures" (p. 3).

Senseless suffering.

Reilly (1991) affirms the work of Morris and Scarry, suggesting that "new developments

in technology and anaesthetics" have been influential in creating and entrenching a particular

set of cultural attitudes about pain. Prior to the Information Age, where information

technologies advanced rapidly, Reilly notes that the predominant view of culture, as it relates

to experiences of pain and suffering, was to "bear it with patience and fortitude" (p. 468).

Historically, suffering has been an accepted experience in human reality, but, as all these

authors have noted, we are faced with the dilemma of answering the question of suffering's

utility because we live in a society that refuses to "acquiesce to [suffering's] inevitability" (p.

462). Suffering, Reilly suggests, is a modern crisis because our inability to recognize the value of

suffering ("senseless suffering") is at a historical high (p. 462). To Reilly, this is a scandal as it

relates to the view that suffering must be purposed for it to be valuable. For example, any

woman who labors through childbirth, eventually experiences the love for her child as an

aftereffect of great pain and endurance. Achievement, or particular rewards, such as a

marathon runner enduring great pain, justify suffering, providing our modern culture the solace

of purpose required to overcome the situational experience of pain. Reilly notes his observation

that socio-culturally, pain is viewed as a necessary experience only when it serves the greater purpose of success. But, as Reilly notes, this cultural context inadequately prepares us in evaluating how the non-rewarding, non-beneficial, or "senseless" forms of suffering might have value. This means that our culture cannot look at suffering without viewing it as useless.

He ascribes this to several key culturally contextual beliefs: that "human life [is] a commodity," that incurable pain is "purposeless" (p. 463), that the "erosion of religious belief in our time" has led to the "technological abolition of all suffering" and that "for the first time in history people are being born who do not expect to suffer" (p. 466). Firstly, Reilly contends that contemporary culture views human life as a commodity. He describes this cultural notion of commodification by using the analogy of human life as a product. This product, which rolls "off a conveyor belt" then becomes "subject to a system of quality control" and when its quality is deemed below a "minimum level of acceptability," it is discarded as an "inferior item" (p. 463). Human life, viewed as a commodity, is subjected to certain standards. When the product of human life is impaired by suffering, it is deemed not valuable, and must be discarded. Secondly, Reilly also notes that contemporary culture's secularisation, and the "erosion of religious belief in our time," has made it difficult to find meaning in pain. He describes contemporary culture as a "post-Christian, post-religious age," seemingly suggesting that, without a religious tradition to guide culture, the "reassurances, promises" and "consolations" provided would be less available to make meaning out of experiences of suffering (p. 466). Thirdly, Reilly argues that the control that technology allows contemporary culture, is notably greater than any time before. Reilly notes that technology has given us a control over our environment that has to a "pervasive expectation" that we can avoid pain (p. 468). He specifically discusses the modern

thinking that science will always "bail us out," and that the rise of medical technology has

"persuade[d] us that we can act with impunity" (p. 468).

Finally, Reilly explains that, given each of these features of contemporary culture, the "human

demand for an explanation of pain meets today an embarrassed silence" (p. 462). There seems

to be little value found in suffering, because it challenges the prevailing belief in human life as a

commodity. Further, with a tendency to believe that "incurable pain is purposeless,"

contemporary culture finds little to no value in the experience of suffering.

Alternative Sociocultural Interpretations of Suffering

> Wherever one looks on the globe, it appears that human beings want to be edified by
>
> their miseries . . . they want to make their suffering intelligible (Schweder, Much,
>
> Mahapatra, & Park, 1997, p. 119)

The previously described critical views of sociocultural interpretations of suffering offer

accounts for how experiences of pain and suffering have been cultural mediated, and how that

influence has led to, according to several authors, several potentially negative implications. As

noted above, the question of the educational value of suffering does not necessarily imply that

pain or suffering itself is good or that it should be assigned a 'positive value'. Indeed, cultural

constructions of pain and suffering can pertain to the various and complex ways in which

culture encourages individuals to interpret pain as a bad or unpleasant or noxious thing. Rather,

to raise the question of suffering's potential educational value is simply to suggest that pain and

suffering may, in some circumstances and in some ways, contribute to worthwhile educational

goals. This does not imply that educators should seek to induce suffering, or that they should

refrain from alleviating when they can. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that any

education worth the name will inevitably be accompanied by suffering of some kind, and if so

then it seems important to try to understand if and when such suffering might facilitate

educational growth and learning as well as when it hinders or impedes such growth.

Furthermore, even if the educator's purpose should not be to induce suffering, an informed and

reflective educator will try to understand when and to what extent a particular, intentional

educational act might nonetheless produce suffering and, accordingly, try to judge whether or

not such suffering is on balance warranted in light of the educational aims at stake. In short,

even if suffering is always, by definition, negative or unpleasant in some degree, it remains

possible that suffering, at least sometimes, makes a positive contribution to learning and

human growth.

The point of a sociocultural perspective, though, is that the goodness or the badness of

pain is to be viewed as a complex and multi-faceted thing. When we say that experiencing pain

is bad, or that some person's response to pain is 'good' or 'laudable' in some way (e.g. a

physician, or therapist, or the person who suffers), the sociocultural perspective reminds us

that these responses indicate and subsume complex and variable cultural patterns. They are

not simply reducible to physical or biological symptoms. Therefore, the following section

explores these complex cultural patterns by exploring alternative sociocultural interpretations,

and responses to, suffering. Each one demonstrates an intention in looking for, and seeking an

answer to the question of the value of suffering. In particular, the following interpretations

examine the broader, historical trends of humans interactions with the potential meaning in

their experiences of suffering (Schwder et al., Kleinman, Morris, Spelman).

The meaning of suffering.

Schweder et al. (1997) contribute to the discussion of the interdependence of morality and health with their analysis of the "cross-cultural study of the types and distribution of explanations of suffering with special reference to illness" which they describe as having a "distinguished history" (p. 125). They initially reference the work of Kleinman (1986, whom I discuss later) and of Murdock who ethnographically studied and published "explanations of illness in 139 societies" in 1980 (p. 125). His work, they suggest, laid seeds of inquiry into the "official causal ontologies for suffering" and, further, that particular forms of suffering generate specific "types of explanations" (p. 126). Observing a world-wide, prevailing belief that suffering can be traced back to some form of cause, the authors note three major explanations of suffering that offer "alternative accounts of the causes of misery": "interpersonal, moral and biomedical" (p. 127).

The "interpersonal mode of causal explanation suffering" suggests that the sufferer is victim to the various forms of ill-will of others ("witches, ancestral spirits, envious neighbors, domineering relatives"). This externalization of blame implies that human experiences of suffering are the result of others' malice; therefore, the value of suffering is determined by the reliability of the claim that "others are held responsible for one's misery" (p. 127).

From a more moralistic perspective, the "moral code of causal explanation" suggests that the sufferer is the culprit for their pain or suffering. In contrast to the interpersonal mode, the moral code implies that one's "personal transgressions, misdemeanors, and spiritual debts" (p. 127). This societal view maintains that each individual must "bear the primary responsibility

for their own miseries" and that the value of their suffering is determined by some cosmic form

of karmic balance; the belief is that "one reaps what one sows" (p. 127).

Finally, the authors note a cultural view that suffering is caused by the biomedical

nature of our human existence. This explanation suggests that suffering is the result of "events

and circumstances that take place outside the realms of human action, responsibility, or

control" (p. 127). These experiences of suffering can be best understood as "material events"

whose value can be determined in "material terms" (p. 127). Schweder et al. explain that the

sociocultural view that holds material causation of suffering maintains that suffering is best

"controlled through material interventions" (p 127). These contrasting ideas lead to an

interesting discussion regarding the view of suffering's cause and alleviation.

Briefly, the authors note two interesting observations regarding causation and

intervention. One, that the interpersonal explanation for suffering is, worldwide, the most

frequently used causal account and, two, that biomedical therapies are the most frequently

pursued forms of alleviation/intervention. This corroborates many of the claims previously

stated, where a medical-model, or a medicalized view becomes the prevailing view concerning

interaction with, or alleviation of suffering. Further, Schweder et al. contribute an important

collection of observations to the discussion of sociocultural and historical views of suffering,

especially as it relates to world-wide perceptions of causes of suffering, and their corresponding

therapies. The following section outlines a congruent, yet more specific focus, on the method of

finding value in suffering. Kleinman, whose work the previous authors mention, focuses on the

concept of listening as a way of finding meaning and value in experiences of suffering.

Listening to pain.

One particular and emergent view towards suffering, viewed in the work of Morris, and also of Arthur Kleinman, Harvard psychiatrist and anthropologist, emphasizes the value of listening to pain, as a method by which we may begin to understand its meaning. Pain, according to Morris, "is something we must learn to use in our thinking. Thinking is somehow learned or born or created out of pain" (p. 289). Similarly, Kleinman suggests that "illness narratives edify us about how life problems are created, controlled, made meaningful" (Kleinman, 1988, p.). Kleinman takes a more focused look at the ways in which humans have responded to the "intimate and manifold ways by which illness comes to affect our lives (p. xi)." His suggestion, and one of the main ideas put forward in his work, is that by accounting for the lived experience of disease, and by studying the experience of illness, we might discover something "fundamental . . . about the human condition, with its universal suffering and death" (p. xiii). His perspective of suffering is articulated in his suggestion that "nothing so concentrates experience and clarifies the central conditions of living as serious illness" and that in listening to the narratives of suffering, we might be edified in recognizing how "life problems are created, controlled, [and] made meaningful" (p. xiii). Morris, as previously noted, explores a similar posture of "listening" whereby leaving space to hear allows "us to examine various moments – specific historical junctures – when pain thrusts above the plane of silent, blind unquestioned suffering in which it ordinarily lies concealed" (Morris, p. 3). Yet, as a medical practitioner, Kleinman examines how modern medicine aims to draw attention away from the experience of suffering, and, in doing so, isolates both practitioner and patient. His suggestion remains that the meaning of illness might be found in the connection of uncertainty between

the care-giver and the patient, but modern medical practices frame disease as a problem with the practitioner acting upon the prescribed socialized perspective of illness as disease. Kleinman believes that society must reframe this perspective through the "interpretation of narratives of illness" and that we must "envision in chronic illness and its therapy a symbolic bridge that connects body, self and society" (p. xiii). This idea will be further illustrated in the final chapter of the thesis.

Listening to sufferers.

The representations by means of which we can learn about suffering, or learn from it, simultaneously provide occasions for the commodification of suffering, avenues for the traffic in sorrow and grief (Spelman, 1997, p. 10)

Finally, Spelman (1997) attempts to explain how "sufferers", the people who suffer in society, are viewed in Western culture. Specifically, Spelman strongly supports the notion that it is necessary to organize our attention in the face of the "ubiquity of suffering" (p. 1). While not necessarily claiming that we completely avoid the senseless aspects of suffering, as is Kleinman's perspective, Spelman does suggest that collective ignorance must be addressed in order for the view of suffering to be acknowledged and potentially reframed. Her book draws upon three main portrayals of sufferers as: 1. the subjects of tragedy 2. the objects of compassion; and 3. the spiritual bellhops (p. 1), where each elicits a certain form of attention that makes them (the portrayals) "morally and politically problematic" (p. 2). She suggests that it is in our human nature to respond to suffering through judgement, whereby creating an economy out of suffering by judging its value for our attention. Therefore, in an attempt to make suffering "intelligible" we may render it "bearable, maybe even controllable" (p. 2), and

thus, we are able to make sense of it. Similarly to Kleinman, Spelman lays out a sociocultural view that suffering must be understandable in order for it to be purposed, and that often, the uselessness of suffering renders it unintelligible. Yet, Spelman acknowledges the non-sensical form of suffering as paradoxical to the rationalized form, where one's ability to make sense of suffering inevitably conflicts with experiences that cannot be understood by rational thinking.

Educational Implications

We are unceasing in creating histories and futures for ourselves through the medium of narrative. Without a narrative, life has no meaning. Without meaning, learning has no purpose. Without a purpose, schools are houses of detention, not attention (Postman, 1996, p. 7)

The occasions of our suffering are capable of revealing what our habitual illusions often obscure, keeping us from knowing. Our afflictions drag us - more or less kicking – into a fresh and vivid awareness that we are not in control of our circumstances, that we are not quite whole, that our days are salted with affliction (Cairns, 2009, p. 7)

The discussion, to this point, has demonstrated a sociocultural approach to the study of pain and suffering, and examined some illustrative examples of such an approach. This approach has been useful in aiming to directly address the question of the educational value or significance of suffering, and given that this thesis is concerned with said educative value of suffering, the following is an effort to relate the end, or the purpose, of suffering, with the end, or the goals, of education. It is in identifying the aims (the ends) of both suffering and education that we may begin to create a point of connection between the sociocultural and historical views of suffering, and education's response to those views.

Given that our most recent cultural history has been shown to value suffering insomuch as it is beneficial or useful for a greater aim, Cairns (2009) offers an alternative, yet somewhat aligned to Western culture, perspective that addresses the need to find purpose in pain. Firstly, his inquiry regarding the end of suffering is described to have been initiated with his personal attempt to ponder the "ubiquity of grief and pain" (p. vii) alongside his own experiences of heaviness, which he defines as "dread" (p. viii). His "study in suffering" probes at finding some "sense in affliction" given its "generous availability" (p. viii) and further aims at answering the question of why we suffer and, moreover, why the intensity of human suffering varies. To these questions, he offers several key insights; one, that affliction generates a certain form of awakening, which the Greeks termed *kenosis,* or "emptying" (p. 8). This *kenosis,* often connoted theologically, refers to, in Cairns' understanding, a certain end where the emptying might lead to a "*hollowing*", which then may further produce a form of "*hallowing*" (p. 8). Cairns suggests that each of this aspects of *kenosis* have the potential to awaken a part of our awareness that might recognize that "all of our comfortable assumptions are shown to be false" (a very real form of suffering), and that, "if we are lucky" we may begin to catch "a glimpse of the somewhat broader view" (p. 8). In this way, Cairns is establishing the end of suffering as a form of renewal or awakening to a greater reality. Instead of the narrow understanding of suffering as something to be avoided, especially and most obviously the senseless suffering, Cairns is proposing that the end of suffering may just be antithetical to senseless suffering in that it relieves one of living in a worldview that cannot see beyond itself. Cairns second insight puts forth that the "stubborn truth" about suffering lies in its capacity to teach us, and to inform us of another way given its "remarkably effective" way of providing the opportunity for reflection

(p. 11). This difficult way of learning is, in Cairns' perspective, one of the truest forms of

growing in knowledge. Here, Cairns makes a deliberate connection to learning, and I contend,

to the role of suffering in an educative sense. He continues with the following two insights;

Cairns suggests that the answer to the question of why we continue to experience suffering as

something to be avoided might be noted in our "own self-aggrandizement" where our

"cut[ting] ourselves off from our communities, both past and present" assumes a certain level

of masochism, "doom[ing] us to reinvent a fleet of troubled wheels" (p. 18). In establishing this

greater context for human suffering, Cairns is suggesting that it is in human forgetfulness, and

historical ignorance that we continue to replicate a blind view towards suffering. Therefore,

affliction, Cairn's final insight, un-blinds us from our pride and, instead, suggests that we

"confront . . . our own weaknesses" (p. 18). Each of these insights combine to Cairns main

revelation, that we "might appreciate affliction as the *foundation of the foundation, the*

beginning of the beginning" in order that our response to that suffering, which is "a

circumstance of our common journey" might offer us "a clearer view" (p. 19). The end of

suffering is the mysterious hope of something more. Human suffering need never to be viewed

as senseless, if we believe in its ability to teach, to educate, and to grow. Its end is a beginning.

  In questioning the end of education, it is best, according to Postman, to understand the

narrative, of many narratives, that underlie our educational goals. As Postman (1995) explains

in his opening chapter, it is only on the basis of a clear understanding of normatively compelling

purposes of education (the "why"), that educators may properly identify and evaluate the

appropriate *means* by which those purposes ought to be pursued (the "how). Of course, as

Postman notes, for any given aims or ends of education, there may be numerous (though not

unlimited) appropriate methods or means to promote them. As he notes, quoting Nietzsche, "For someone who has a 'why', almost any 'how' will do (cite).

For Postman (and Nietszche), this point about the logical priority of aims over means of education leads to a further point about centrality of the learner in any educational relationship. As Postman (1995) notes, "there is no one who can say that this or that is the best way to know things" (p. 3). Without an end, one is lost. But, at least as importantly, one is also lost unless one's education is guided by one's own ends rather than another's. This point is worth dwelling on momentarily. Postman's point is not that a good student (or a student whose education is furthered in some way) must reject and oppose any ends or aims proposed for him by the teacher (or by society, culture, etc.). Rather, the point is twofold: first, that the aim must be meaningful, and seem worthwhile, to the learner. However, worthy the teachers' aim may be, it is educational worthless at best if it falls on unfertile soil. Second, whether or not a particular way of teaching (through lecture, dialogue, example, or some other means) is 'effective' depends ultimately on whether it promotes the desired aim, and not on anything about the supposed intrinsic 'effectiveness' of a particular teaching method or procedure. This is important in the present context because it is apparent that most of us may find goals or ends valuable even if though they involve considerable suffering and pain. Furthermore, given the choice between educational methods that are approved, in part because they minimize suffering and discomfort, but which fail to promote the desired aim (or promote it to a relatively small degree), and an 'unapproved' (or unpopular, or outmoded, or unfamiliar) method, which promotes the desired aim very effectively, but which involve some discomfort and pain, many learners will without hesitation opt for the latter over the former. In other

words, the presence of pain is not in itself (on a common sense view), necessarily an indication

of educational failure. Yet, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, some common cultural

conceptions of suffering make this obvious conclusion very difficult to endorse.

As the preceding discussion makes clear, one reason that suffering may be understood

to have positive educational value concerns its transformational character. Education is not a

static thing, and those who experience it cannot be properly understood in static terms.

Education is, necessarily, a process by which persons change in some respect. As Postman

(1995) notes, education is a means by which one may "become a different person because of

something you have learned . . . so that your world is altered" (p. 3). Of course, a bad or poor or

ineffective education may also change one – for the worse rather than for the better. But in

these cases, it seems to make more sense to say that one has been miseducated in some way.

In its most common use, education is a term that indicates a positive transformation in the

educated person (Peters, 1966). Once again, it also seems obvious that suffering can *sometimes*

issue in positive personal change. Indeed, we tend to think of change that is hard earned, or

difficult, as having an increased value or worth. I don't mean to suggest, of course, that all

suffering is therefore educationally valuable. Suffering and pain can often be terrible things to

endure. But at the same time, considering the cultural denigraton of pain and suffering noted

earlier in this chapter, it is worth underlining the fact that suffering is sometimes endured, and

even chosen voluntarily, in the course of pursuing larger and more valuable aims. In any case,

this is part of Postman's point – that the process of self-transformation, which lies at the very

heart of education in any event, cannot avoid all suffering and at least sometimes benefits from

it.

The final point I wish to highlight from Postman is that of the educational role of

narrative. According to Postman, self-transformation is inevitably a narrative process, and as

such education should not ignore the narrative dimensions of learning. As Postman says, the

process by which you "become a different person because of something you have learned . . .

so that your world is altered" (p. 3) is determined by the narratives one follows (or rejects). The

necessity of this narrative places education with a larger context within which we all live.

Education serves a broader narrative, society's dreams and ideologies. And, those dreams and

ideologies are redistributed back through the system of education to create a relationship of

interdependence. The very existence of a system such as education, as a social institution, is

mediated through other forms of societal governance. One cannot ignore this relationship,

because the defining features of our lives have been reflected through the interdependence of

narratives in education and in its relation to its citizens. The following chapters explore these

questions through three lenses: the materialist view of suffering, the rationalist view of

suffering, the emotive and spiritual views, as well as exploring new approaches, in education,

for embracing experiences of suffering.

This chapter has sought to explore the sociocultural views on pain and suffering. This

included examining several critical views on the contemporary understanding of suffering:

Morris' critique of a pervasive medical view, which has dominated popular understanding of

suffering, suggests that by depersonalizing suffering, by way of a medical approach, we have

lost a certain sense of power in understanding it, as well as alleviating it. A similar critique is

held by Scarry, who articulated the contemporary belief that pain is the illness itself, thus,

creating a society of fear in regards to suffering. This chapter further explored several

alternative sociocultural interpretations of suffering, including several works that highlight the

notion of "meaning" in suffering, as well as acknowledging the role of "listening" as it relates to

finding value in the experiences of suffering. Finally, this chapter concluded with a description

of how pain and suffering are modeled in the formal education system, and how the primary

goals of education are tied to the value of experiences of suffering, a relationship that must not

be underestimated. The ways with which our contemporary society understands the role of

education will significantly determine our views of every day experiences. This was the point

made by Postman who believed that we are changed, as humans, when we learn. So, what are

the narratives that have shaped our collective understanding of pain and suffering? And, how

might exploring those narratives help to facilitate this inquiry into the educational value of

experiences of suffering? The following chapters aim to answer these questions.

Chapter 2: The Materialist View of Suffering

This dominance of man over nature means that we can satisfy more human needs

with less work than ever before in history (Grant, 1959, p.4)

This chapter further extends the sociocultural approach to questions of the relationship

between education and suffering. In particular, the central aim is to explore the conceptual

foundations of a particular culturally mediated view about the value and meaning of suffering,

which I refer to as the materialist view, and that is drawn from the mind/body dualist

conception. I begin with a discussion of broad philosophical and cultural foundations of the

materialist view, before examining some of the ways in which this view manifests itself in

educational settings. The chapter concludes with an examination of several critiques of the

materialist view, from which I distil several potentially significant normative educational

implications.

Conceptual Foundations

The materialist view reinforces the belief that our experiences are purely physical, and

as such, our experiences of suffering should be viewed similarly. This form of materialist

understanding gained cultural ascendance during the 17th century as part of a broader

philosophical and scientific movement. The Enlightenment might be seen as a time of immense

sociocultural shifts, where perspectives regarding all phenomenological insights developed,

progressed, and changed. Specifically, Descartes theory regarding the dualism existent in the

human self, as one, body, and the other mind, help to illuminate the ways in which a

hierarchical understanding has developed concerning experiences of suffering. I aim to show

how this scientific, and materialist, ontological view, still demonstrated in society today, while

having many positive and helpful aspects, has resulted in believing ourselves to be masters of

our suffering, using control as a tool to avoid pain, and foregoing the opportunity to understand

and experience suffering's educational significance. This view has been chosen as a method of

analysis, and is motivated by the concept of Cartesian dualism – whereby the human self is

defined as having two distinct entities, the material and the rational. The following includes two

major conceptual frameworks that are significant to understanding the materialist view of

suffering. The scientific age and the rise of medicine, and their supportive concepts, form an

overall foundation. Each concept may also be seen as distinct in representing a certain ideology

or belief, and is useful to understand in order to recognize its manifestation in education, which

has led to a prescribed understanding of suffering.

Scientific concepts and the scientific age.

The rise of Bacon's scientific method, and the increase in Enlightenment thinking, generated much growth in scientific thought, beginning in the 14th and 15th centuries and culminating in tremendous philosophical and scientific growth in the 17th century. Certain concepts underpinned the scientific age, each demonstrating key features of what be considered a materialist view. These concepts are described below to generate a conceptual framework for materialism.

Empiricism.

A significant contributor to the conquest of science was, and is, empiricism. This epistemological position holds that "all justification of beliefs about real existence is dependent on experience, or empirical" (Meyers, 2014, p. 2). This type of real existence is "independent of what anyone thinks about it"; rather, existence is "independent of any intellectual consideration" (p. 2). Essentially, empiricism encourages the notion that our understanding and knowledge of the world and our experiences are grounded in the physical senses and material aims. The materially focused scientific conquest holds hands with empiricism in affirming that true knowledge can be empirically tested and proven.

Objectivism.

This thinking suggest that an objective reality exists "independent of human experience" (Jonassen, 1991, p. 8), and that as humans, we strive to gain knowledge of this *objective* reality, which has *essential* properties that can be discovered. Objectivism, as an influential philosophy of scientific and technological age, purposes learning towards a very material, physical, and concretized understanding of the world, where verifiable knowledge is valued above

interpretive knowledge (constructivism). Jonassen explains that the key premise of learning,

from an objectivist position, is that "learners are told about the world and are expected to

replicate its content and structure in their thinking" (p. 10).

   Reductionism.

Similarly, the practice of reductionism is worth noting as a defining conceptual framework of

the scientific age, which has led to the belief that the human being and experience can be

reduced to specific elements, which then must be controlled to avoid senseless suffering.

Reductionism, as commonly understood, is the practice of considering or presenting a complex

phenomenon as if it were reducible to a single metric or denominator. A simple example of

reduction has already been introduced – the idea that a complex, multi-faceted, culturally

mediated notion of pain can be reduced to a single term – physical sensation. However, other

aspects or features of reductionism, as it applies to cultural understandings of pain and

suffering, are significant and worth noting explicitly. Most notably, reductionism can be applied

at the level of individual identity. In this sense, reductionism includes the belief that the

individual person might be reduced to its simple elements, namely, the physical body.

Descartes famously explored the notion that the human self is made up of two distinct parts,

the mind and the body, that have "different natures or essences" (Hoffman, 1990, p. 310). Pain,

from this view, is located in the body, while 'identity' (or subjective experience) is located

separately – in the mind. Descartes' theories of pain are relevant to the discussion of suffering

because they were introduced in a time when the "dominance of the scientific medical

paradigm" (p. 84) was ascending. Descartes' main theory "divorce[d] mental from physical

states and tend[ed] to attribute single symptoms to single causes" (Bendelow & Williams, 1995,

p. 83). This theory, developed in 1664, simplified pain by explaining that a pain system sends

messages from the skin to the brain (p. 84). This suggested that pain was regulated physically,

and that material forms of control might be applied in order to alleviate it. Popularizing itself

into popular culture, Descartes' theory of pain taught to "do something about it (pain) and to

act effectively in order to relieve it" (p. 84), which implied a certain level of ability to control,

whether by way of mental control, or through the controlling strategies of a materially-

dominated science such as medicine. As such, the complexity of a human being is made simple

by the age of science, if we believe that we have a distinct physical, material self. The role of

the mind can be understand as something other than the physical self, and which will be

discussed later.

The rise of technology.

The Cartesian dualistic conception of the person or self also explains a certain narrative

about the rise of technology in the modern age. The first element of this narrative concerns the

place of science and the rise of scientific understanding as the pre-eminent mode of human

knowledge, according to which there exists a prevailing need to empirically understand, to

objectify and to reduce objects into their material parts. As the significance of scientific

knowledge grew, a second element -- technology – also played a central role in shaping cultural

narrative of modern Western societies. Specifically, provided the means by which the gains of

science were mobilized for human benefit. Grant (1991) writes, "Because the conquest of

human and non-human nature is at the heart of modern science. I describe science as

'technological'" (p. 9). Where technologies have always existed as the tools with which societies

have demonstrated certain abilities, the increase in the dependence of technologies to help

society pursue scientific and social aims also grew during this time period.

The Medical View of Suffering

The science-technology narrative nexus plays a prominent role in a further important

element of the materialist sociocultural narrative of pain and suffering that emerged during the

enlightenment, namely the rise of medicine as a science grounded in the study of the physical

body, and one which seeks to control, cure, and fix the broken, suffering human material-self.

The scientific age fostered many great advances in the modern medical field. Suffering and pain

have been alleviated through the advancement of medicine, and its history shows a dedication

to aiding those in need. Indeed, David Morris, in his book entitled, "The Culture of Pain" writes

that the "scientific worldview of medicine so thoroughly dominates our society" and thus has

strong influence on our perception of suffering and pain. The proposed perception of suffering,

as the source of limitation and a disability, requires some expansion to the notion of pain, given

the sociocultural description of medicine as a key determining contributor to perceptions of

suffering. Pain and suffering, in this context, are loosely connected by their material and

physical manifestations. In an attempt to contextualize this perception of suffering, it is

important to outline the history of Western modern medicine and how its principle aim, to

eliminate and alleviate forms of physical suffering, has generated a sociocultural belief that

suffering is the source of limitation and disability. Modern medicine has controlled this

narrative, in overt and hidden ways, but it is important to determine the history of this way of

thinking in order to understand its effects on the social service of education.

Although, as I have noted, the rise of modern medicine gained momentum during the 17th century enlightenment, certain changes , such as the increasing institutionalization and professionalization of medicine, might be traced back to the Renaissance period. It was during this time that an increasing number of hospitals were established, beginning in the Mediterranean West, moving across urban populated areas in Northern Europe and finalizing their conquest in England (Loudon, 1997, p. 71). These hospitals signaled the enhanced "complexity and sophistication [in] the organization of health care" that "ultimately formed the foundations of modern medical order in the West" (p. 71). The causes of this new institutionalization and professionalization were many, but the principles of establishing systems and standards for medical practices were of greatest concern for modern medicine at the time. Systems of licensing for professionals became commonplace, and standards of practices were agreed upon by "craft guilds", and later ratified by the governing State (p. 72). The institution and the profession worked together to offer health care to its citizens that could be certified and verified, as well as guaranteeing their authority within society. It is during this stage of systematization of medicine that increasing stratification began occurring among professionals, where those in the "higher ranks of the profession" found a way to regulate their own "organizations and regulations" for the purpose of expanding their "authority and market share" (p. 73), and evidenced first in Italy as a way to increase pressure on the medical field as a whole. The mechanics of control are evident in this history, and demonstrate a certain way that Western modern medicine has, from its origins been grounded in a certain form of social control.

Medicalization.

The increasing role of medicine in modern culture has initiated what can be termed medicalization. Peter Conrad, researcher and sociologist from Brandeis University, suggests that medicalization is the way in which social control and medicine act together to "define and treat non-medical problems as medical problems" (1992, p. 209). The term *medicalization* begins to appear in social scientific literature in 1970s, according to Conrad, and Zola, an early critic of this growing sociological, offered the understanding that "medicalization is a 'process whereby more and more of everyday life has come under medical dominion, influence, and supervision'" (p. 210). Before this time when medicalization become recognized and defined, sociologists from the 1930 to 1950s began taking note of this social trend, and the term became increasingly used to demonstrate the social dependence on medical practices as well as and medicine's imperialist narrative. The institutionalization of medicine might be the single greatest catalyst for the expansion of medicalization, given that prior to the formal study of medicine in universities, founded in the 1200s, medical knowledge was largely inaccessible to the average citizen. The dissemination of medical learning rapidly grew when experiential knowing was put to text, and therefore made available to increased numbers of learners.

Zola (1970) outlines four main ways with which medicine has developed to extend its reach beyond the scope of traditional medicine. The first way, the "expansion of what in life is deemed relevant to the good practice of medicine" suggests that medicine's position to treat disease became "multi-causal" alongside greater acceptance of preventative health care (p. 493). This orientation assumes that a patient's "symptoms of daily living, his habits and his worries" are all significant contributors to one's health, and as such, medical practitioners must

"intervene to change permanently the habits of a patient's lifetime" in order to identify

potential health challenges "before the disease process starts" (p. 493). The medical

practitioner, as a representative of the medical field, becomes a key player in a method of

social control through the form of medicalization. Further, Zola acknowledges how medicine

continues to maintain power through the "retention of absolute control over certain technical

procedures" (p. 494), "access to certain 'taboo' areas" (p. 495), and the relevancy of medicine

to the "good practice of life" (p. 496). The second way, concerning technical procedures,

describes the function of medicine as being entitled to the "right to do surgery and prescribe

drugs" (p. 494), which Zola recognizes as being concerned with much more than the basic

disease. Plastic surgery for physical alterations as well as the regulated drug industry have

become exclusive spaces of medicine, despite their concern with something beyond the

assumed role of medicine to diagnose disease and illness. Further, the intimate spaces of one's

material and metaphysical self are made public in the medical field, and the access to these

'taboo' areas can be assumed spaces for medical intervention. Finally, medicine's relevancy to

everyday life has increased and can be demonstrated by how society uses medical language as

a point of validation. The term 'health' is a pervasive word in our society, often denoting

goodness or value. Death and illness are avoided points in personal conversation, but we are

ready to use the discourse of dying for other aspects of our social life: economy, education, etc.

This veneration of medicine, and its impact in the form of medicalization, cannot be excluded

from the field of education, and these same principles that shape an educative system that

aims to prevent suffering, given that it is a limiting, as well as a disabling feature of our lives.

The goal of medicine has been to alleviate human suffering; therefore, with the increase of

medicalization and its extension to the education system, suffering is perceived to have

decreased. Medicine has enhanced our lives, and so now it too can enhance our learning, but

with what consequences and effects?

Educational Manifestations

The conceptual foundations discussed in the previous section – Cartesian dualism and

its reduction of pain to a physical problem, the rise of science and technology, and the

consequent 'medicalization' of pain and suffering--provide a basis for the materialist

understanding of suffering in education. This has led to educational practices that mirror the

concepts of science, technology and medicine. Education provides tools for understanding the

human experience, and from the materialist view, these experiences are viewed through the

lens of physicality, or materiality. The following explores these education practices, as related

to their conceptual underpinnings.

The influence of the scientific age in education.

The colonial enterprise and the natural sciences, mutually, have shaped and controlled

by the deployment of one another (Thésée, 2006, p. 25).

John Rudolph (2005) traces the phenomenon of scientific influence on education in his

article, "Epistemology for the Masses: The Origins of 'The Scientific Method' in American

School." He sets the rise of scientific methodology in education against the background of the

late 1800s when core academic courses and subjects were established in formal educational

institutions. Further, during the time of the Cold War in America, increased numbers of

enrolment at the secondary level contributed to the need for "en masse" schooling techniques

(p. 343) and the method of science had been previously established as a "model for knowledge

generation in nearly all realms of discourse and deliberation" (p. 344). Public life became

contingent upon scientific methods for "address[ing] problems in all areas" of society (p. 346).

Many eminent thinkers of the time espoused the scientific method, claiming its ability to serve

the complex needs of its social challenges. Science became the gold standard for mediating

knowledge and learning. Education may have been regarded to be one of the last social services

to respond to this ever-increasing pervasion of science, with critics suggesting that "education

should follow suit with the field of medicine in become an "evidence-informed profession"

(Shahjahan, 2011, p. 184).

Education as social control.

One of the fundamental processes of modern education is social control, which Dewey

(1990) explains as one of the primary aims of education, the "habituation of an individual to

social control" (p. 92). Western civilization has depended on many tools of control, including

education, with its rootedness in modern scientific inquiry, in order to promote more

controlled ways of living. The formal institution of education teaches specific aims and goals in

any given society, each which determine an individual's social value and "social efficiency" (p.

92). These aims and goals can be categorized as *curriculum*, which Dewey notes is the "essence

of any university", and that it is, as the material form of *what is taught*. The curriculum, is a

technology, or tool of social control, that concretizes the role of education into specific

purposes and aims. For example, Herbert M. Kliebard (1958) discusses curriculum as

"represent[ing] a vehicle for social and political reform as well as a force for perpetuating

existing class structures and for the reproduction of inequality" (p. 270). Other educational

theorists proposed that the "role of public schools in perpetuating hegemonic control can be an

important way of understanding the curriculum" (Zilversmith, 1987, p. 86). The role of curriculum in today's schools remains a topic of interest and focus for educational theorists and philosophers alike, who question how curriculum is being included in a time when the "education profession has struggled to remain focused on its primary purpose of learning and instruction for students" (Slattery, 2012, p. xix).

Another similar form of social control might be seen in the form of standardized testing. Tests such as the ACT, MCAT, any provincial/state universalized test, or university entrance exam, act as controls for valuing a certain standard of one's education. For example, a student who scores higher than another on an exam is said to have known or understood more. The student with the higher score is now afforded more opportunities because their knowledge is commodified to allow for access to further education, further wealth, and further material advantages. The concept of grading is similar to the function of standard testing. It is a measure of one's ability. Education, and its educators, use numbers to highlight intelligence and showcase that intelligence using reporting systems that rely on particular scales of knowing. Quantifying knowledge is a means of control, especially given that the knowledge is predicated on one's acquisition of facts and skills, not in one's potentiality.

The influence of medicine in education.

Stephen Petrina's (2007) work on the medicalization of education is an elegantly complex undertaking in his attempt to rearticulate the previous work of historians, whose description of the adoption of medical discourse and practice in education has neglected to account for the subtle complexities and nuances of medicalization. In past research, the history of the medicalization in education has been comprehensively outlined to include examples

ranging from the late 1800s to our postmodern age. Psychopathologic studies on young male

students in France during the 1890s, conducted by Binet and Victor Henri, established an

"individual psychology" to distinguish students with "'abnormal" from those with "normal"

mental abilities (p. 512). Similarly, the introduction of physical education during the late 19th

century launched two identifiable goals for health in education, that of "healthy physiology and

moral outlook" as well as physical fitness such as "agility, endurance, posture," etc. (p. 514).

Legislated physical education was formally passed in the United States by the 20th century.

Finally, psychotherapy became especially relevant when medical professionals decidedly

asserted that the school should mirror the modern hospital for the purpose of attending to the

defects and limitations of individual students. None of these examples account for the vast

bureaucratization of prescribed medication that has significantly impacted the lives of young

children, which has *taught* them to understand the experiences of physical suffering as

something that can be medically avoided. The medicalization of education, according to Petrina

(2007) began with the introduction of "complex and subtle interrelationships" between the

social service positions, such as "janitors, nurses, pediatricians . . . social workers, and teachers"

during the early twentieth century (p. 503). The influence of medicine on the public system of

education, "medicalization" might be described as "nonmedical problems [being] defined and

treated as medical problems" (p. 504). Rather than pointing to mental hygiene,

psychotherapeutic practices, or vaccinations, which Petrina describes as the obvious forms of

medicalization, Petrina suggests that it was through more subtle and complex ways that

medicine exerted control in education. He notes that medical practices subtly and subversively

guided education through the integrated histories of "deviant students, hyperactive children,

medical inspections, mental hygiene, disability, and special education" (p. 508), and that it was

these practices that reconstructed schooling as "medicine [became] oriented to scientific

laboratory and clinical practices" (p. 508). In each of those historical accounts, medicine was

used as a method to compare "abnormal" to "normal" in order for regulatory practices to be

established. Petrina's accounts of medicalized education suggest an invasive belief in the

primacy of materiality, and that our learning is dependent on our physical abilities. Therefore,

we must assume two positions in regard to suffering: (1) Avoid suffering using any medical

means possible, (2) Control suffering, when it is being experienced, through medical means.

Similarly, Terzi's many works concerning medical labelling in education highlight the

issues surrounding terms such as "disability," "special needs," "impairments," etc. Her article

titled "Beyond the dilemma of difference: The capability approach to disability and special

educational needs" (2005) notes the tension existent in education between perspectives that

"endorse the use of categories and classification systems" and those that "critically highlight

the possible discriminatory and oppressive use of these systems" (p. 444). The inclusion of

medical classification in education has encouraged this tension given that the terms of disability

and special needs have been critically examined, by some, for the purpose of understanding

whether "individual limitations and deficits" remain the cause of impairment, or whether it

might be concluded that it is the "limitations and deficits of the schooling systems" (p. 444).

Terzi writes that some sociologists of education, in attempting to understand and explain the

phenomenon of medical categorization of students with disabilities discuss special needs in

education as "socially constructed" and as the "products of disabling barriers and of

exclusionary and oppressive education processes" (p. 448). The author notes the importance of

questioning medical language of difference where abnormalities are used as defining features

to separate and segregate.

Critical Analysis and Educational Implications

This final sections details a critical analysis of the previously explored conceptual

foundations of materialism, and their manifestation in education. The analysis includes three

main themes derived from the materialist view: (1) The material measures of suffering (2) the

material methods of control, and (3) the material belief that suffering has negative value. These

themes demonstrate that the materialist views suffering as something that threatens the

overall aims of materialism, and as such, has no purpose in growth or learning.

Measures of suffering.

Descartes' theory of pain was only educationally useful insomuch as it provided the

opportunity to narrowly address pain in a simple, material, physical way. This allows us to

conceptualize pain as "rationally and objectively measure[able]" (Taylor, 1989, p. 345). The

materialist believes their identify to mean "a strict and total identity of himself and his body,

nothing less" (Taylor, 1963, p. 8). This is revealed in both of the previously explored views, with

suffering being a loss of control suggesting that the identity of the individual is enveloped in

their ability to maintain order, keeping the categories of their life maintained towards the goal

of perfection. The second view similarly reinforces a material belief by reducing one's ability to

learn to one's physical capabilities. Education marginalizes those individuals with differences

and challenges in learning, holding them against normative scales, teaching them that their

worth is defined by materiality.

To the Western modern reader, it seems common sense that suffering might be

perceived as a human experience that should be diagnosed and treated, but, this reductionist

view, that encourages and promotes a view of suffering that is solely a matter of medical

intervention, has been initiated into the social fields of education, and endorses a view that

may be detrimental to learning. The experiences of physical suffering, within spaces of

medicine, are to be remedied through any means possible. This perception of suffering is

mirrored in the educational context, where suffering is a prescribed limitation and disability and

is thus reduced to a medicalized phenomenon. Educationally, suffering is perceived as an

impediment to full growth, health and learning, and those who suffer in any capacity find little

allegiance in the normalized practices of education. Terzi (2005) acknowledges three derivative

features of discussing the "conceptualizing differences in education" (p. 445). The first feature

suggests that physical suffering is the fault of the sufferer, especially when medicalization

suggests that the "individual['s] limitations and deficits" are the cause of that suffering (p. 444).

Terzi explains that one such view endorses the language of medicalization, where the "adoption

of medical categories of disability and concepts of learning difficulties" implies that the

individual's medical identity will dictate one's ability to participate, to understand, or to learn.

This view reduces one's experiences to a purely medicalized perspective, so that the physical

body is the source of one's difficulty or challenges. But, Terzi notes a second, counter-feature,

to this view, where the challenges an individual may face in learning is caused by the school

institutions' "inability to meet the diversity of children's learning" (p. 446). Here, the

perspective is that the issue is not exclusively medical, rather, it is the institution of education

itself that must be held accountable for students' difficulties, while suggesting that "any form of

category or classification of children's differences" is seen as "inherently discriminatory" (p.

446). Terzi explains a final feature of conceptualizing differences, whereby she suggests that

these two views, the individual at fault, or the "social element" (education) at fault, endorse an

"artificial causal opposition" that "leads to limited and unsatisfactory conceptualizations of

disability and special needs" (p. 446). Outlining these opposing views, it seems that Terzi is

explaining that reducing children's difficulties to a single cause ignores the "complexity" of the

issue. Further, the issue of classification, a certain vestige of medicalization, is of great concern

in the attempt to untangle suffering as a site of limitation and disability. Taking all of these

features and arguments into account, it is resolved that the greatest concern is how this

concept of deficit thinking affects one's experiences of learning and education. With a guiding

narrative of believing physical impairment to be a determinant of ablement (or disablement),

education has subscribed to the ideology of "historical materialism" (Cole, 2006, p. 143).

Education, too, has embraced a materialist belief concerning each individual's ability to learn

and to know; suffering, again, has no place in this ideology, for it is the marker of disability and

limitation.

     If education serves the functions of its state, then it is not surprising that schools

become spaces of competition, in implicit and explicit ways. Competition is a *revealed* reality

while living in a material framework. Neoliberalism, while seemingly, and elusively, advocating

for public good, distances individual citizens from each other by perpetuating the discourse of

competition. The state profits when individuals work harder and longer with each worker

hoping to 'get ahead' and 'be successful'. This competitive strategy serves the interest of the

state and the elite, and marginalizes those individuals who are systemically disadvantaged. Each

citizen's identity becomes defined by her/his ability to get ahead, beat the pack, and compete

among the masses. Similarly, individual identity is further threatened when a citizen's interest is

monetized. In a recent study conducted by a Canadian recruitment agency, findings suggest

that "47% of Canadian professionals are unhappy in their job" (Reporter, 2016, para. 1). It

becomes clear that personal interest, and positive emotional experiences come at the expense

of competition. One's education becomes the determinant for financial success, and the

commodification of learning. This has several detrimental implications (Cairns, 2013, p. 340);

Administrators and education leaders seem to have their hands tied in respect to the economic

needs of a school. For example, with little aid from the federal government, schools must look

to other strategies such as "corporatization, marketization, and privatization" (Ryan, 2012, p.

27). Corporatization, specifically, introduces a further dilemma of accountability, in which

administrators must comply with the demands of their financiers, often providing further

advantage those who are already advantaged (Orlowski, 2012, p. 180). This form of inequitable

accountability is similar to the "high-stakes testing" that teachers and administrators must

administer, wherein student identity is contingent on a test score (Ryan, 2012, p. 21). Exclusion

is an obvious result, as "low income students and students of color have been the primary

victims of high-stakes testing" for several reasons (Ryan, 2012, p. 31). Firstly, pedagogy around

'teaching to the test' often requires that teachers "direct their preparation efforts at particular

groups of students" while marginalizing those students who are already disadvantaged or

"culturally different" (Ryan, 2012, p. 32). Secondly, students with little to no cultural capital are

severely disadvantaged in test-taking when tests are designed with embedded normative

cultural values, often a "Euro-centric perspective" (Ryan, 2012, p. 32; Bourdieu, 1990, p. 64). An

atmosphere of competition only further alienates each individual student from themselves, as well as others. Students are assessed individually, where their knowledge dictates a certain level of worth, in this material view. When perfection is valued at a grade of A or 100%, there is something wrong with the student who is not able to know, or to perform, at an A-level. Teachers are similarly situated in a competitive market when curricular restraints and professional expectations supersede teaching and learning in whole and just ways. Education, learning, and knowledge become commodities for the modern individual, who has learned to believe that growth in one's understanding of the world, and of oneself, is merely a tool for personal material gain.

Methods of control.

The key concepts of the scientific age may best demonstrate how the dependence on control has been widely accepted and valued. These practices include empiricism, reductionism, and objectivism. Each highlight a particular form of control that has cultivated a cultural belief in the need to control. Control, as a master of the material world, and most poignantly stemming from inductive ways of thinking, has enticed us with its aim of predictability. If our observations could be tested and controlled, then that very control could lead to greater efficiency or knowledge. Efficiency and knowledge as two resulting factors, might then enable wealth, prestige or perfection, therefore revealing control to hold immense allure. When we are able to anticipate a result, we are more able to feel safe in our experiences. Control perpetuates a feeling of safety and assuredness in a particular experiential outcome.

However, the materialist view of suffering *conceals* an intense fear: the loss of control. It

seems natural for most humans to fear the unexpected, and in a society of control, the

potential experiences of suffering generate an innate fear. Moments of suffering are a

demonstration of one's lack of knowing of how to control one's experienced environments.

Unpredictability is risky, and involves the relinquishing of control. As an impulse, we have

learned that losing control is something to actively avoid and resist at any cost. Science has

warned us that unpredictability can be harmful; thus, suffering is avoided given that its

potentiality for challenging and disturbing experiences remains high. It is this fear of suffering

that initially drives us to control our environment so that we believe that our future is within

our power. Our fear determines our behavior so that we learn that if we truly care about our

livelihood, we need to control the world around us. Thus, paradoxically, it is the control which

technology enables that ultimately ends up controlling us. Our material world becomes

governed by these technologies, to the extent that they begin to govern us in certain ways. And

that anything that hinders that perfection is defective, threatening, and must be avoided.

The scientific age and the rise of technological power have fostered a sociocultural

ideology of the need to control. The implications of this societal landscape are many, especially

in the spaces of teaching, growing, and learning. It is important to understand the sociocultural

history of science in order to recognize its powerful effects on society's collective consciousness

as well as society's main tool for learning: education.

Education reinforces particular social and cultural views (could cite Bourdieu on social

reproduction here). The point of this chapter has been to show how a particular cultural view

about suffering in the West-- materialism -- is subject to cultural reproduction within and

outside of the formal education system. Within schools, Knowledge is quantified through the use of standardized testing, and formalized through a grading system that assesses the sum of a student's understanding into a number, or a letter grade. Schools value control, where the same type of social order that is expected in the wider Western culture, must be mirrored in education. Education has become a science, where order, predictability, and control are key features. Due to this, the question of suffering's value becomes nearly irrelevant. What place is there for suffering in an education system that bemoans failure and prizes perfection? The value of suffering, seen through the eyes of science, thus, is reduced to various forms of avoidance. Scientific advancements have allowed for the controlling of the material world, because, from the materialist's perspective, suffering can and should be avoided.

Devalued suffering.

Another implication of the discussion of materialism as a culturally mediated and constructed conception is that the potential value of suffering for education is quite narrow and minimal. Suffering is 'valuable' insofar as it indicates that ignorance, or some other educational failure, is present, which in turn triggers the need to 'cure' or 'remediate' the failure. Like the medicalized notion of a symptom indicating some form of disease to be cured, the experience of suffering is only as valuable as it serves to identify a problem to remedied In this sense. Take for example the challenge of early-readers. When it is identified that a particular student is demonstrating a difficulty in learning to read, their experience of suffering in laboring through their learning is regarded as a symptom of some deeper problem. Is it their phonetic understanding? Might they have dyslexia or some other diagnosable challenge (ie. Aphasia)? The child's pain in learning is seen as an opportunity to diagnose, and to cure the educational

impediment. It becomes an obstacle to overcome, a problem to fix, or an illness to cure. The

value of suffering is purely negative – suffering doesn't teach us anything, it simply serves as a

red flag or 'symptom' that signals when some external intervention is needed to facilitate 'real'

learning. The material view of suffering regards suffering as measurable, by way of the

scientific method, the use of technology and the tool of medicine. Given its measurability,

suffering is also controllable, through those sociocultural tools. This leads to a belief in

suffering's avoidability, where one's ability to control one's experiences of suffering creates a

sense of mastery and agency over suffering. The child who suffers in learning to read is quickly

taught how to master that difficulty, to avoid the trap of suffering by building tools and

strategies to avoid the pain and challenge. Certainly there are benefits in teaching a child how

to overcome challenge, but I contend that something valuable is lost when mastery, in a

materialist sense, is the ultimate objective. The meaningful aspects of suffering are lost in this

materialist view; the educational value of suffering is compromised, or dismissed. The fullest

aspect of knowing is concealed in the material view; it masks our awareness of something

beyond the physical world, given that the reasoning for learning is for mostly material gain.

Chapter 3: The Immaterial/Metaphysical World of Suffering

This universal human nature is to be a rational creature. Our place in the hierarchy is to

be distinguished from animals as being rational and from God as being creatures.

(Grant, 1995, p. 32)

A Cartesian – or dualist – view of human nature implies that human experience, and

thus human suffering, is fundamentally two-dimensional. The previous chapter explored the

first dimension – the material or physical dimension of suffering. This chapter explores the

second dimension – mental or immaterial suffering. I use the label 'rationalism' to encompass different aspects of this immaterial view. Furthermore, rationalism has been a powerful influence on modern, Western education. As such, in the second half of this chapter, I extend the analysis of the rationalist view of suffering to examine its educational implications.

As discussed in the previous chapter, materialism interprets the human experience of suffering as entirely physical. As such, a materialist conception of suffering provides no useful tools for understanding, interpreting or evaluating non-physical forms that human suffering takes. Rationalism provides the required tools. The rationalist view posits the mind as a locus of control over the body, including control of physical suffering. However, from a rationalist perspective, the mind itself may be a source of suffering. The mind may become muddled, it may be damaged or disabled. It may function poorly for various reasons, becoming a source of confusion and misunderstanding rather than of insight and knowledge. Indeed, in extreme cases, it is sometimes said, one may 'lose' one's mind – in extreme cases, completely and irretrievably. These descriptions also indicate sources of potential mental, psychological or immaterial suffering. The 'rationalist' side of the Cartesian dualist perspective purports to provide tools for understanding and interpreting these experiences, and for examining their educational implications. Indeed, modern education has arguably embraced a rationalist view, in holding that the labor of learning is governed wholly or mainly by one's ability to reason. Mental or immaterial suffering, on this view, is thereby a symptom of educational failure or incapacity. Ultimately, then, I will argue that the rationalist view negates any potential educational value of immaterial suffering, much as the materialist view negates any potential value for physical suffering.

Three Key Features

Rationalism is a multifaceted concept and is used below in its most general and common forms to demonstrate its significance in human understanding of reasoning and the mind. The term rationalism, with its Latin root, ratio ("to reason" or "to calculate"), denotes most broadly a form of knowing through reason. This chapter outlines the rationalist view of suffering by exploring, firstly, the conceptual foundations of rationalism, using three key features of rationalist perspective, secondly, the manifestation of these features in education, and finally, several critical responses and educational implications.

Priority of rationality over experience.

This first section outlines three key features of the rationalist view of pain and suffering: (1) Rationalism prioritizes the mind, and its ability to reason, ultimately giving priority to rationality over human experience (2) The mind is viewed as a machine, and the rationalist adopts language that turn the mind into a tool for control, and (3) the mind acts as a source of epistemic authority.

The first key idea in the rationalist view is that rationality is prior to experience. Here the 'priority' of rationality is not chronological but logical. In other words, rationality is prior to experience in the sense that empirical claims (including claims about physical pain and suffering) can only be justified or warranted by reason. This form of knowing, or epistemology, is commonly opposed to sensory forms of knowing, such as empiricism, in that rationalism is concerned with reasoning and more abstract types of knowledge. Reasoning is most commonly associated with the faculties of the mind, and such was the focus of several key philosophers, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, who believed that reason was an access point to truth, and that

truth could be derived from one's ability to reason. Huenemann (2014), author and professor of

philosophy, is careful to point out that rationalism, when defined as believing that reason is the

only way to truth, is a misnomer. He clarifies that most rationalists accept that knowledge is not

self-defined or even self-made; rather, that the "justification of some important claims is

independent of any particular experience", or, that these claims are justifiable *a priori. T*his

term, *a priori*, suggests the validity of a claim independent of experience, and that the validity

of these claims is redeemed through reason. On this view of rationalism, rationality is prior to

non-rational experience. On its own, sensory experience is meaningless, and only when

mediated by reason can experience be illuminated with meaning. This rationalist view endorses

the notion that the meaning, or value, of experiences of suffering might be discovered through

reasoning. For example, when one experiences pain through relationship with another, they

might reason that the other person may have had cause for the infliction, or they might reason

that they were deserving of that pain, or they might reason that they were undeserving. Each of

these reasonings denies the possibility of educational value because it is uncomplicated and

unnuanced. Accepting blame, or blaming another, requires little to no thoughtful reflection.

The rational reasoning creates a binary response that cannot account for the complexity of

value in learning through pain.

The mind as machine.

Modern cognitive neuroscience, the most sophisticated attempt yet to link mental

functions with neural structures, has embraced the quest for mechanistic explanation

through decomposition and localization" (Zawidzki & Bechtel, 2002, p. 2)

A second key idea in the rationalist view is a mechanistic view of the mind. The

continental rationalists also agreed that all humans are born with a mind that "possess[es]

some kind of special processing machinery" (Huenemann, 2014, p. 5). This meant that

reasoning was made possible through the literal computational activities of the mind, in that

the functions of logic such as deduction are evidence of the mind's capacity for intellect.

Intellect was traditionally perceived and regarded as an infallible form of knowing and

continues to exist today as a form of social economy. This lead to a new form of modern

empiricism, that C.T. Wolfe and O. Gal explain "put at its center an ahistorical, disembodied,

isolated 'mind'" which ran contrary to the empiricism of the "New Science" in the 1600s.

Rationalism and empiricism found commonality in their belief that knowing was directly linked

to one's ability to perceive the world through mental reasoning. Atomism, a familiar Cartesian

term, refers to the claim that "all basic mental or cognitive entities count as individuatable

states of mind stuff" (Ereneling & Johnson, 2005, p. 249). In this way, the mind is reduced to its

elementary components, and is readily correlated to the brain given a reductionist approach

that views mind as performing certain functions that may be a set of analyzable systems.

Therefore, there appears to be little difficulty in perceiving the mind as a machine, when we, as

humans, readily draw on its mechanistic processes to perform certain functions. With the mind

being an elusive concept, choosing to equate the mind with the brain is a more simple, and

more comprehendible approach.

This scientific and biological understanding of the mind as machine is not new and can

be traced back to ancient conceptions of the mind with earliest definitions of the term "brain"

being derived from ancient Egyptian papyrus, believed to be written around 1700 BC (Gross

(1998a). The rise of ancient Greece overlaps this time period, and it follows that several prolific thinkers and writers of the time also demonstrated interest in the human brain and its specific functions. For example, Gross appoints the title of "First Neuroscientist" to the Greek writer, Alcmaeon of Croton, who initiated and championed the belief of the "brain as the site of sensation and cognition" (p. 10). His anatomic dissections were the first of "intellectual inquiry" and his work was followed by many of his time. The father of modern medicine, Hippocrates, did not practice dissective medicine, but his greatest work concerning brain function involved his study of epilepsy, with the brain being described as "the seat of this disease" (p. 13). More broadly, Hippocrates openly denied the common belief that the heart participated in any mental processes, stating that all "mental operations . . . are completely undertaken by the brain" (p. 13). History continues with numerous accounts and findings in mind-brain studies, up until the Medieval time when the brain was certified as the "localization of mental faculties in the organ's ventricles" (p. 31), and the brain became defined as a series of anatomical substances orienting to particular bodily functions.

The computer analogy.

The idea that the brain *processes* certain information, and relays that information to the human body is a pervasively technological way of perceiving the brain's functions. We use computational language in referring to the mind, exemplifying some conscious or unconscious belief that the mind is a mere machine. The computational theory of the mind asserts that "cognitive processes are in some sense computational processes" (Horst, 1996, p. 17), and that the mind functions similarly, if not, identically to a computational device. This theory, and its main contemporary proponents, Jerry Fodor, Zenon Pylyshyn, and Hilary Putnam, collectively

agree upon and advocate for the understanding that "cognition literally is computation and the

mind literally is a digital computer" (Horst, p. 19). The mind is reduced to its functions as a

computing system and cognitive processes are analyzed to account for human activities

(behaviors, thought, action). The computational theory of the mind is indicative of a larger

sociocultural trend tending towards the belief that the mind (or brain) is a device to be used

and programmed.

This rationalist view, with the mind viewed as a machine, or computer, endorses the

notion that the meaning, or value, of experiences of suffering is entirely lost when the

machinery is broken. One is not able to "process" suffering accordingly because the mind,

acting as a machine, is not operating, or has not been programmed to reason through

experiences of suffering. The machinery imagery suggests that the mind is simply a tool to

control the body, and does not suggest that the mind be used as a tool to seek, or to find,

meaning in one's experiences. Education has responded to and perpetuated the concept of the

mind as machine by structuring its principles in such a way as to sequester the minds of

students, affirming their cognitive capacities over any other ways of being or knowing. As

previously described, intelligence is a form of cognitive success, which potentiates favorable

outcomes for learning and knowing. The mind is the key holder for academic proficiency or

academic failure, and a student must exclusively rely on the mind; the mind is treated as an

machine to be subjugated to the rules of education, where focus and attention are necessary.

Minds must be turned on, ready to be controlled by the power and will of the student at

command. One's ability to listen and attend to any given instruction is dependent on one's use

of one's mind, and then how to control the mind's processes. Therefore, the rationalist's view

of suffering would regard those experiences of suffering as a threat to the goal of reasoning and control. The mind becomes a space of suffering, when the educational expectation, influenced by a sociocultural ideology, is that each student should and must manage their mind as a machine. One suffers when one cannot remember, when one cannot recall, when one cannot perform the computational exercises that one expects of their mind-machine. Like a computer that freezes, the mind, when construed as a machine, will cause its user suffering. Similarly, intelligence is about using the mind for the purpose of knowing. Because suffering interferes with the mind's capacity to reason, it is a threat and therefore has negative value. The function of education, from the rationalist's view, is to generate a population of 'knowers'. Students are intended to know, and their level of intelligence is contingent on this knowing; therefore, an inability to know would be detrimental to one's function as a learner.

The rational mind as locus of epistemic authority.

The mechanistic conception of the mind provides a theoretical gateway to a third key element of the rationalist conception of pain and suffering – the mind as a mechanism for controlling and managing physical experiences, including experiences of pain and suffering. Following this line of Cartesian thinking exposes a certain belief that controlling the mind is possible, and control is necessary for acquiring knowledge and understanding. For example, it is been often assumed that channeling energy to the mind is a matter of focus and attention. Envision the stereotypical situation of a five-year-old physically energetic child in a kindergarten classroom. They want to fidget, move, jump, and tap, using their bodies. With the goal of education primarily being cognitive learning, that five-year-old student is told to "Focus" or "Pay attention." This implies that the mind, as an object, follows directive rules and that in

order for the mind to function in specific ways, the mind must use its functions for control in

order to discover truth, or knowledge. Something is "wrong" when that five-year-old, with

intentional teaching focused on training the mind, cannot control the impulse to physically

move, but instead is observed as a distraction to themself and to others. Generally, this is

viewed as a problem, because learning is only attained or actualized when the mind is able to

be used for control; instead, educational suffering ensues because the system of education has

regarded this student as unable, or even, disabled, as was previously explored. Therefore, this

rational approach suggests that it is natural for experiences of suffering to occur, in the form of

lack of control. Furthermore, from a rationalist perspective, loss of cognitive or intellectual

control is a sign of cognitive dysfunction, which needs to be extinguished and brought back in

line with norms of functional rationality. From this perspective, the possibility that cognitive

discomfort or suffering might be a temporary and possibly educationally desirable feature of

the learner's attempt to make meaning, or to "reconstruct" their understanding, in light of new

knowledge or experience is ruled out. Instead, viewing suffering as a sign of dysfunction and

irrationality, rather than as potentially an element of a more complex and perfectly functional

process of learning, the rationalist requires the educator to discern methods of intervention for

the mind's ability to control.

A further way of conceiving of the mind from a rationalist perspective is concerns its

ethical orientation. The rationalists' dogma, which states that the mind has the potentiality for

discovering innate truths, extends beyond verifiable knowledge, to the world of moral and

ethical truth. In fact, the continental rationalists collectively and readily acknowledged the

mind's need to understand and capacity for understanding the unintelligible world. Descartes'

expansive thinking about the mind, including his efforts to "provide a framework for thinking

about the world" extended to a call to doubt, or question "all our beliefs about the world and

ourselves" (Matthews, 2005, p. 8). This extension led Descartes to doubt the "existence of the

whole world outside himself" and even the "existence of his own body" but this doubt ended

where Descartes could not deny his "existence as a thinking thing" (p. 8). Existence, as related

to one's mind, leads to questions of morality when one asks, "What is my purpose?" or joining

Victor Frankl's "Search for Meaning." The limitlessness of one's ability to question and

contemplate might lead to *shadows* of enduring truth. Plato's cave allegory exemplifies this

notion in suggesting that human thought or perception is like the shadow on a cave wall, where

true knowledge lies outside the cave and the mind's capacity to reason is of "highest and

immortal" governance (Gross, 1998, p. 17). The existence of something greater, something

more eternal, can be reached through the faculty of the mind. Again, when the mind cannot

contemplate the ethical, the individual is regarded as experiencing suffering, or causing

suffering. The individual, then, must be taught ways to avoid or intervene in those experiences.

Contemporary education views this avoidance and intervention as appropriate for true

learning.

　　　Descartes' dualist notion of mind and body proposes challenges for understanding the

educative value of suffering given its simplistic view of the human self. As noted in the previous

chapter, the materialist view of suffering recognizes experiences of pain as oppositional to the

goals of physical wellness. This has led to Western society's prioritization of medical

intervention, which aims to alleviate pain through controlling means. Similarly, the rationalist

view of suffering recognizes the mind as an essential aspect of control. When rationalism forms

the theoretical basis for understanding human experience, the mind is conceptualized as a tool,

like a computer, that may be used to control and manipulate experiences. This notion suggests

that educationally, we are taught that the mind provides us the opportunity to escape

suffering, and if the machinery of the mind is broken, suffering will be further experienced

given that control is not attainable. Similarly, the experiential way of knowing acknowledges

that human experiences can and should teach us, but rationalism rejects this notion to some

degree. Instead, it suggests that the mind is the vehicle for knowledge, not experience, and that

it is through training and dedication to learning that one may "know". In this way, experiences

of suffering as perceived as a threat to the mind's two, primary purposes. If it is a machine,

suffering is the experience of its brokenness, and if the mind serves to find truth, suffering

leaves one aimless with no clear, definitive life goal. Suffering threatens these treasured roles

of the mind, because one's mind is so intimately connected to one's sense of being. Without

the capacity of mental functioning, one is left with the question, "What is my life? What is my

identify?" One's sense of being and purpose is attached to one's ability to reason about both.

Thus, the question of one's existence lies in one's ability to contemplate existence itself.

Rationalism and Suffering

In this section I elaborate and strengthen the application of the broader rationalist

conception of human experience (knowledge, understanding, purpose) to the specific case of

human experience of pain and suffering. In particular, I focus on the two key ideas – the

problem of 'irrationality' and the idea of 'useless' suffering. These two help to frame the

previous description of rationalism, by specifically describing how suffering is viewed from a

rationalist perspective. When one's inability to reason, the primary function and purpose of the

rationalist, is compromised, suffering results. When reasoning is impaired, the rationalist experiences a form of suffering that threatens their basic orientation to understanding the world around them. This "irrationality" is regarded an experience to be avoided. Further, the idea of useless suffering is modeled through the rationalist's understanding of learning, when one's experiences are valued below that of reason and rationalism. The purpose of education, from the rationalist's view, is to train the mind to operate and function properly in order to learn and acquire knowledge; therefore, any threat to this purpose is seen as a form of suffering.

The concept of irrationality.

The rationalist view of suffering might be described as the inability to reason. For instance, if the rationalist places the primacy of reason, one's ability to critically analyze, process, and use the mind's functions, above all else, then suffering, would be the converse, an inability, or the non-ability to reason, otherwise known as *irrationality.* Irrationality might take on several forms, including mental challenges, processing difficulties, various types of memory loss, etc. What is important to acknowledge here is that the rationalist values reason, and when reasoning is impaired in any form, that individual might be said to be unable to fully reason, and thus, be suffering. In order to make meaning of human experience, one must be able to reason fully, or at least to a socially expected degree. When this ability is threatened, when suffering is viewed as an inability to reason, there is little to educative value. Inability, from the rationalist view, cannot teach us, because truth is extracted through the process of reasoning. When reasoning is improbable, the possibility of gaining understanding, truth, or knowledge is limited; therefore, suffering has negative value. To conclude, certain revelations and concealments

should be included to recover certain ideas that will move this exploration of suffering's

educative value forward.

Useless suffering.

The abstract qualities of rationalism can cause a certain type of suffering because of its

valuing of reasoning, one that can move learners away from a joy of learning, instead of

towards it. Further, Sloan (2005) notes that, increasingly, "academic abstractions" are being

introduced to children at "an ever earlier age" in an effort to standardize and test for reasoning

abilities in mainstream education (p. 34). The mind, believed to be a machine, or a computer, as

previously noted, has become the primary tool for education to "seek to systematize skill and

abstract knowledge" for the purposes of "conventional economic and social success" (p. 35).

Like the physical conception of the self, this rationalist conception, "permeat[ing] modern

education" believes in a form of control and "manipulation" that seeks to "exploit" knowledge

and finds no value in suffering. The primacy of reason means that a person's mind, their ability

to reason, and to gain knowledge are made primary. The body and one's senses are secondary,

if not obsolete, in the pursuit of knowledge, and the whole person is separated into parts, from

the dualist perspective. The mind/body dualist perspective inadequately addresses the

educative value of suffering because the value of education in both conceptions is reduced to

the goals of control, perfection, and mastery. Nowhere in those goals can one find value in

suffering because suffering threatens and limits one's ability to control.

Critical Analysis and Educational Implications

In each of the previously explored conceptions of the mind, the rationalist perspective

persists in believing that the human ability to comprehend, understand, or learn is dependent

on the individual's mind. The mind has maintained this high status in learning, with its capacity

for knowledge long being valued and esteemed. The formal education system highlights this

stature by structuring its curricular aims and goals towards the understanding that the mind is

an object to be used for acquiring knowledge, as well as a space for retaining knowledge. The

student's mind is the prize object to be accessed, and educators use language such as "shaping

minds", "educating the minds of students", or "it's mind over matter" that connotes that the

identity of the student lies within the object of their mind. This form of Cartesian dualism

suggests that the mind acts independently of the body, and its objectification can be purposed

for educational pursuits. What is the educational value of suffering from the rationalist's view?

The following outlines trends of rationalism in education, including education's general view

regarding the brain, and intelligence; subsequently, this view is endorses by the rationalist

perspective of suffering, which is further detailed as 'irrationality' and a form of 'useless

suffering'.

Rationalism in Education

> We are governed by laws which we only partly understand. Reason is at first only
>
> present in us potentially and not actually. It needs to be developed by education.
>
> (George Grant, 1969, p. 32)

From the time of the Enlightenment, the search for meaning in our human experiences

has been determined by our ability to reason (Stout, 200, p. 22). Modern education adopted

the views of liberalism, teaching and "empowering students to become independent *thinkers"*

(p. 23). A liberal education is determined to "cultivate the mind" (p. 23) and teaches that one's

ability to reason maintains primacy over other aspects of the self, especially as that ability

relates to acquiring a valuable education. One's ability to know is contingent on one's capacity to control the mind, to use the mind as machine, and to acknowledge the mind as essential for acquiring truth. The following accounts for the ways in which education has adopted these views of the mind, and how they are modelled in educational practices.

Criticism of rationalism.

Michael Oakeshott, famous British intellectual and educational philosopher of the 20th century, concerned himself greatly with the rationalist view of knowledge, arguing that "technical rationalist has been occupying a dominant position in every field of social life [including] education" (Wen, 2006, p. 45). His criticisms of the dominant rationalist ideology in post-Enlightenment education include three essential points: (1) that modern education holds that the "'rational' solution of any education problem requires a sort of 'technical knowledge' associated with it" (p. 48), (2) that "'technical knowledge' can be learned from a book" often memorized, not experienced, and "learned and acquired in the process of mechanized operation" (p. 48), and (3) that rationalism is the "most effective means of solving the problems of education" (p. 48). Oakeshott raised these criticisms in order to point out that the rationalist conception of learning values perfection, leaving little room for failure, mistakes, or an experiential notion of growth. He suggests that valuing perfection, where " 'education is reduced to arguments solely about which books or concepts must be taught'" will inevitably lead to " 'confusion and dogma'" (p. 49). Similarly, Sloan (2005) suggested that using the tools of rationalism in early education can be detrimental to the future learning of students. He writes, "if an abstract conceptuality is imposed too early on the child, before the child has been able to make it its own, this abstract conceptuality can then only be experienced as other, not

as the child's own, but as alien to the child, even hostile . . . [leading] to anger, hostility,

depression, and despair" (Sloan, p. 34).

What is obscured by rationalism?

What is obscured educationally when rationalism is viewed as the primary method of

knowing? Several key insights are obscured by the rationalist view. Firstly, the rationalist's

conception of the educative value of suffering conceals an important holistic aspect of knowing,

known as tacit (sometimes referred to as poetic, or experiential) ways of knowing. Michael

Polanyi (1966) might be most associated with the concept of tacit knowing, and he describes

this form of knowing as having four aspects: (1) "the functional" (2) "the phenomenal" (3) "the

semantic", and (4) the "ontological" (p. 13). Each of these aspects is discussed more thoroughly

by Polanyi, but their sum forms what might be crudely defined as an experiential way of

knowing. According to Polanyi, tacit knowledge "comprises a range of conceptual and sensory

information and images that can be brought to bear in an attempt to make sense of something"

(1966). This is somewhat related to Dewey's concept of constructivism, realized as both an

educational theory and practice. Dewey, previously noted as a critic of rationalism, articulated a

way of educating that involved personal construction of knowledge instead of rote, mechanistic

forms of learning. It must be noted that while constructivism has gained much attention in

educational philosophy and pedagogical practices, it continues to be concealed by the

rationalist aims of perfection and mastery in education. In tacit, experiential, and constructivist

conceptions of knowledge, suffering might be regarded as having value given its natural

occurrence in human experiences.

The brain.

The brain, often thought of as the biological form of the mind, might be considered the most important part of the human self in learning. Michael Oakeshott (2015), who is revealed below as a critic of the rationalist view, describes education's obsession with the mind when he states that the rationalist "has a respect for 'brains', a great belief in training them, and is determined that cleverness shall be encouraged and shall receive its reward of power" (Oakeshott, 2015). Training the brain is of greatest concern for the rationalist, and in education, this looks like what might now be considered *rote learning* or *mechanistic education*. Gallegos Nava details this mechanistic education as being defined by many key features, including: "systemic," "development of thought," "static, predetermined curriculum," "mechanistic psychology," "based on the mechanistic science of Descartes-Newton-Bacon" (Miller, 2005, p. 4). While many of these features have been challenged since the rise of progressive education, many of these mechanistic tools remain as vestiges of rationalism in education today. For example, our evaluative tools for assessing knowledge still rely heavily on quantifying the mind's aptitude for any given subject. Quizzes, tests, and projects are aimed at discovering the level of cognition of each learner; the mind is tool for this knowing, and knowledge is viewed as an extension of reason, or logic (Miller, 2005). Ravitch (2011) writes that the "current preoccupation with test scores and data is a relatively recent development" (p. xxvii). She explains that prior testing had no serious implications, rather, they were viewed as private information for each student. They were not publicized and used to "evaluate the quality of teachers, schools, and districts" (p. xxvii). The success of schools has become dependent on the community's collective mind, which is evaluated through "mechanistic" means such as testing.

Intelligence might be said to be the primary aim or measurement of knowledge, from the rationalist view. Like the description of standardized testing, and the categorization of learning deficits in the preceding chapter, intelligence might be viewed as the other side of a coin where the mind is the tool of control.

Intelligence.

Intelligence testing has a long history, and is briefly outlined here to highlight the notion that the mind is the locus of control in accruing knowledge. Like the material form of standardized testing, the main purpose underlying intelligence testing has been to "measure differences in intellectual ability between people or to monitor changes in the intellectual ability of a particular person over time" (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2008, p. 30). The beginnings of intelligence testing can be dated prior to modernity, but formal intelligence theories emerged during the rise of scientific inquiry. Evolving from the philosophical pondering of intelligence, the concept of "ability" became a metric for twentieth century living. Many metaphors (geography, hierarchy, computation, biology, epistemology, sociology, anthropology, systems) became icons for understanding the abilities of a human (p. 2-29). The key motivation being to understand the human capacity for intelligence, as well as to generate a standardized form for human intelligence. This has certainly motivated much controversy, given that critics have pointed to intelligence testing simply being a measure of cultural knowledge, or that the testing is biased in its design, by a specific designer. This continues to be true in schools today, demonstrating our continuing belief in the rationalist view.

Taking stock of the rationalist conception of pain and suffering

In this chapter, I have discussed the rationalist conception of pain and suffering and

examined some of its major educational implications. In this section, I attempt to take stock of

the discussion so far, in order to gain a clearer view of the various costs and benefits that may

be associated with the rationalist conception, especially with respect to its educational

influence. I argue that the upshot of the rationalist view is complex and ambiguous. A

rationalist conception illuminates certain facets of the human experience of suffering, and in

doing so reveals some potentially valuable or useful educational possibilities. However, it also

works to conceal certain alternative understandings about human suffering, and in doing so

closes off or at least impedes opportunities or gaining a fuller understanding of how educators

might productively attend to the experience of human suffering in educational contexts.

The discussion in this chapter has identified two key ideas revealed by the rationalist

conception of suffering and its educative value. First, the rationalist conception views pain and

suffering as an educational limitation or impediment. According to this view, pain is an obstacle

to learning, and should be eliminated, or when experienced, should look to certain

interventions in order to avoid future suffering. Certainly, there are benefits to this view;

educators do not intend, or desire their students to suffer, nor would they let their students

suffer without some form of intervention or help. Contemporary education would not have

students suffer needlessly or without the goal of growth, yet there is something that is missed,

or overlooked by this perspective. Secondly, the rationalist conception of suffering highlights an

individualistic dimension of pain, which has heavily influenced contemporary education.

Hermans, Kempen and van Loon (1992), connected the plague of individualism to the trends of

rationalism, affirming the notion that the "dominant conception of the self in Western thought"

has been defined as " 'self-contained'," " 'egocentric'," " 'rationalistic'" and " 'self-contained

individualism'" (p. 23). Education reflects these definitions in continuing to value personal

knowledge, individual success, and the pursuit of narcissistic aims. Instead of viewing suffering

as a way to grow through human experience, the rationalist believes that suffering should be

avoided, if not eliminated. This prevents any possible educational value of suffering, and

motivates efforts against experiences that challenge human suffering. The rational view and the

medical view both regard suffering as an experience that must be eradicated from the learning

process.

Chapter 4: The Emotive and Spiritual World of Suffering

This chapter focusses on emotional and spiritual aspects of suffering, which have been

neglected in the discussion so far. The previously explored materialist and rationalist

conceptions of suffering suggest a certain narrow and minimized view of the potential

educational value of experiencing suffering. Both views simplify the experience of suffering as

something that must be controlled, the materialist says that suffering is primarily physical, and

must be avoided through the means of technologies such as medicine; the rationalist posits the

mind as the locus of control – the mechanism by which suffering was to be managed or

controlled, while also acknowledging suffering as an experience that threatens one's ability to

reason. This chapter explores several thinkers who have addressed the emotive and spiritual

dimensions of suffering, thereby providing theoretical alternatives to the materialist and

rationalist perspectives. Nevertheless, I also argue that the alternatives presented remain

limited and incomplete. Specifically, contemporary thinkers who emphasize and highlight the

emotional and spiritual dimensions of suffering remain restricted to a view of suffering that

needs to be controlled and managed. Accordingly, a primary purpose of the chapter is to

identify and discuss the strategies of control and managed. In this respect, discussions of

emotional and spiritual pain and suffering in education model a discourse that challenges some

aspects of the materialist/rationalist perspectives (most notably, by focusing on experiences of

pain and suffering that go beyond the merely physical or biological), but also as a discourse that

remains trapped in the confines of those perspectives, which view pain and suffering as an

impediment to learning, and thus stands in need of control and management.

There has been a slow movement towards recognizing and appreciating the role of

emotions in the making of meaning of experience. Western society has moved away from the

"exercise of 'pure' reason" and gradually dismissed the notion that "emotions [are] 'irrational'",

instead finding value in evaluating the experience of emotionality. In education, increasingly,

there is a movement towards practices that promote awareness for more than a materialist or

rationalist view (Solomon, 1993, p. iix.). These practices have been applied in the educational

context to some success. For instance, practices of yoga and mindfulness meditation have been

included in Western education with the aim to relieve suffering experienced emotionally and

potentially spiritually. However, both yoga and mindfulness meditation, as practiced in Western

educational systems, fail to address the complexity of suffering. While these practices

acknowledge suffering as a natural human experience – unlike the materialist and rationalist

views - they seek to manage those experiences and forego recognizing the educational

significance of suffering.

Emotions and Emotionality

Emotions are a complex and multi-faceted human experience. Theories about their genesis, location, and categorization remain contested. Yet, their involvement in human life is undeniable, and may best be defined as a "myriad of physiological, neurological, and psychological components" (Kitayama & Markus, 1994, p. 1). Researchers have also begun to articulate more complex understandings of suffering as an emotive experience. I discuss these here and then move onto their application in education.

Zembylas (2008) writes about "critical emotional reflexivity" and "the power and politics of emotions in teaching" (2007). In seeming alignment, Boler (1999) outlines a sociocultural and historical narrative of emotions, with a primary focus on "gendered educationally histories" (p. 31). Their work has helped to challenge previous materialist and rationalist views on emotions by highlighting the value of studying the complexity and nuance of emotions, including their significance in educational settings. Zembylas and Boler seem to aim at dismantling historical and sociocultural perceptions of experiences of pain and suffering, by promoting practices such as critical emotional reflexivity, which serves to help individuals confront personal beliefs concerning social suffering, as well as educating society regarding the role of emotions, as historically gendered, and leading to suffering that might be viewed as useless.

Emotional intelligence.

Discussion of emotional intelligence also demonstrates an attempt to move towards a more integrative understanding of human experience. The idea of emotional intelligence gained prominence in the 1990s when discussions began around the idea of social intelligence, originating from Howard Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences and his category of

"[intra]personal intelligence" (p. 239). Here, Gardner's theory stressed the importance of recognizing the importance of an intelligence that prioritizes "access to one's own feeling life" (p. 239). The connection of emotions and intelligence had not yet been acknowledged, and criticism was initially raised in referring to the affective experiences as a form of intelligence, when intelligence had been historically understood as a rational aspect of self (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Yet, champions and proponents of this burgeoning concept pressed on, using the former work of intelligence researchers, who authenticated social intelligence, describing it as the "ability to perceive one's own and others' internal states, motives, and behaviors, and to act toward them optimally on the basis of that information" (p. 435). Thus, emotional intelligence is described as "the verbal and nonverbal appraisal and expression of emotion, the regulation of emotion in the self and others, and the utilization of emotional content in problem solving" (p. 433). Daniel Goleman's book, "Emotional Intelligence" (1997), popularized the notion of emotional intelligence, and saw widespread use in the fields of business (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002; Fineman, 1993), leadership (George, 2000; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995), medicine (Freshwater & Stickley, 2004; Bellack, 1999), and education (Elias & Arnold, 2006; Humphrey, Curran, Morris, Farrell & Woods, 2007). The theory of emotional intelligence has moved Western society towards a palatable understanding of the role of emotions, specifically, that they serve some greater goal of intelligence. One's ability to use their emotional intelligence could be linked to the value of pain and suffering, if viewed as a way to recognize and acknowledge the potential benefits of those experiences.

Emotional geographies.

Further, drawing their inspiration from "critical geographies" of "health and embodiment," authors Davidson, Bondi and Smith (2005) articulate how the "discipline of geography often presents us with an emotionally barren terrain" but that the affective elements of our lives are more recently being understood as spatial and as influencers of our understanding of space (p. 1). The authors use three core themes: (1) the "location of emotion in body, bodies and places" (2) the "emotional relationality of people and environments"; and (3) "representations of emotional geographies" (p. 3). In particular, Davidson et al. highlight that new and continuing research focused on the subject of emotion, and its spatialization, demonstrate that there is obvious criticism of "past presuppositions" that "emotions are not materially important" (p. 1). The spacializing of emotions, in material and non-material ways, demonstrates a new, and hopeful way of integrating the material and non-material. The notion of emotional geographies may provide an opening for exploring spaces where the value of suffering could be explored. Literally and figuratively, this concept of emotions may be promising in helping to guide collective views of pain and suffering, where the connection to emotion is regarded as a space, where one might reject the notion of choosing a materialist, more physical notion of pain, and similarly reject the belief the one is entirely rational. Instead, one might explore the possibilities of how one's emotions may guide them to a complex, nuanced, and potentially valuable understanding of suffering.

Integration of Emotions in Education

With these core concepts in mind, we look here at how the integration of emotions, and their corresponding theories, have been applied in educational settings. Researchers such as

Zembylas, Boler, Noddings, and Mintz have been especially influential in charting a new path

for emotions in education, and their work will demonstrate a significant change in education's

response to valuing students' emotional states. Firstly, though, it is important to explore the

historical movement away from the mechanistic form of education, which began in the early to

mid-1900s, and highly influenced by the works of John Dewey. Secondly, this progressive

movement led to a certain form of educational ideology focused on encouraging and sustaining

students' positive-emotions, such as happiness and positive self-esteem. Finally, the more

recent curricular aims of socio-emotional learning, and emotion-regulation, have become

common in Western classrooms today. Each of these trends points to a certain way in which

emotions have been viewed in education, which helps to illuminate how the emotional view of

suffering is being explored in educational spaces today.

Progressivism in education.

Avi Mintz's studies mostly concern the role of pain and suffering set within the context

of education. Mintz's most consistent position seems to be that pain in learning can be both

beneficial and detrimental. His research shows a concern with the idea that pain is always bad,

in education, and he explores the value of pain through a variety of educational settings and

studies. Further, he articulates an unpopular view that certain pains are worth endorsing, for

the greater value of education and learning. This is a departure from the previously discussed

materialist and rationalist conceptions of suffering because Mintz explores a more nuanced and

complex view of suffering, instead of reducing it to its binary form of "good" or "bad".

Woven throughout much of his work, he often considers the connection of these "'pains

of learning'" to the progressivist movement of the early twentieth century (Mintz, 2017, p.

344). For example, in his most recent article, "Pain and Education," Mintz notes that the

"progressive educational theorists" collaborated to "liberate students' interests and intellect"

by releasing them from the bondage of an "oppressive and fear-inducing" traditionalist model

of education (p. 345). Progressivist educators, believing their Traditionalist predecessors to

have cared little for student satisfaction and enjoyment, engendered a new model of education

that avoided unpleasantness; instead, they modelled education around students' happiness,

interests, and enjoyment. Mintz's connection between suffering and the progressive education,

is more extensively explored in an article entitled "The Happy and Suffering Students?

Rousseau's *Émile* and the Path not taken in Progressive Educational Thought" (2012). Here,

Mintz highlights several key slogans promoted by progressivist educators, mostly concerned

with student-centered forms of instruction and teaching philosophies, with one specific

philosophy most explicitly concerned with pain and learning; that "genuine learning [should be]

exciting and pleasurable" (p. 249) and avoid suffering. Mintz explores the notion that this

understanding, that learning should be absent of any form of negativity, has led to the "widely

held belief that frustration, confusion, distress, and other painful moments in education inhibit

learning" (p. 249). Further, this form of "effortless and painless" educational philosophy has

been maintained by a "long history in progressive education" (p. 250) where educators have

actively promoted the avoidance of pain in learning. The "path not taken" is one where the

notion of pain is viewed with greater nuance and reflection. Mintz explains that the dominant

"belief that educational pains are obstacles to learning" has "resulted in denying students

meaningful challenges and educational experiences" (p. 264). A new path must be formed to

redeem this potentially meaningful experience.

Finally, Mintz (2008) details the progressivist tendency to avoid suffering in his PhD

dissertation, "The Labor of Learning: A Study of the Role of Pain in Education". Mintz

demonstrates that the active avoidance of pain, and the belief in the "painlessness" of

schooling is a false notion. His attempt is to cultivate a generative conversation around why

pain has been avoided in education, and what might be lost, educationally. In much of his work,

Avi Mintz shows his attempt to draw attention to progressivist ideals of education that have

avoided acknowledging any possible educational value of suffering, instead, focusing on

learning as something that should be fun, entertaining, and contribute to the happiness and

positive self-esteem of all students.

Mintz's concern about the progressivist movement, and its efforts to move away from

authoritative and more traditionalist forms of teaching, demonstrates a certain ideological

position assumed in Western education. With the goal of including more care for the emotion-

state of students, education has increasingly assumed that any negative emotion towards the

learning process is bad. Therefore, just as Mintz describes and critiques, the progressive

movement has avoided creating challenging experiences for students for fear of causing

negative emotional reactions. Educational suffering is regarded as indicative of something that

should be changed, so that happiness and positive experiences are more prevalent.

Happiness and self-esteem.

In connection to the progressive movement in education, a particular ideal of happiness

and self-esteemed has developed followers in education. As a response to the goals of

progressivism, the aim of promoting happiness and self-esteem, might be said to further

promote avoiding any forms of education that might threaten that effort. Roberts (2012)

explains that, broadly, there seems to be an obsession with happiness in the "contemporary Western world" (p. 463). In the sociocultural setting, happiness is sought after and commodified, while at the same time, the "avoid[ance] of situations that might lead to unhappiness" is normalized. Roberts argues that this collective understanding has pervaded educational spaces where educationists themselves have also "accepted the centrality of happiness for human life" (p. 463). Thus, in advocating for happiness as the end goal of education, spaces of suffering, or "despair" as Roberts terms the experience, are at "odds with the dominant trends of our time" (p. 464). Despair is regarded as the "anti-thesis of happiness" thereby making it an experience to be avoided; but what is lost when we avoid experiences of despair and suffering? What learning might occur if we entered those unexplored spaces? The goal of Western, contemporary education, is to create learning spaces that are positive and encouraging for students, and even when students are challenged, it is set within a narrative that says "This will pay off at some point!" – thus, positive emotions are the hopeful, and eventual goal, even in the midst of struggle or difficulty. A narrative that discusses "negative" emotions as equally valuable to positive ones seems to have no place in our modern educational context, and these experiences of emotion are regarded as something to overcome, or to eliminate. Like the rationalist perspective, experiences of suffering are viewed as an impediment, or detrimental to the learning process.

Nel Noddings has made similar claims about suffering in education, and most explicitly written in her book, "Happiness and Education" (2003) where she warns against the glorification of suffering in order to prevent the infliction of further pain on others. Her overt warning against suffering follows, "I want to insist that suffering is a bad thing – something to

be avoided, relieved, and never deliberately inflicted on another" (p. 45). She draws on

examples from the lives of Goethe, Nietzsche and Viktor Frankl to explore the non-necessity of

suffering for finding deeper meaning, and connects this to education by suggesting that "young

people should learn about the ways in which others have looked at suffering . . . [all] without

damaging the possibility of future happiness" (p. 43). For Noddings, an education grounded in a

"discussion of happiness, is to find ways of alleviating suffering" (p. 52). In Noddings' view,

suffering and pain are parts of the human experience, but that these emotional experiences can

be accepted, and then managed with the pursuit of meaning through happiness. While trying to

confront the glorification of suffering, Noddings' chapter "Happiness as an Aim of Life and

Education", draws on religious and philosophical examples of the veneration of suffering, and

seeks to argue that the purpose of discussing happiness is to "find ways of alleviating suffering"

(p. 52). While not denying the human experience of suffering, Noddings does reject the notion

that suffering, itself, holds meaning; rather, she writes that "[h]appy children, growing in their

understanding of what happiness is, will seize their educational opportunities with delight, and

they will contribute to the happiness of others" (p. 261). Noddings' understanding of happiness

does not avoid experiences of suffering; it avoids the belief of their innate meaning, and instead

suggests that happiness should be the aim of education, and the ultimate purpose of life.

Finally, the self-esteem movement, stemming from progressivism, is outlined in

Maureen Stout's thorough investigative work titled "The Feel-Good Curriculum: The Dumbing

Down of America's Kids in the Name of Self-Esteem" (2000). While written nearly 18 years ago,

this book still highlights a significant conversation that aligns with the question of suffering's

value in education, and further supports the connection of education's tendency to avoid the

discussion or promotion of experiences of suffering. Stout begins her book by discussing her

alarm at the pervasive dialogue of self-esteem, in discussions around the goal of education,

when she first began her career as a professor of education. Thus began her curiosity and her

eventual completion of a book devoted to understanding the self-esteem movement in

education. She notes a clear societal denial of a self-esteem derived from merit or hard work;

instead, self-esteem can be controlled by the individual, which Stout correlates to the therapy

movement and the increase of psychology-based practices in the education setting. Self-esteem

can be chosen, as if it is a matter of belief or self-talk, and thus we are "liberat[ed] from all

constraints" that may cause us suffering (p. 15). She connects the movement back to

progressive ideals of education, where a belief that feelings of "inferiority" that may derive

from failure would "hinder future learning" (p. 81). Thus, it is the educator's role to ensure that

such feelings are avoided, and that self-esteem remain high.

Ultimately, the emotionalist perspective prevents an exploration of the potential

positive educational value of suffering. The possibility that there may be educational value in

embracing suffering, and attending to its lessons and teachings, is anathema to this view, which

regards suffering as a path to emotional and psychological collapse or breakdown. Suffering is

perceived only as a threat, and rarely as an opportunity for learning

Education about emotions.

The following responses to emotions have been increasingly implemented in schools.

They highlight a need, or interest, in addressing the emotional aspects of the student life, and

aim at helping to develop a way of understanding and managing those emotive experiences.

Social-emotional learning.

The concept of social-emotional learning is relatively new to education. Books such as, "Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators", co-authored by members of an association titled *Research and Guidelines Committee of the Collaborative for the Advancement of Social and Emotional Learning* (CASEL) in 1997, highlight the more recent need to address the more immaterial experiences of life in school curriculum. Social and emotional learning is defined as the "ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems, and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development" (Elias, 1997, p. 2), and explicitly draws from Daniel Goleman's articulation of emotional intelligence. The intention in teaching social-emotional competencies is, partly, to balance the over-emphasized rationalist qualities of public education, and in doing so, to teach students to "be good citizens with positive values and to interact effectively and behave constructively" (p. 2). These affective goals suggest a particular end of education that is purposed around being and becoming a certain type of person, which can be limited or inhibited by experience of suffering. The value of suffering is only as effective as it is able to lead one to learn how to manage one's experiences – outside of this, suffering may be considered useless.

Emotion regulation.

Opinions concerning the role and significance of emotions has been slightly polarizing throughout history, with some believing them to be "troublesome deviations from proper functioning" and others viewing them as an essential aspect of our intuition (Gross, 1998b, p. 271). Gross catalogues these historical opinions of emotions in much of his work regarding

emotion-regulation. He defines emotion-regulation as the "processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" (p. 275). While the particular practice of emotion-regulation might vary, it is its inclusion in education that demonstrates an ongoing interest in the emotional-lives of students. For example, Jacobs and Gross (2014) contend that nearly all educational situations that involve emotion, whether it be the "excitement or terror of making new friends" or the "anxiety at achieving good grades," might be "understood more fully by adopting an emotion regulation framework" (p. 189). Despite this broad advice for the inclusion of emotion regulation, specific practices such as "emotion regulation questionnaires about test-taking" have been implemented in classrooms to begin addressing the emotional disturbance experienced around testing (p. 194). Similarly, "emotion regulation goals" are being used in classrooms are being used to help students self-regulate their experiences, and the corresponding emotions. The tool of emotion-regulation has drawn the interest of today's educational context, where the significance of emotions has become increased.

The implications of studying emotional geographies.

The concept of emotional geographies, as defined earlier, is a less-developed educational concept, The implications of this concept are being explored as a more metaphysical understanding of how emotions play a role in the physical space of a classroom. Hargreaves (2001), drawing upon the work of Davidson, Smith and Bondi, proposes that "teaching and learning are not only concerned with knowledge, cognition and skill"; rather, they are likewise "emotional practices" (p. 1056). His article "Emotional Geographies in Teaching" explores the concept of space as related to emotion with data drawn from interviews

conducted with 53 Canadian elementary and secondary teachers. His study found that five key

themes were prevalent to the discussion of emotional geographies in classrooms, including: (1)

sociocultural distance (2) moral distance (3) professional distance (4) physical distance, and (5)

political distance. Each of these distances related to the concept of emotion, where a teacher

must emotionally navigate the space of education. For example, the concept of "sociocultural

distance" was identified as a theme given the increasing numbers of students who "belong to

culture that are different from and unfamiliar to those of their teachers" (p. 1062). The

repercussions of this reality might include a need for increasing "emotional understanding" in

order to "bridge the sociocultural gap" between teacher and students' families. Further,

Hargreaves highlights the concept of "moral distance" suggesting that "emotions are moral

phenomena" (p. 1066). In teaching and learning, the conflicting opinions concerning the

purpose of education causes emotional disturbance that must be negotiated, often occurring

during "teachers' interactions with parents" (p. 1067). This moral distance teaches us how to

learn from others who are different. The concept of emotional geographies is helpful in

recognizing the space that emotions occupy in classrooms.

The Educational Value of Suffering

In attempting to explore the potential educational value of suffering, it may be helpful

to synthesize the previous sections which outlined the complicated definition of suffering, the

historical movement away from traditionalist education model towards a more progressivist,

happy form of education, and the manifestations of that progressivist view in education today.

Each of these ideas has contributed to a larger narrative concerning the relationship between

emotionality and the value of suffering in education. The complex nature of human emotions is

matched by its complex integration into contemporary education, and the following explores

how this complexity may reveal the advantages and disadvantages of the emotional view of

suffering.

The discussion of emotions.

It must be stated that the introduction of discussing emotions in education has inherent

value. In recognizing the emotional aspect of a student's life, contemporary education has

attempted to respond to a historically ignored aspect of the human self. Integrating the

concepts of emotion regulation, emotional geographies, and socio-emotional learning, into

Western education has certainly changed the nature of schooling today. The value of this

change may be in its attempt to explore more holistic forms of education, where traditional

forms of education have been largely associated with the previously explored concepts within

the materialist and rationalist views. The inclusion of emotion language and practice of schools

has informed several generations of students that their emotion-state is important and

valuable. This importance includes experiences of suffering, where student trauma, discomfort,

and all ranges of emotional disturbance are being attended to in multiple ways. It may be said,

then, that the educational significance of suffering is found in an increasing willingness to look

at the suffering itself, through an emotional lens. The experience of emotional suffering is no

longer disregarded as having no value, but it is the experience itself that implies value –

because, any emotion regarded as suffering may now be addressed in a formal educational

setting. For example, teachers respond to the emotional-needs of students in potentially

educationally beneficial and non-beneficial ways. When a student becomes frustrated, most

educators attend to that student, who is now regarded as demonstrating a need. That need

may be satisfied with the help of the teacher, in both small and large ways. In particular, the

specific aim to help students regulate their emotions has led to many studies highlighting the

need for education to address the rising emotional disturbances of anxiety, despair, depression,

etc., occurring among students today. Contemporary education has taken on this role,

recognizing that experiences of suffering, as emotionally-viewed, require attention and action.

This is valuable, as previously noted, because it acknowledges that students are emotional-

beings, and that their daily education experiences highly involve their emotionality.

Caring and suffering.

The concept of caring, as previously addressed through the work of Nel Noddings, is

similarly discussed in the work of Katie Eriksson. Where Noddings denied the value of suffering

as an educational experience, instead suggesting that care ethics are preferable ideology for

teaching instruction, Eriksson (1992) articulated a more complex argument in her article, "The

Alleviation of Suffering – The Idea of Caring". Working in the Department of Caring Science, as a

pioneer for caring science, Eriksson suggested that "suffering is the most important basic

category of all caring" (p. 119) and where Noddings (2003) might respond that if we "give

suffering a 'place of honor,' we may contribute to its occurrence and continuance," it may be

that acknowledging the value of suffering, as important for caring, does not imply that we seek

it out. Eriksson confronted the more complex aspects of Noddings' ethics of care by proposing

that "caring science does not deny the presence of suffering, even though it aims at soundness

and health; suffering is the point from which it begins" (p. 119). Here, the idea is that "suffering

is the deepest, most tacit and most naked mode of the human being" (p. 119) and it might be

suggested, then, that education need not dismiss this aspect of the human being, but through

acknowledging it, may find ways to value it. Eriksson advanced the practice of care ethics, writing that the "alleviation of suffering has always been a cornerstone of caring" and that our ability to alleviate human suffering "depends on our ability encounter our own suffering" (p. 122). Just as education has begun to encounter the ways in which students experience emotions, so too must it, through those emotion states, encounter suffering, in order to seek its educational value.

The labor of learning.

Avi Mintz's works are essential in exploring the relationship between emotionality and suffering. Specifically, he focuses his attention on the progressivist notion that, in education, emotions play a role, which should not be overlooked. He suggests, as previously discussed, that there is some form of "labor in learning," using various examples, including that of Japanese classrooms, where students acknowledge that learning includes emotional dissonance. He writes about a struggling student, in the context of a Japanese elementary mathematics classroom, who is placed, by the teacher, in front of their peers to demonstrate his insufficient understanding. Mintz describes that to many, this scene may seem abusive, if not severely damaging to the student's emotional well-being, especially when the "teacher failed to offer general emotional support" (2008, p. 68). What this scene is intended to demonstrate is the role that emotions must play in the educational value of suffering. They exist as an essential aspect of the learning process, but are still regarded as something to overcome.

The Progressivist View

The progressivist view demonstrates a movement away from the materialist and rationalist perspectives, which both aim to eliminate any form of suffering in the learning experience. Suffering, in these views, must be eradicated, or eliminated, because it provides no positive benefit for education. Progressivists acknowledge that the phenomenon suffering is an aspect of the human experience, appreciating its purpose in moving each person forward to the success of learning. Emotions play a role in this movement, highlighting a certain disturbance one experiences when one is faced with the challenge of learning. For progressivists, this is a sign post of learning, where some negative emotions are inevitable, if not useful for the motivation of understanding. Therefore, the progressivist does mark an advance, or an interesting move beyond the rationalist view, but it remains stuck in a view that sees emotional suffering as something that needs to be overcome. The progressive views lacks the vision to see beyond eliminating negative emotions, and misses being able to capture the nuance and complexity of the role of suffering, as a permanent and valuable role, in learning, in both process and outcome.

In discussing the emotive view of suffering, it has been shown that an increasing interest and dedication to understanding the role of emotions in learning has taken place in contemporary education. Progressivist theories show concern for the emotional-aspect of the student, where a desire, and tendency, to alleviate suffering has been the aim of educators. Experiences of suffering are acknowledged, but are swiftly determined as something detrimental to the learning process; therefore, certain educational practices are aimed at alleviating those experiences. While the progressivist view does not look to eliminate

experiences of suffering, avoiding them through means of intervention in various forms like the material and rational views, the emotionalist view looks at the experience of suffering as something natural, and a normal part of the human experience, but also looks to overcome it through various practices. Thus, it may be said that this continuing acknowledgement of emotional experiences allows for suffering to maintain some educational value, yet, it remains an experience that is seen as counter-educational, like the materialist and rationalist views before it. The emotional view of suffering moves towards recognizing its value, drawing close to it by accepting it as natural part of existence. But, the emotional view of suffering continues to present a distorted or partial view of its significance, focusing mostly on the ways in which pain and suffering impede or obstruct learning, or threaten emotional health and well-being. By way of the progressivist movement, emotionality in education idealizes happiness in ways that occlude the inevitability of suffering in human experience, thus foreclosing opportunities to reflect on how suffering may provide opportunities for learning. Instead, the student who maintains high self-esteem, and who is happy, may be better enabled to learn and to acquire knowledge. This is a similar goal from the spiritual view, which will be subsequently explored, and demonstrates that, while education says little in regard to the spiritual aspect of the self, there is an implied need in the spiritual practices that have been secularized for the purposes of education.

The Spiritual View

Another aspect of the human self that has been overlooked in exploring the educational value of suffering is the spiritual. Like the emotional-self, there has been less explicit attention paid to the spiritual-self, and this section will explore the value of suffering in education,

through the lens of spiritual education. More recent research shows that there is a rise in spiritual education, but that it remains lacking in analysis (Carr, 1996; Vokey, 2003). Both authors note that spiritual education challenges the notion of rationalism, a dominant ideology of modern education, and that the recent renewal of spiritual education provides new dialogue for understanding the educative value of suffering, not as something to be eliminated, as seen through the medical, material view, or as avoidable, as seen through the rational, immaterial view. Instead, the discussion of the spiritual dimension of suffering challenges the rationalist and materialist perspectives in some ways, but certain spiritual practices in education also remain in the grip of certain assumptions about pain as an impediment to learning, and thus obscure a more positive view of the educational potential and value of suffering.

The spiritual dimension of human existence is a contentious or controversial paradigm in educational theory and practice. The landscape of North American discourse on spirituality draws up familiar images of polarized political parties. One way in which this polarization is reflected is via conflicts between religious conservatives and secular liberals -- with liberals criticizing staunch conservative religious ideals seemingly designed to restrict, control, and repress, while conservatives correspondingly condemning liberals for their permissive, immoral, unprincipled and unvirtuous attitudes and behaviors. But the spiritual dimension of suffering can also be viewed from perspectives other than those provided by established religion. For example, for some, spirituality conjures thoughts of New-Ageism, with practices such as meditation and yoga detaching from their spiritual roots in Buddhism and other religious traditions. Such secularized conceptions of spirituality are often mobilized as devices of self-care or self-prescribed psycho-care. Spirituality, in its historical and traditional form, has been

set aside in education the name of secularism; but, like the increase of attention to emotions in education, certain practices are addressing the spiritual self, yet cannot fully be actualized given the limitations of including a religious or spiritual aspect.

A context for spiritual education.

The following accounts for the wider context for spiritual education, briefly noting how secularism has influenced education, and how there has been a recent change in the educational climate for spiritual learning and teaching.

Secularism.

The historical movement away from spirituality, from organized religion, to more individualized notions of spirituality, may be best explored through an understanding of secularism. Most broadly, secularism's principle objective is the separation between "state and religion" (Maclure, 2011, p. 3). Secularism is an assumed need in a democratic state, especially to promote "neutral or impartial [stances] in its relations with the different faiths" of its citizens (p. 9). Dobbelaere (2002) describes secularization as a "manifest process" wherein the "polity, in conflict with the churches, emancipates instructions that have long been under the influence of religion" (p. 13). In education, a particular secularization occurred during the early 20th century, modelled by the work of Emile Durkheim, a seminal French sociologist, whose work was aimed at "develop[ing] a national system of secular education" and whose ideas "triumphed in the écoles normales" (p. 19). The *laicization* (freedom from ecclesiastical control) of education was furthered spurred on by political actors, such as Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, who upheld the goal to separate the school from the church. This secularization resulted in, as Dobbelaere explains, "changes in social control from moral or religious to technical and

bureaucratic control" (p. 33). With education secularized, the role of spirituality becomes an

issue of one's private life, and education takes no responsibility for teaching spiritual values.

Therefore, when experiences of suffering arise, the potential value of spiritual practices,

especially when they relate to organized religion, is overlooked.

   Spiritual education.

   Several authors are both acknowledging the lack of, and advocating for greater inclusion

of spiritual education in the "curricula of public schools" (Vokey, 2003, p. 168). Instead of using

the language of religious organizations, these authors are using more generalized, less

particular, language to propose greater spiritual education in schools today. Spirituality is

thought to be a neglected aspect of student learning; certainly, this is in the recourse of the

secularization of education, but Vokey notes that this is also due to a "perceived absence of

higher purposes for school learning" (p. 168). Parker Palmer (2004) affirms this absence of

purpose by suggesting that there is a "hidden wholeness" that is not pursued, often leading to a

divided and painful existence (p. 4). Palmer notes that this divided life is the result of being

"removed from the truth we hold within" and that we might be reminded of our wholeness by

"embracing brokenness as an integral part of life" (p. 4, p. 5). Palmer encourages exploring life

as a holistic, and spiritual experience, where suffering may not be viewed as something to be

eliminated, avoided, or managed; rather, it is beneficial because it is a human reality.

Spiritual Practices in Education (A Critique)

   The following outlines several forms of spiritual practices education, all with the

expressed intention of attending to both the emotional and spiritual experiences of suffering.

Similar to the practices of self- and emotional-regulation, these educational trends tend to

promote a greater awareness of the emotive and spiritual self, as well as re-balance the

tendency towards rationalistic approaches to learning and teaching. While their inclusion and

adoption in public education has grown significantly, their benefits and limitations must be

explored in order to understand their value in addressing experiences of suffering. The

practices of mindfulness, meditation and yoga, are aimed at accepting the value of experiences

of suffering, which is a movement towards a certain form of valuing experiences of suffering.

Yet, there remain some disadvantages, and certain pitfalls to the inclusion of spiritual practices

that are guised as secular.

Mindfulness.

One of the most well-known practices, and trendy words, of our current time is

mindfulness. Jon Kabat-Zinn's secularized meditation has become increasingly well-known, and

well-used, and public schools across North America have started implementing various forms of

mindfulness practices to address more holistic education aims. Mindfulness is most commonly

defined as the English translation of the word *sati*, drawn from Buddha's teaching language,

and is intended to suggest "particular qualities of attention and awareness" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003,

p. 145). Drawn from the 2,500 year-old wisdom of Buddhist tradition, mindfulness is described

as the heart of Buddhist meditation, and is the "core teaching . . . constitut[ing] the foundation

upon which all . . . various forms and traditions rest" (p. 146). The practice itself rests on an

ethical foundation, sharing the expressed purpose of "non-harming" in learning to understand

how "unexamined behaviors" and the "untrained mind" can "contribute directly to human

suffering" (p. 146). Kabat-Zinn writes that the intervention needed to be "free of the cultural,

religious, and ideological factors" most commonly associated with Buddhism. His intention was

to design a practice that would "relieve suffering at the levels of both body and mind" (p. 148).

While denying that mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) can be reduced to a "clinical

algorithm" (p. 145), Kabat-Zinn notes that the practice or performance of mindfulness is not

just a series of techniques, rather, mindfulness "develops and deepens" over time with "on-

going commitment…[and] cultivation" (p. 148). The practice itself rests on an ethical

foundation, sharing the expressed purpose of "non-harming" in learning to understand how

"unexamined behaviors" and the "untrained mind" can "contribute directly to human

suffering" (p. 146). He describes MBSR, his main program development of mindfulness in 1979,

as a "vehicle for the relief of suffering," with experiences not being avoided or denied, instead,

being welcomed with an "intentional openhearted presence" and "suspension of judgement

and distraction" (p. 148). More specifically, the goal of mindfulness is to "calm and clarify the

mind, open the heart, and refine attention and action" for "potential transmutation of . . .

suffering" (p. 146). Siegel, Siegel and Parker (2016) suggest that mindfulness, as part of

"'internal education'" allows for this non-judgment to be a precursor for acceptance and that

"[b]eing in a mindful state can allow you and your students to be 'aware of what's happening as

it's happening'" (p. 47).

How did it get to education?

The use of mindfulness in psychotherapy has a developed history originating with Jon

Kabat-Zinn's development of programs such as *MBCT*, Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy

and *MBSR,* Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction in 1979 while being considered the "foremost

pioneer in the therapeutic application of mindfulness" (Siegel, Germer & Olendzki, p. 19).

Therapeutic mindfulness is thus redefined for the purpose of "awareness of present

experience, with acceptance" (p. 19) with the addition of acceptance being primary for

therapists whose goal is to provide care for patients who are confronting painful life

experiences and situations. The clinical use of mindfulness seems designed for the purpose of

relieving experiences of suffering, such as stress, pain and illness. Its use in education appears

to be similar. Recent research, measuring the efficacy of mindfulness, was assumed to show

that "mindfulness practices may have important developmental benefits for sharpening

concentration skills or building emotion regulation skills" (Schwimmer & McDonough,

forthcoming). These outcomes are valuable and worthwhile, and given that public educators

may not implement practices of religious or spiritual nature, it would seem appropriate to

secularize a method such as mindfulness if its effective use is to promote greater overall health

and learning for students. Schools across North America, such as those in Portland, Oregon,

who have adopted the use of *Peace in Schools*, a mindfulness-based program created by a Zen

Buddhist practicing woman, are choosing to deliberately involve students in a spiritual tradition

for the purpose of self-regulation, wellness, tolerance, etc. The movement of emotional

learning has been aided by practices such as MBSR in the context of education, where programs

such as MindUp, and L2B, are regularly being practiced in classrooms and schools today.

   MindUp.

   MindUp is a curricular based program, developed by those in fields of affective studies,

and informed by the experience of educators and students who participated in trials of the

program. In accepting the need for education-based practices of mindfulness, several experts

assembled a program with the purpose of developing "mindfulness attention awareness

practices" (Maloney, Lawlor, Schonert-Reichl, & Whitehead, 2016, p. 313). MindUp includes

three unique age-appropriate versions at grades K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. Lesson plans are designed for

teaching the essential skills of mindfulness, including "practicing perspective-taking, optimism"

and improving socio-emotional skill such as "self-regulation," "attention regulation," and

"inhibitory control" (p. 316). In accepting the emotional self, the MindUp curriculum, primarily

used in North American schools, aims to promote "improved prosociality, increased well-being,

improved stress physiology, improved school success" (p. 316). The authors of this evaluative

article document several of their studies to determine the efficacy of the MindUp program,

with findings suggesting that the program has offered several key benefits to Canadian students

grades 4-7, including, "increased mindful awareness; improved social and emotional

competencies; increased proficiency in EF; better relationships with teachers and peers;

improved academic achievement and engagement; and improved psychological and

physiological well-being" (p. 326).

　　　L2B (Learning to Breathe).

　　　A similar educational program, Learning2Breathe, is based on principles derived from

the MBSR and designed to "increase emotion regulation, stress management, compassion, and

executive functions in order to promote well-being and support learning" (Broderick & Metz,

2016, p. 361). The thematic teaching can be adapted to diverse student populations where the

BREATHE acronym is taught to meet the specific needs of the learners. In particular, the rise of

issues of anxiety and depression in today's typically developing adolescents is regarded as an

issue that can be mediated with social emotional learning in the school setting. L2B responds to

that needs by accepting that human experiences of emotion must be acknowledged and

managed by "supporting the inner work of adolescents through mindfulness" (p. 376).

Transcendental Meditation Practice.

A niche form of mindfulness is being practiced in San Francisco's school system, titled

the "Quiet Time Program", otherwise referred to as "Transcendental Meditation Practice"

(Travis, 2016, p. 76). Linked to enhancing human development, the practice of Transcendental

Meditation includes "techniques [that] investigate consciousness from different angles and are

associated with different patterns of brain activation" (Travis, 2014, p. 1). The purpose of these

techniques, and their investigation of consciousness, is to developed "focused attention and

open monitoring" for the development of "cognitive and affective skills" that become "available

to deal with challenges in daily life" (p. 1). This expressed purpose of managing the difficult

experiences of life is coupled with the aim to achieve transcendence, not by force or focused

intention, but by the "natural tendency of the mind" to automatically reach transcendence

while disappearing in the practice (p. 3). Education has adopted this practice in an effort to help

students who suffer from challenges such as attention-deficit disorder, anxiety, and to promote

an increased capacity for resilience, general intelligence, and higher-order thinking (Travis,

2016, p. 75-76).

Each of these approaches to including some form of spirituality into education seems to

attempt to find value in suffering by learning how to manage it. Mindfulness, as a method of

intervention, is intended to help to overcome the challenges associated with pain, suffering,

trauma, or emotional distress. The practice of mindfulness maintains the goal of awareness, in

order for possible improvement of life experiences, and the lessening of suffering.

Yoga in education

With an estimated fifteen million Americans practicing regularly, most North Americans,

and likely almost all urban dwellers, would be able to identify the modern practice of yoga, in

its various forms (Chapple, 2008, p. 71). Originating in India, and practiced there for nearly

2,500 years, yoga was introduced to the Western world in the 1900s due to its more physical

advantages attracting the attention of those whose aim was to "gain a healthy body" (Hoyez,

2007, p. 2007). Primarily holding a corporeal goal, yoga gained followers in the Western world.

Its introduction into education might be ascribed to "government initiatives aimed at educating

the 'whole child'" (Khalsa & Butzer, 2016, p. 46), where yoga's "holistic system of practices" (p.

46) were appropriately aligned to the goals of "school-based social-emotional initiatives"

(Butzer, Bury, Telles & Khalsa, 2016, p. 4). Khalsa and Butzer (2016) identify several

organizations that have supported these initiatives including the Garrison Institute, the

Association for Mindfulness in Education, the International Association for School Yoga and

Mindfulness, and the Yoga Service Council, all of whose goal was to address the perceived need

for "techniques to facilitate the development of social-emotional competencies, such as stress

management and self-regulation" (Butzer, Bury, Telles & Khalsa, 2016, p. 4). Across North

America "three dozen [yoga] programs [are] currently being implemented . . . in over 900

schools" demonstrating both its popularity as well as its perceived efficacy.

Most commonly aligned with goals of social-learning, school-based yoga programmes

have developed rapidly and educational research continues to study this phenomenon. Butzer,

Bury, Telles and Khalsa note four categories of hypothesized improvement in their review of

"existing research on the promising effects of school-based yoga interventions" (p. 8). In the

area of improved mind-body awareness, the authors note that "school-based yoga

interventions [are likely to] enhance healthy behaviors and outcomes through students'

embodied experience" (p. 9). In the area of self-regulation, the authors note that emerging

"neurological evidence" demonstrates the "role of contemplative practices in improving stress

management and self-regulation" (p. 9). In the area of improved physical fitness, the authors

note that ongoing research shows enhanced physical fitness in the areas of "respiratory

function, increased exercise adherence . . . [and] reduced obesity risk factors" (p. 9). More

specifically, the authors note that some studies show that yoga is "sometimes better than

standard physical exercise" and that certain yoga postures "may have unique effects on

psychosocial well-being" (p. 9). And, finally, in the area of improved "behaviors, mental state,

health and performance" the authors highlight several studies that demonstrate the

improvement of student performance, such as "academic achievement, classroom behavior . . .

[and] cognitive functioning" due to yoga-based education programs (p. 10).

Similar to the practices of mindfulness, yoga incorporates a more corporeal dimension

that looks to use the bodily movements as a way of integrating a holistic approach to improving

the quality of life. With the integration of yoga into education, it would seem that the same

assumptions about pain and suffering are incorporated. Suffering is regarded as a natural

human experience, but the practices of mindfulness and yoga are aimed at transcending and

controlling experiences.

Benefits and Limitations

Educators, and the system of education, are attempting to respond to something

greater about human existence and are looking for ways in which to address the emotional and

spiritual dimensions of the human self, while challenging materialist and rationalist views. As

such, contemplative practices, like mindfulness, have found their way into the education

system, as an attempt to attend to the more immaterial aspects of both teachers and students

alike. Each of the previously described educational programs aims to address the persistent

issue of mind/body dualism, by focusing on the more emotive and spiritual aspects of

experiences. As a result of this focus, certain educational benefits are being witnessed and

studied, where the acknowledgement of experiences of suffering, and the corresponding

practices to alleviate that suffering, are proving effective. Yet, in the attempt to alleviate

suffering, it may be that some learning and knowledge is being overlooked because the goal

continues to be the avoidance, if not eradication, or pain and suffering. The following addresses

the benefits and limitations of the emotional and spiritual views of suffering.

Benefits.

Firstly, there is clearly a concern for practices, in education, to address emotional and

spiritual suffering. Countless studies are highlighting the significant impact of practices, such as

mindfulness, on student anxiety, depression, social skills, among others. For example, Butzer,

Bury, Telles and Khalsa's (2014) study titled "Implementing yoga within the school curriculum: a

scientific rationale for improving social-emotional learning and positive student outcomes"

accounts for more than forty unique studies that aim to address the feasibility, efficacy or

impact of programs such as mindfulness, meditation, yoga, etc. The authors address the need

for continuing research given that "research on school-based yoga is in its infancy" with "most

existing studies [being] preliminary and . . . of low to moderate methodological quality" (p. 3).

Despite this early research, it is revealed that there is an important change in education

occurring, where the acceptance of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual self are becoming of increasing priority. As such, experiences of suffering, a more accepted reality from the emotive and spiritual view, are being managed with various practices and through various forms. It might also be suggested that this increase in well-being practices in education reveal that educators alike are in need of holistic-care, given that "5400 instructors [have been] trained by these programs to offer yoga in educational settings" (Khalsa & Butzer, 2016, p. 46). Secondly, it might be said that these educational practices benefit the system of education by broadening the aims of education to something beyond the material and the rational. As demonstrated by the description of the spiritual-self, and the heritage of mindfulness/yoga being spiritual in essence, it would seem that modern education is looking outward to find something spiritually satisfying, in order to transcend the practical suffering of the everyday material and immaterial world. The example of Transcendent Meditation offers an account of a practice that seeks to transcend real-life experiences and to mediate experiences of suffering through a traditionally spiritual practice.

Limitations.

Firstly, while there is growing interest in education to promote and enhance more holistic aims, such as emotion-regulation, emotional-awareness, a sense of the inner self, etc., there is a concealed New Ageism that hides in the shadows (Schwimmer & McDonough, forthcoming). In particular, the co-optation of meditative practices, in the various forms of mindfulness (and other related practices), and yoga, is concealed by the educational aim of providing "nurturing environments where children can learn to know themselves, discover what are their interests and where teachers address each students' personal needs" (p. 19). By

detaching these meditative practices from their traditional and historical roots, and by

secularizing them for educational purposes, the consideration of long-term effects and from

understanding "what it means to educate a human being" are being concealed. McDonough

and authors highlight three necessary considerations in reviewing the practices of mindfulness,

as a form of New Ageism, in education. Firstly, the authors point out New Ageism's

"introspective conception of personal growth" referring to the work of Carl Rogers who

popularized the notion of " 'full potential'" which was adopted into popular education where

teachers are intended to help students "develop a more authentic form of life by exploring and

being more in touch with ones emotions and true inner Self" (p. 18-19). Secondly, New Ageism

endorses a "strong reliance on healing techniques as educational tools" that help them to reach

that full potential (p. 17) by "introducing students to a variety of moral, religious and spiritual

traditions, without encouraging students to endorse any particular tradition" (p. 9). Thirdly, the

authors note a certain independent-nature of the inclusion of New Ageist practices, that

includes a "certain entrepreneurial dimension" where students are encouraged to "take control

and responsibility for who they are" and promoting a certain way of educating the future

generations of citizens (p. 19). These considerations, for the purposes of this thesis, are not

intended to be either good or bad, but, rather, point to ideas that are concealed with the

adoption of practices, such as mindfulness and yoga, and which educational philosophers

continue to question and critic given the increasing, and possibly naïve, inclusion of these

practices in today's education system.

While the research of mindfulness, meditation, and yoga programs suggest an increase

in selflessness, compassion, and tolerance (Kaplan, 2006; Gawande, 2004), it might be said that

these educational practices endorse a type of learning that highlights the individual as chief

priority. This relates to McDonough et al.'s consideration of the "entrepreneurial dimension" of

New Ageist practices, where students are being encouraged to self-focus, a similar objective to

the progressivist goal of happy and satisfied students. It is possible that while we are helping

our students overcome serious conditions, such as anxiety, depression, and suicide-ideation, we

are paradoxically teaching them that their individual needs are of highest importance. This

continues to perpetuate a competitive, individualistic form of education, and these competing

ideologies may be more confusing than helpful for students.

"Educating Spirituality"

The following includes brief accounts of more nuanced spiritual education, where

prescribed practices are not present, but the inclusion of spiritual language and a sense of

spiritual being might be a cornerstone for spiritual education and teaching.

Spiritual connection in education.

Palmer's "To Know as We are Known" (1993) describes education as a spiritual journey,

whereby students and educators join together to form a community of trust, truth, love and

hope. This form of spiritual education is purposed towards connection between "knowers" and

that knowledge is derived through relationship with others. Palmer's essential concern is that

education has lost this type of spiritual connection that is necessary for the truest form of

knowing. He describes this aspect of the self as the "inner landscape" (1998, p. 4) which must

be reflected upon both individually, and more importantly, communally. His chapter entitled

"To Teach is to Create a Space" (1993) describes the key characteristics of a learning space

where students are invited into an environment of trust, where authentic and true education

can take place. Palmer identifies "openness, boundaries and an air of hospitality" as "essential dimensions" to a learning space (p. 71). Each facilitates education purposed to whole-person education where truth is central to the educational experience.

Spiritual connection and suffering.

This form of knowing in spiritual being and connection is described as "undivided" (Palmer, 1998, p. 11); undivided in the sense that it does not fragment the individual by conceiving of it in terms of physical or metaphysical, material or immaterial, rather, it is holistic. The holism of life's experiences must include the spiritual dimensions of the self if the value of suffering is to be discovered. Palmer (2004) suggests several ideas for how one might embrace spiritual connection and learning. Firstly, he highlights the notion that we must paradoxically explore life's experiences through a "solitary journey" as well as in a "real form of community" (p. 11). This paradox suggests that we experience the world as individuals, but always in relationship to each other. Our spiritual connection might help us to interpret our experiences, both personally and corporately. Secondly, Palmer notes certain preparations that must be consistently and continually sought in adopting an ideology and ontology that includes spirituality. These suggestions are both practical, defining "clear limits" (p. 73) and finding "skilled leadership" (p. 75), as well as ideological, establishing "common ground" (p. 80) and cultivating "graceful ambiance" (p. 84). This view of spiritual education does not look to eliminate or manage experiences of suffering; rather, it is a nuanced and complex view that seeks to establish connection to oneself and to others, in order that wholeness might be recovered. The reconciliation of oneself to the spiritual aspects of life may be helpful in discovering the educational value of suffering.

Vokey (2003) affirms this notion of common connection by calling upon Postman's idea

of narrative, and endorsing the view that a shared narrative provides meaning, and that

spiritual connection might infuse contemporary education with a greater sense of meaning.

When suffering is purposed to some greater goal of education, the meaning of that suffering

might be discovered and valued. Vokey points to necessary changes in education, such as the

"articulat[ing] a new world-view" (p. 174), "demonstrate[ing] that spiritual education 'works'"

(p. 175), and a personal attention to "our own spiritual development in the academy" (p. 176),

all which might move education towards learning that suffering has educational value.

Conclusion

The role of emotions and spirituality in education has grown significantly in

response to materialist and rationalist forms of teaching. These aspects of the self are being

acknowledged in schools today, with various practices demonstrating a wide-spread initiative of

helping students manage their experiences of suffering. The secularization of education has

dismissed any account of the role of the human spirit in the process of learning and growth,

yet, it might be shown that certain spiritual education has started being introduced into

contemporary education through practices, such as mindfulness, yoga, and transcendent

meditation have resulted in specific educational benefits and limitations. Further, the

emotional and spiritual view of suffering continue to point to a deeper and more complex need

among students. The educational value of suffering must be acknowledged as an experience

that requires deep consideration. It might be concluded that the emotional and spiritual views

of suffering acknowledge these experiences as natural, and potentially unavoidable, but the

educational value is found in the discovery of practices of management. The examples of

teaching emotional-regulation, socio-emotional literacy, mindfulness practices, and yoga, all

demonstrate the acknowledgement of human suffering, with the aim to relieve it by finding

ways of management. It might be said that the educational value of suffering, from the

emotional and spiritual view, is when one is able to learn how to manage the experience of

suffering itself. Yet, there are authors who recognize a less practical, more holistic spiritual

education that embraces suffering in education, without discounting any aspect of the self;

rather, by exploring the fullness of human experience.

Chapter 5: Approaches to Embrace Suffering in Education

This final chapter explores new approaches to embracing experiences of suffering as

educationally valuable, building upon the previous discussion of emotions and spirituality in

education. While these two views offered helpful insights into how experiences of suffering

might be educationally valuable, the ways in which they continue to reduce suffering to an

experience that must be managed, fails to capture the most full and most captivating

dimensions of educational value in suffering. Instead of avoiding, or managing, suffering, as is

the case with the materialist, rationalist, emotional and spiritual, these new approaches extend

beyond the previous notions of suffering, instead, offering as view that sees suffering as

valuable for learning.

Three different approaches to conceptualizing the educative role of suffering will be

explored, but the introduction and summarization of these approaches can only account for a

tentative and preliminary discussion of views that, I argue, deserve greater attention and

research. The first approach is drawn from the works of Martin Heidegger, whose concept of

being and becoming may help to explore the value of suffering. Heidegger's philosophies, and

specifically that of being and becoming, explore how our very existence calls us to learn. This type of learning through experience can also be captured through the concept of tacit knowing - where the fullness of knowing is explored through experience. The educational implication of *being* and *becoming*, as well as tacit knowing, allows for experiences of suffering to be embraced as a way of learning. The second approach I will discuss understands suffering as a way of learning attention. Being attentive, often associated with the focusing of the mind, is alternatively viewed in this section as a way of becoming attuned. Instead of a controlling of the mind, this form of attention is more accepting, like holding one's arms open, instead of tightening the grip. Situated in the work of Simone Weil, this type of attention to suffering provides educational value and might be actualized in the pedagogical practice of silence. Finally, the third approach is helpful in recognizing suffering as an opportunity to embrace ethical responsibility. This more humanistic approach is explored where our relationship to the world, and to others, offers educational significance when we respond to the suffering we see. Certain pedagogies, with an ethical orientation, are being implemented in schools today, such as a pedagogy of discomfort, and a pedagogy of unknowing, which illustrate a humanistic response to suffering. Each of these approaches provides a more complex, less simplistic, way of viewing suffering, acknowledging its inseparability from human experience, and embracing it, instead of controlling, or avoiding it.

Suffering as a way of *being* and *becoming*

Martin Heidegger might be characterised as a "neglected figure in the field of philosophy of education", yet his contribution to the field by way of phenomenology and existentialism are helpful in approaching the question of suffering's educational value (Peters,

2009, p. 1). Specifically, it is Heidegger's clarification of the role of education that is most helpful in elucidating the role of suffering. It was his belief that "what we call education is properly or authentically a formation of the human character that is guided by a principle/ground" – which he referred to as "*being-human*" (Brook, 2009, p. 50). Education, in Heideggerean language, is a "leading the whole human back to who we are, or, a becoming truly human"(p. 50). Heidegger affirmed the etymological view of education as a leading forth, a call to both formation and transformation (p. 51). More specifically, Heidegger's ontological theories of *being* and *becoming* are helpful in exploring the phenomenon of suffering and its value for our learning. *Being*, or *Das Sein*, for Heidegger, was understood as something that went beyond the general way of viewing being as "beingness, the essential characteristics of being . . . which have been investigated by traditional metaphysics" (Heidegger, 2014, p. ix). Instead, Heidegger proposed viewing the phenomenon of *being* as a "happening, an originary event thanks to which beings as such become accessible and understandable" (p. x), sometimes referring to this being as "being as such" or "being itself." Thus, the translators of Heidegger's "Introduction to Metaphysics" point out that Heidegger understood *being* to be "essentially historical" (p. x). Heidegger's notion of *being* is important for the discussion of suffering's educational value because it is the combination of an individual's ontological, as well as epistemic, belief that seems to determine whether one believes suffering to have either educational purpose or educational uselessness. For example, as previously explored, those who believe human experience to be defined by the material world, the ontological assumption might be that we are material beings and our material essence is only as valuable as we can sustain physical health and well-being. Experiences of suffering threaten that being, and are

seen as something to be avoided or eliminated from the human experience. The immaterial, rationalist, interpretation of suffering similarly challenges the value of suffering, suggesting that the mind has ability to analyze, understand and control suffering, for the same purpose of elimination. Yet, in Heidegger's notion of *being*, we find something more nuanced and complex about human existence, and specifically experiences of suffering. *Being* points to a middle space, or a certain "middle voice" (Lewin, 2014, p. 359), where *being* can represent the past experiences as well as the present-self (hence, middle voice). Instead of believing existence to be either material or immaterial, past or present, Heidegger's notion of *being* suggests that we look at the mysterious middle space of our essence, the in between, the paradoxical, or the "space between activity and passivity" (p. 359). This is especially essential for understanding how the human response to suffering may be educationally valuable, because it aligns with the understanding that learning, or education, is a calling forth, not something that does or does not exist, not something that has or has not happened, but the potential of something, the potential of *being* through the transformative experience of learning. Our experiences of suffering are embraced in this ontological view, because all experiences help to shape who we are, and teach us about our humanity. *Being* and *becoming* are ways in which to consider how one exists, and how one will learn. *Being* includes a state of awareness, and it is this awareness that provides a way for understanding the potential educational significance of suffering.

This idea of *being* is built upon by Heidegger's concept of *becoming*, which is explained as a process defined by education's purpose itself, *formation*. This formation, as a vehicle for *becoming,* signifies "becoming truly human" which may be "thrown upon us," "taught to us," and that "must always be chosen by us" (p. 51). Education, according to Heidegger, should be

centrally purposed towards the goal of formation, where "transformation of the self can be

achieved by interrogating what we take for granted about our world and ourselves; by

challenging assumptions we make about them and have historically made" (Dall'Alba, 2009, p.

37). This challenging of assumptions might refer to the material and immaterial previously

outlined, that have determined how education has approached the phenomenon of suffering,

and has regarded experiences of suffering as useless for the educational purposes of control,

mastery, and reasoning. Heidegger's notion of becoming juxtaposes much of our current

educational practices, that are most often aimed at a decisive, objective and rationalist end

goal. If learning is becoming, then educational practices might become a way to balance these

somewhat opposing views of static versus non-static modes of learning. Formation, as

education, can be the vision *and* the movement, the *being* and the *becoming.*

Being and becoming in education.

What does being and becoming look like in education? And, how can it be helpful in

redeeming the value of suffering? Firstly, the concepts of being and becoming reveal a

dimension of the human experience that has long been overlooked by the rationalism,

empiricism, and objectivism, that is, the experience. Both being and becoming imply an action,

a behavior, an attitude, and a state of being that relies on the living out of human experience.

Therefore, traditionalist models of education cannot account for this form of learning, because

learning is contained within a narrow definition of prescribed and set learning where the

quantity of knowledge is appraised before the fullness of the learning experience. Heidegger's

being and becoming reveals that learning occurs when one is experiencing the world through

daily participation and interaction, which necessarily includes experiences of suffering, though

need not be limited to suffering alone. For example, when suffering is viewed as one 'node' in a

tangled network of experiential relationships – involving emotional, spiritual, physical/bodily,

and cognitive elements – then the idea of surgically hiving off the 'suffering' element, and then

subjecting it to rational control or elimination, is no longer viable. The medical view sees

suffering as a tumor that might be cleanly removed in order to restore a healthy body. From a

Heideggerian perspective, suffering might be viewed as a surgeon who, in trying to remove

unhealthy cells from the heart, ends up needing to remove the whole organ and much else. In

this case, the 'cure' for suffering in education might be worse than the original disease. The

Heideggerian view implies that such surgical approaches to suffering in education, and the

dualistic worldview that gives rise to such approaches, must be rejected in favor of an

alternative that views suffering as a necessary feature of human experience, and thus as a

phenomenon that must be taken into account as a potential contributor to learning.

Heidegger's notion of being and becoming best captures how suffering is not something to be

overcome or eliminated in order to learn and live, but is in a sense itself a necessary condition

of learning and growth. As such, its value needs to be recognized as such, even if it must also

be treated by the educator with great care and sensitivity to the complexity of human

experience.

   Tacit knowing.

   This form of experiential learning, inspired by Heidegger, was also espoused by

educational philosopher Michael Polanyi, who coined this form of knowledge *tacit knowing*.

Complementary to the notions of *being* and *becoming*, the concept of *tacit knowing* reinforces

the belief that one's experiences are a valuable aspect of one's education. As such, the

experience of suffering is educationally valuable because it is a part of one's experiences.

Contrary to traditionalist models of education, tacit knowing allows for all human experience to

be educational. This means that suffering might also be regarded as educational given that it is

a normal and natural human experience. Polanyi's tacit dimension suggests that we can learn

from suffering because it is an embedded aspect of our being.

Tacit knowing suggests that our life experiences are an embedded part of our learning

(Polanyi, 2002). In tacit knowing, we find a reconciled view of suffering, where our experiences

include our physicality, our rationalism, and the abstract qualities of emotion and spirituality, all

contributing to our growth and connection to learning. Our being, including our experiences,

draw us into some deeper awareness of knowledge, as Polanyi (2002) explains, "There are

things that we know, but cannot tell" (p. 239). Tacit knowledge suggests a form of learning that

transcends the conception of knowledge as purely physical, purely rational, or purely

emotional; rather, it is something complex and mysterious, and allows for suffering to teach,

instead of threaten. Polanyi discusses two basic forms of knowledge: (1) "knowing a thing by

attending to it", and (2) "knowing a thing by relying on our awareness of it for the purpose of

attending to an entity to which it contributes" (p. 240). This idea of attention will be later

explored, and is intimately connected to the idea of tacit experience and knowledge.

Embracing suffering, in this tacit way, may be most challenged by the context of our

current, postmodern education system. Teachers must account for the students' understanding

in observable, and assessable means. Society, and its various institutions, demands a certain

level of quantification of knowledge, in order that we can assess the value of that knowledge.

Tacit knowing, as a form of *being* and *becoming*, contrasts the traditional form of learning as

acquisition, instead proposing that the student become co-collaborator in the construction of

knowledge. To demonstrate this contrast, Bruce Torff (1999) proposes four models of students,

including: (1) "child as imitator" (2) "child as learner from didactic" (3) "child as thinker," and (4)

"child as collaborator" (p. 202). The former two models highlight the mechanistic view of

learner, where learning occurs by way of rote-memorization or imitation, and the latter two

highlight a more constructivist, tacit way of learning, where learning occurs by way of

"reflective thinking" and participation in collaborative activities. Tacit knowledge, in the

classroom, accounts for the individual experiences of learners, allowing the space for co-

constructed knowledge, and a sense of individual responsibility for learning. Further, the

educational value of suffering might be best realized through tacit knowing, as one is able to

recognize the value of experiences as a natural part of learning and growth.

Suffering as a way to learn attention.

A second positive value of suffering may lie in its ability to focus our attention.

Attention, often defined in education as a way of demonstrating focus, is alternatively

described as "suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty and ready" (Roberts, 2011, p.

324). This definition, both embodied and written by French philosopher, Simone Weil, sought

to advance the "potentially redemptive value of suffering in learning" by exploring the notion of

attention as more than focus cognition (Roberts, 2011, p. 317). Instead, the practice of

attention, for Weil, is the "underlying goal of all school study" and "developing our capacity for

attention is both an epistemological and a moral process" (p. 324-325). The epistemological

process refers to the applied effort of attention for the possibility of knowledge - as is the case

in "attempting to complete a task correctly" (p. 325). This process easily thwarts the goal of

learning, resulting in a physical response, when students "contract their brows, hold their breath, and stiffen their muscles" (p. 326). Weil rejects this exaggerated form of attention, suggesting that finding value through one's experiences cannot be achieved through physical force. Rather, the moral process refers to a less applied attention, where knowledge is acquired by waiting, and "coming to 'understand with our whole self the truths which are evident'" is the eventual outcome of attention (p. 326). This form of attention calls us to "watch and wait" (p. 327); we develop a keenness for understanding when we allow attention to find us. Weil includes spiritual tones to her understanding of attention, suggesting that "attention is the orientation of the soul to the Good (or God)" (Yoda, 2014, p. 6). The movement towards the *Good*, or God, as part of this form of attention, need not alienate or discriminate; rather, it might offer a way to understand an alternative form of attention, which may help in recognizing the educational value of suffering. Suffering, thus, can be seen as a natural way of learning attention given that it focuses our energies towards the present-experience. We must suspend our thought, and if possible, become empty and ready to realize the potentiality of growth. The educational value of suffering is in its drawing us to attend to our present-state and in the very development of attention itself.

Attention in education.

The concept of attention, most often used in education, might be exemplified by the student whose energetic presence in a classroom causes disruption for other students, and most often, the teacher as well. The student, most often, is commanded, in some way or another, to "Pay attention!" in order that their behavior more strongly reflect the traditional posture towards learning, which is focused, quiet, and attentive. In this case, suffering might be

experienced by all parties involved, the teacher, who has been taught to control their classroom, and whose frustration motivated by the energetic student might be considered a particular form of suffering. Similarly, the students who are distracted might be experiencing a similar form of suffering to their teacher, frustration, anger, or confusion. And, the energetic student themselves might be, in their own experience, suffering from the challenges associated with a learning space that does not allow for their energy or their way of expressing themselves. The materialist view might see their physical energy, and its disruption, as something that must be mediated with a medical intervention (most commonly an inquiry into potential ADHD) or with a physical intervention (moving that student into isolation). The rationalist view might see that student as lacking the necessary intellectual abilities or capacity to learn within that space, and as such, should be identified as problematic. But, thirdly, and with greater complexity, a more nuanced view of attention gained through experiences of suffering might be viewed through this example as a more cautious, patient, and curious posture. The teacher might cautiously attend to the energetic student by slowing down the natural response to frustration, and ask themself how they might help the student, potentially using Weil's suggestion of watching and waiting. Through their suffering, they might learn to understand the student in a more personal, patient way. The students too, might learn to understand that education can be energetic, and through their suffering might recognize the goodness of a student who may seem bothersome. This example demonstrates a view of suffering as a form of focused attention that implies a rejection of the dualist materialist/rationalist conceptions and an embrace of an alternative view.

Pedagogies of silence.

How can these ideas of suffering as a way of learning attention be applied in education? Certain pedagogies are being explored in current educational practices, as is the case with a pedagogy of silence, which is defined as a way of "listening to silence" and as a way of being. Lewin's (2014) article "Behold: Silence and Attention in Education" explores both the concept of attention, and silence, in the context of education. The author differentiates, like Weil, between a type of attention that can be defined as the "engagement of intended concentration" (p. 355), and a type of attention that fosters a "moment of awareness" leading to beholding. Instead of considering attention as an aim to acquire or accrue knowledge, attention instead is considered a purpose or meaning in our experiences. Lewin notes, "To behold something is, in a certain sense, to submit ourselves to it, to give ourselves to be held, to become silent" (p. 356). That silence is both the medium and the outcome when attending to experiences of suffering. For the author, "the call for silence in schools might be helpfully recast in terms of a call for attention" (p. 357). The actualization of this pedagogy in classrooms may be implemented differently in different settings, but the intention of a pedagogy of silence is to help students rest in their experiences, while attending to their present thoughts. Given this practice of silence, students may find themselves able to engage with experiences of suffering, not because they are better able to manage them, but because they are provided a space where it is possible to attend to those experiences.

Helen Lees (2012) joins Lewin's exploration of the pedagogy of silence, explaining in her book, "Silence in Schools" that "positive silence might be necessary for school education" (p. x). She suggests that "silence moves and takes with it meaning; it is a form of transit; a translator

'from the known to the unknown'" (p. 1), and defines this silence is outside of the binary that

would limit it to the "absence of noise" (p. 4). "Strong silence" defies this binary, instead

referring to, "in educational contexts," a "state of mind" that is physiological (p. 5), but, which is

"more than neurobiological fact", rather, "inner realisation" (p. 7). Lees explains how strong

silence must be appreciated by all educational stakeholders, and that their views of silence are

the most important aspect. This attention to silence and its capacity for educational value is

further explored in her book through the firsthand accounts of teachers and administrators

who work with strong silence daily.

Finally, the pedagogy of silence is taken up in Zembylas and Michaelides' article "The

Sound of Silence in Pedagogy" (2004) exploring silence as a "complex, positive phenomenon"

(p. 193). The authors note that "silence is a force" (p. 194) and that "silence and nonverbal

communication are particularly important in classroom interactions because the majority of

students emotional communications take place without talk" (p. 200). Here, the authors are

pointing to the space where silence holds meaning, and where students are connecting to ideas

or interactions without speech. Experiences of suffering in the classroom may be found as

valuable, if students are given the time of space to be reflective. Zembylas and Michaelides

note that research has shown that providing "a moment of silence" is beneficial for both

learning and teaching. The uses of silence are considered by the authors, and include (1) "a

mechanism of reflection" (2) "a practice of self-criticality" (3) "a way to explore the inner self"

(4) to "make sense of thoughts, ideas, emotions and actions"; and (5) to "indicate a certain kind

of unspoken understanding" (p. 203). Each of these uses and potential outcomes of silence

point to a form of attention that may be learned through allowing students to experience their

suffering, and embrace its value. Without any form of practice that provides this type of space, students may never learn how to properly address their experiences of suffering, similarly foregoing any opportunity to learn how to give their experiences true attention. The potential educational value of suffering lies in its ability to draw us to a form of attention that teaches us and guides us towards greater understanding.

Experiences of suffering may offer us the opportunity to learn how to truly attend. In education, asking our students to "pay attention" does not elicit the form of attention that may help us to embrace suffering; rather, it suggests that attention is a mechanism of the mind, in order that effective learning might take place through cognitive processing. Instead, as demonstrated in the words of Simone Weil, attention draws us to a deeper sense of knowing, and moments of suffering, when attended to, similarly help us to engage in an inner world that is often hidden by traditional educational practices. These pedagogical practices might be contrasted to the previous discussions of more New Age meditation, without taking on board their ontologically misguided and epistemically naïve views about suffering as an aspect of human experience than can and should be transcended or overcome. They reflect a deeper, richer, and more complex way of understanding the experience of suffering.

Suffering as a Way to Learn Ethical Responsibility

Ethical responsibility in educational settings is a more recent, and more contemporary discussion. Experiencing suffering may be seen as a way to learn ethical responsibility, which is not to say that inflicting suffering is educationally valuable; rather, it has been suggested that "suffering . . . encompasses the potential price for a meaningful life" and that moral education is the keyholder to illicit the empowerment necessary for such living (Chen, 2011, p. 213). If we

acknowledge and explore our experiences of suffering, it may be that we learn how to

understand others' suffering, and to show empathy and care for others. This ethical orientation

is reflected in schools today, such as a pedagogy of discomfort, and a pedagogy of unknowing,

and illustrate another example of how embracing suffering has positive educational value.

Chen's Humanistic Morality

Chen (2011) discusses the concept of suffering through her analysis of human

experiences of natural disasters, and the ensuing embodied reactions. This inquiry intentionally

focuses on the significance of moral education while Chen argues that human ethical

understanding is derived from the "bearing and transcending [of] suffering" (p. 203). Chen is

claiming that human potential for ethical responsibility might be realized through our

relationship to the natural world. Instead of viewing ourselves are purely materialist, Chen is

pointing to an ethical orientation that embraces experiences that are both material and

immaterial. In acknowledging our relationship to the world, we might acknowledge that

suffering is a result of living in this world. For example, Chen draws upon the stories of the

Chinese earthquake in May 2007. She notes that these catastrophes demand our attention to

the point that we question our existence and our role in the world. The educational implication

of this view is modelled in the notion that "educating young people for the wisdom of suffering

is to cultivate a humanistic morality" (p. 203). This might mean teaching students how to

understand their suffering in relation to the world and to others around them. Chen's

description of ethics advances the Daoist understanding of "the balanced unification of Heaven

and Earth within Humanity" (p. 209). Here, Chen suggests that "'openness' and 'tranquility'" are

metaphysical tools that may be used for human adaptability to change. Instead of aggravation,

resulting from suffering, Chen is arguing that ethical responsibility is unavoidable given human

connection to the earth. Humankind's self-preservation is contingent on our willingness to

confront "fear and pain" and these Aristotelian ethics of virtue are "both moral and

intellectual" responsibilities (p. 210). This willingness to confront fear and pain is being applied

pedagogically in classrooms through the lens of discomfort and unknowing. Chen's humanistic

morality offers a platform upon which to build an educational understanding of suffering as

motivation for ethical responsibility.

Pedagogy of Discomfort.

Martin Urrutia Varese and Avi Mintz's works include various explanations and

descriptions of pedagogical practices that attend to suffering. Urrutia Varese's doctoral work

and Mintz's research both draw on concepts derivative of Emmanuel Levinas, who extensively

addressed the issue of suffering and its paradoxical implications in the field of education. While

acknowledging that inflicting suffering on another is not tolerable, the authors identify a

particular difference in promoting a form of suffering that is educationally valuable and one

that causes "useless suffering" (Urrutia Varese, 2015, p. 9; Mintz, 2013, p. 217). Useless

educational suffering is defined as the "artificial and arbitrary domination, punishment, and

coercion foisted upon children" that does not cultivate learning (Mintz, 2012, p. 265); whereas,

valuable educational suffering might be considered as "inherent to education" and

"encountered by a personal exploration that involves learning by confronting oneself with the

Other (the not learned)" (Urrutia-Varese, 2016, p. 2). The difference between these forms of

suffering is guided by Levinas' understanding of "*suffering in me*" versus "*suffering in the other*"

where the former form of suffering is violently inflicted upon another, while the latter form

"enables students to appreciate and endure the limits and vagaries of the human condition"

(Mintz, 2012, p. 264). The educator must learn, then, how to guide students to opportunities of

"*suffering in me*" that "involves learning by confronting oneself with the strange or the other"

(Urrutia-Varese, 2015, p. 10). This pedagogical task maintains moral implications that can be

difficult to navigate, let alone approach as necessary to the role of educator. Urrutia-Varese

(2015) notes that the educator must assume "responsibility for the subjectivity of the student"

in order for the realization of "suffering [as] a key component in the construction of meaning,

because the creation of meaning is the result of this confrontation with oneself" (p. 12).

Specifically, a pedagogy of discomfort is one way in which Chen's ideas or the idea of

suffering to learn ethical responsibility is being realized in the classroom, given that, as an

educational approach, it "emphasises the need for educators and students alike to move

outside their 'comfort zones'" (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012, p. 41). In particular, the justification

behind this approach is that "discomforting emotions play a constitutive role in challenging

dominant beliefs [and] social habits" (p. 41). As suggested earlier, in experiencing discomfort, or

suffering, one might be compelled to ethical action or responsibility. Zembylas and McGlynn

studied the effect of discomforting pedagogies in a Northern Ireland school, where a

"discomforting pedagogical activity" was employed for the expressed purpose of examining the

"potential and limitations of pedagogy of discomfort" in a classroom setting (p. 41). Students

were included in an activity that challenged their assumptions and beliefs, and many students

were noted to have experienced "fear, shock, confusion, anger and disappointment" (p. 50).

The significance of the study was assessed through these affective experiences; the authors

understood the embedded ethical challenge of implementing a pedagogical practice of

discomfort with regards to issues of social (in)justice, and the critical analysis of "hegemonic

perceptions and feelings" (p. 43). Both authors note the inherent difficulty and vulnerability

required to employ such pedagogical practices, but, also recognize that responding to suffering

and engaging with the challenges associated with ethical responsibility must not "evade the

possible discomforting feelings that may be required" (p. 57). This pedagogy of discomfort, as

an experience of suffering, may be shown to develop ethical responsibility, and the educational

value of this pedagogical approach may be most realized when students' affective experiences

are embraced for learning. Parker Palmer describes it most succinctly when he suggest that

"when we allow the whole self to know in relationship, we come into a community of mutual

knowing in which we will be transformed even as we transform" (1983, 54). We can only

become more whole, as we become more communal.

Conclusion

These final approaches offer a way to discover educational significance in experiences of

suffering. They provide a way for our experiences to be meaningful, where the concepts of

being and becoming allows for our very existence to teach us. This tacit approach to eliciting

meaning from experiences of suffering is less present in traditional education, but may be seen

as a way to help students embrace and learn from their life experiences. Suffering might also

draw us to grow in our ability to attend. Discarding a more cognitive approach, this type of

attention is enabled through a less active, less forced orientation to learning. Like being and

becoming, this approach suggests that by allowing ourselves to experience suffering, we may

learn how to be attentive. Finally, an ethical responsibility might be found when we embrace

experiences of suffering. By experiencing our existence, and giving those experiences our fullest

attention, we might find that we are connected to the world, and to those around us in a profound way. Our suffering may help to respond to others' suffering, teaching us how to respond to ethical concerns. These approaches do not deny experiences of suffering; rather, they embrace them as an opportunity to grow and learn.

Conclusion

The question of suffering's educational value has unearthed certain ideologies that have motivated certain views towards our denial or our embrace of pain and suffering in education. By exploring the sociocultural views on pain and suffering, it has been shown that a pervasive medical view has dominated popular understanding of suffering, and that exists a common belief that pain is the illness itself, and has thus created a society of fear in regards to suffering. Education is a medium by which we learn how to view the world, and more specifically, our daily experiences. The educational narrative, concerning suffering, suggests that suffering is an impediment to learning, not an advantage. This idea has been further reinforced in both the material and immaterial views of suffering, both which act to eliminate, or avoid suffering. The material view of suffering regards suffering as measurable, by way of the scientific method, the use of technology and the tool of medicine. Given its measurability, suffering is also controllable, through those sociocultural tools. This leads to a belief in suffering's avoidability, where one's ability to control one's experiences of suffering creates a sense of mastery and agency over suffering. The value of suffering is minimized, if not entirely dismissed, which is similarly endorsed by the rationalist view, except that the mind becomes the tool for control, and that suffering is the loss of that control. First, the rationalist conception views pain and suffering as an educational limitation or impediment. According to this view, pain is an obstacle

to learning, and should be eliminated, or when experienced, should look to certain

interventions in order to avoid future suffering. The material and rational views find little to no

value in experiences of suffering, denying any possible educational value, if not only to identify

where suffering might be eliminated.

A more progressive view embraces the role of emotions and spirituality in education,

identifying that life's experiences cannot be reduced the material or immaterial; rather, there is

complexity in the whole human experience. These aspects of the self are being acknowledged

in schools today, with various practices demonstrating a wide-spread initiative of helping

students manage their experiences of suffering. The secularization of education has dismissed

any account of the role of the human spirit in the process of learning and growth, yet, it might

be shown that certain spiritual education has started being introduced into contemporary

education through practices, such as mindfulness, yoga, and transcendent meditation have

resulted in specific educational benefits and limitations. Further, the emotional and spiritual

view of suffering continue to point to a deeper and more complex need among students. The

educational value of suffering must be acknowledged as an experience that requires deep

consideration. This depth is most established in the final section of this thesis, which explored

the notion of *being* and *becoming*, Heideggerean concepts that suggest that our very existence

teaches us. This tacit approach suggests that our everyday experiences help us to grow and

learn, and establishes that all experiences are valuable for our education. Similarly, a more

complex approach to understanding the educational value of suffering is found in growing in

our ability to attend to our experiences. The concept of attention is one that has been sidelined

by material and immaterial approaches, where the language of focus and control have replaced

a more deep and meaningful form of attention. And, through this attention, we can explore

ourselves and learn to value the experiences of others, growing in empathy, compassion and

understanding for others.

Suffering, from the materialist and immaterialist view, signals some type of educational

failure, whereas the movement towards the more empathetic view of emotionality and

spirituality, embraces a more nuanced understanding of suffering as a natural part of the

human experience. The educational value of suffering can be discovered through the reflexive

practices of understanding our being, while our experiences, those of joy, and of suffering, help

us to become attuned to our humanness. Experiences of suffering contribute to this holistic

learning, helping us to embrace difficult, yet valuable understanding of ourselves and others. It

is of great importance that philosophers of education and educational practitioners should

critically consider approaches to suffering which allow for their positive educational

significance: of learning through suffering.

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