

Exploring Mindfulness in/as education from a Heideggerian perspective

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Abstract

Over the past decade or so, within this journal there have been critical debates concerning the role of mindfulness within education, the influence of neoliberalism on education in general and wellbeing interventions specifically, and the relevance of the philosophy of Martin Heidegger for critiquing modernity including the nature and purpose afforded education. In this article we propose that these debates are sufficiently interrelated to develop a more unified argument. We will show how a Heideggerian perspective is conceptually rich, in both its heritage; as it draws upon both East-Asian wisdom and western thinking, and its engagement, as it confronts the implications of what Heidegger called a ‘technical-era’, for offering such a unified critique. The focus of this critique is upon instrumental forms of mindfulness (mindfulness ‘in’ education), which when framed by neoliberalism, has rather narrow goals concerning individual well-being and performance. In contrast, more critical and integral forms of mindfulness (mindfulness ‘as’ education) offer the potential for more holistic and authentic learning. Throughout the article, we discuss how Heideggerian philosophy offers a number of useful concepts (e.g. enframing, Dasein, authenticity, meditative thinking) able to both critique the instrumentalisation of approaches like mindfulness by neoliberalism and speak to more holistic education oriented toward more authentic being-in-the-world.

Key words: mindfulness, Heidegger, neoliberalism, education

INTRODUCTION

The popularity of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in educational settings has increased exponentially over the last two decades (Ergas, 2019a/b). The word ‘mindfulness’ is a complex word that means different things within diverse contexts. In its original Buddhist context, the Pali word ‘sati’ refers to a constellation of meanings including recollection or remembrance of the unity of the self with the world, which is always transitory in nature. This is despite everyday mental distractions, hence the popular refrain of mindfulness to return to present moment awareness (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Sun (2014) also states that mindfulness carries an emotional and attitudinal component, meaning qualities such as “love, kindness, care and consideration for others” (p. 396) are often emphasised. According to Bodhi (2011), this meaning is named ‘right mindfulness’ and is a fundamental part of Buddhist teaching on the Eightfold Noble Path, which lays the foundations for an authentic and ethical life. In more contemporary writings, within the secular-scientific context, Kabat-Zinn’s (2005a/b) operationalisation of this concept is often paraphrased, including the keywords ‘paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally’, with a clear emphasis on its cognitive aspect. This emphasis has played a significant role in the increasing instrumentalisation of mindfulness as a concept within predominantly psychological research as well as its mainstream implementation to different fields such as health and education.

Although in educational contexts MBIs are associated with multiple cognitive and emotional benefits for students (e.g., Flook *et al.*, 2010; Weare, 2012), there are also those who critique these interventions for diluting the ethical foundations of the associated practices, originating from East-Asian wisdom traditions, and being overly-instrumentalised in a manner consistent with a ‘technical’ worldview, in order to serve the broader goals of neoliberalism (e.g., Ergas, 2019a; Forbes, 2016, 2019; Hyland, 2016, 2017; Purser, 2019; Reveley, 2016; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Such debate can be positioned within a broader academic framework, questioning the role of technique and the function or purpose of education in relation to complex world challenges (Ball, 2003, 2017; Forbes, 2019; Gilead, 2012; Hill and Kumar, 2009). In this article we wish to examine these critiques and shed new light on accompanying issues by turning to the work of the philosopher Martin Heidegger. In recent years there has been an increasing interest and rediscovery of Heidegger’s thought and how it links with the purpose of education, through some of his core ideas on modernity as technique and the ethic-ontological distinction between two modalities of being-in-the-world on either

an inauthentic or more authentic path (e.g., D’Agnese, 2019; Mertel, 2020; Trubody, 2015). Although all three of these discussions (mindfulness ‘in’ education, neoliberalism and education, Heideggerian thought and education) have taken place within this journal during the last decade or so (see Ergas, 2015; Hyland, 2015 and O’Donnell, 2015, all from special issue 49/2; also republished in an edited volume by Ergas & Todd, 2016; alongside Hyland, 2009; and Ergas, 2019a for the first debate; Gilead, 2012 for the second debate and Lewin, 2015; Lewis, 2017; Mertel, 2020 and Trubody, 2015 for the third debate), there has not been an attempt to integrate them into one critical and purposeful reflection. The purpose of this article is to offer a comprehensive reflection about the issues and potentialities of implementing mindfulness within education from a Heideggerian viewpoint in a manner that also subsumes some reflection on neoliberalism.

In order to accomplish this, we will start by summarizing the main ideas from those papers appearing in this journal about either mindfulness or Heidegger. We will put aside explicit discussion of neoliberalism, partly to keep the article to length but also because we feel our synthesis will subsume elements of the debate surrounding neoliberalism and education implicitly, though this cannot be our focus. We will show how Heidegger’s concept of enframing provides an accurate understanding of the current educational system as dominant in most parts of the world. Subsequently, we will discuss the implications that the concepts of authenticity and meditative thinking could have for education. Finally, we will offer a reflection on how mindfulness ‘in/as’ education can be understood from a Heideggerian perspective, which we suggest leans towards advocacy of more holistic implementation of mindfulness within schools. In doing so, we intend to contribute to new thinking about education’s more meaningful individual, social and ecological transformative potentialities, uniting with those who call for more integral and critical approaches.

However, before we move on to these critical reflections, it is important to explain briefly why we have chosen Heidegger’s philosophy for this task. Although many philosophers/theorists (e.g. Arthur Schopenhauer, Ken Wilber) could be engaged in a similar vein, we assert that Heidegger’s thinking is pertinent for at least two reasons. First, in Heidegger’s writing we find a lucid, though often semantically challenging, dialogue between East-Asian wisdom traditions, such as Buddhism and Taoism, from which mindfulness derives, synthesised with Western thinking (Caputo, 1986; Lewin, 2015; May, 1996). Second, Heidegger’s perspectives have received increasing attention since the turn of the millennium from educational scholars, including several recent articles in this journal, all recognising his concept-use as particularly pertinent for addressing the tension between educational goals

serving different agendas, neoliberalism on one hand and human flourishing on another (D'Agnese, 2019; Mertel, 2020; Trubody, 2015). Being aware that Heidegger is not usually considered among the classical philosophers of education, and less so in relation to mindfulness even though he authored a book with such a title, it is necessary to commit some effort to introduce the multiple ways in which his key ideas are related to our topic.

AN EDUCATION ROOTED IN ENFRAMING

This section will start by summarizing those articles appearing in this journal about mindfulness and Heidegger respectively, in order to build the crucial connection between the Heideggerian concept of enframing and the type of education that emerges from this specific worldview. Regarding the first debate, which concerns the problematic trend of implementing mindfulness instrumentally (i.e. mindfulness 'in' education), we highlight Ergas (2019a) and Hyland (2009) as making distinctive contributions to our synthesis. Ergas (2019a) states that there are two different narratives from which mindfulness is understood and implemented generally, and in education particularly, those being from either a Buddhist or a secular perspective. While the first discourse understands mindfulness as a part of a broader spiritual/philosophical teaching, rooted in the integral development of consciousness and ethical relationships with other persons, society and nature, the second discourse understands mindfulness in a more instrumentalised way, emphasizing specific cognitive and emotional skills in order to improve academic performance; eloquently dichotomized as "mindfulness as a path versus mindfulness as a tool" (Ergas, 2019a, p. 5). Regarding education, Ergas (2019a), suggests the distinction between mindfulness 'as' versus 'in' education respectively (see Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020 for a similar distinction), i.e., as a form of education itself against a mere external therapeutic intervention, which in its more instrumental version has become satirically known as 'McMindfulness' (Purser, 2019). In a similar vein is Hyland's (2009, see also Hyland, 2015, 2016, 2017) argument by which the decontextualization of mindfulness from its Buddhist spiritual ground constitutes a detriment in the scope and potential benefits of deeper self-knowledge and ethical orientation to the world.

Regarding the second debate concerning the contribution of Heideggerian philosophy to the educational field, it is possible to find within his writings the seeds of a counter-movement against the current dominant, instrumentalised and standardised system. Mertel (2020) discusses Heidegger's 'diagnosis' of modernity as a *technical age*, which he refers to

as the reign of ‘enframing’, within which all entities are understood as a ‘standing-reserve’ under the unidimensional ‘logic of calculation’. Engaging such critical awareness enables philosophers of education to think about the potential role of education within such a cultural-historical background. This possibility is developed from Heidegger’s fundamental ontology in which the possibility of an authentic re-appropriation of one’s own existence is released from its latent ‘emancipatory’ role for the purpose of education. Thus, in order to free education from the shackles of *performativity* and its emphasis on achievement for its own sake, transformation is urgently necessary, characterised by a more significant role for the development of wholeness and authenticity, incorporating processes of self-cultivation alongside care for the social and natural world.

Hence, the Heideggerian idea of modernity as ‘technique’ can serve as an illuminating way to understand the main vices of our educational system as it currently exists. ‘Technique’ does not mean something related primarily to technology, but rather as something that describes the implicit assumptions, and deeply engrained sociocultural-historical norms prevalent, affecting how an individual is in the world as a ‘dwelling’, Heidegger’s term for the site of individual human consciousness whilst recognising its interdependence with the world (Heidegger, 1977/1954; Inwood, 1999). In this sense, technique is understood as a worldview and disposition to and within the world, which within our own species’ outlook reveals everything as a standing-reserve to the service of human interest. This specific form of modern manifestation of the relationship between human being and the world, on the one hand, and of the human being with themselves, on the other, is called *enframing* by Heidegger (1977/1954). In this sense both, nature and the human species, appear as mere resources available for ‘calculative thinking’, according to which all phenomena become an object for human representation, measurement and control, and as subservient to improving efficiency in a world tailored to human needs within an anthropocentric view of reality (Peters, 2002; Rae, 2013).

According to Heidegger (1969/1959), this calculative thinking is characterised by an increasing tendency to reduce every complexity into a set of commodifiable, available, controllable and measurable pieces of data, which within both contemporary educational settings framed by neoliberalism more generally, and clearly observable within trends such as ‘McMindfulness’ specifically, can be observed as the “[...] obsession with improvement, assessment, efficiency and measurement” (Kouppanou, 2017, p. 9). This means that only certain perspectives and actions are valued, those which translate into the mechanisms of an instrumentalised and strategical mentality that ensures productivity according to pre-defined standards and rules that repeat in endless cycles of efficiency. Interestingly, Heidegger

(1977/1951) considers that this form of dwelling in the world is correct, from a metaphysical-technical approach, although it is not true, from an ontological perspective. This means we have progressively more knowledge about materialistic-based science and spectacular achievements alongside but less wisdom about our own existence and its place within the interwoven nature of the world. Presciently, for Heidegger (1969/1959), the greatest danger of such a penurious form of thinking is that it “[...] may someday come to be accepted and practiced as *the only* way of thinking” (p. 56, author’s original emphasis).

In commentaries about Heidegger’s work, we can find the source of several radical critiques regarding the purpose of education and well-being interventions within education that now appear extremely timely. One pertinent critique comes from Biesta (2016), who affirms that from a Heideggerian perspective a genuine education is

[...] aimed at the thinking of Being rather than an education aimed at thinking. It therefore has little to do with adding ‘critical thinking’ or ‘reflexibility’ to the curriculum, but is rather after a different way of ‘being in the world’, not ‘caught’ or determined by the world of beings or [...] by positive knowledge about the world of beings (Biesta, 2016, pp. 839–840).

Thus, genuine mindful practice has much to commend here as it enables observing and inquiring into direct experience. However, if such depth of opportunity is truncated by the abstraction and orientation of mindfulness ‘skills’ to narrower objectives, such an opportunity is lost (Ergas, 2017; Hyland, 2016; Sellman, 2020). The educational process can and must foster a sort of existential transformation of the human *dwelling*, allowing humans to go beyond feeling utterly lost and distracted by their occupation with the *meleé* of everyday things to contemplate fundamental questions about the ‘nature’ of (their) Being.

(IN)AUTHENTICITY, MEDITATIVE THINKING AND EDUCATION

In order to further articulate some of the suggested connections between Heidegger and the critical literature concerning mindfulness and education, we will develop some core Heideggerian ideas regarding the ‘nature’ of being human and its implications for understanding human flourishing in more detail. This will serve as a foundation for reflecting on further implications regarding the implementation of mindfulness practices within education towards the end of the article. Along this journey, we find philosophical support

from Heideggerian thinking for defending the introduction of mindfulness practices as a counterbalance to a type of education rooted in a ‘technical’ framework (Thomson, 2001, 2005). Though as we progress more deeply and conclude, it will be clear that the framing and technicity of education risks subverting the philosophical heritage of mindfulness and its considerable potential unless such features are carefully safeguarded within a broader holistic education orientation.

In his seminal work, *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1996/1927) affirms that the human being cannot be defined, from an epistemological framework, as a rational subject under the Cartesian and Kantian paradigms but, from an ontological¹ approach, as ‘Da-sein’, literally meaning ‘to be-there’, often understood as ‘existence’ or ‘being-in-the-world’. This means that humans are not determined as subjects, capable of re-presenting the reality outside of experience, generally understood as objects, through ideas or concepts inside the mind. As ‘Da-sein’, humans are not seen as existing as separate and closed-off from their environment but as existing as fluid and dynamic expressions of a relationship with the world - what Miller (1996) paraphrases as a ‘force field’ to highlight its constitutive interconnectedness whereby there is a unity of substance throughout reality even when it is expressed in ‘concentrated’ form such as an individual.

In this sense, Heidegger says that the ‘essence’ of Dasein is nothing closed nor permanent but exists in some form of relation in/with a world of changing possibilities. As summarised by D’Agnese (2019), Dasein is a task rather than something already given. This means that our ontological openness/interconnectedness occurs from a variety of orientations, possibilities and meanings available in every situation; making existence a process, uncertain yet potentially purposeful, though the nature of this purpose can be understood as paradoxically meaningful or meaningless. Hence, human beings are hermeneutical beings, which means that we can go beyond the ordinary ontic manifestation of things towards comprehension of phenomena, although such effort requires considerable struggle as it goes against the grain of what could be referred to as ‘consensus reality’ (Sellman, 2020). In summary, humans are an

¹ In *Being and Time* Heidegger discusses “ontological difference”, which distinguishes the main difference between being and beings (entities). Being is a constitutive structure of possibilities, always changing, shaping and being shaped by the world, while beings are the specific and ephemeral things-entities that constitute the world that we take for granted as real. The first domain is called ontological, while the second one is called ontic. For the purpose of this paper, we can take Ergas’ (2017) distinction between contingency and necessity as an application to education of this ontological difference, where the first term refers to the different and changing subjects that indeed are taught at school and the second one to the mind or self that permanently and actively constructs meaningful worlds.

open process rather than a thing with an essential nature, which makes existence an educative journey in itself.

Following Heideggerian (1996/1927) understanding, the unity and totality of existence is defined ontologically by two key concepts: care and dwell. Existence is care in the sense that it is relational by nature and in all possible directions: self-care, care for other persons and care for the things that occupy everyday life. This concept must be understood ontologically without assuming any positive meaning though, rather as ground for a range of possible displays of care, from more instrumentalised and dominating to more solicitous and liberating forms of relationship with ourselves and others. As Heidegger (1996/1927) states, “this concern which essentially pertains to authentic care; that is, the existence of the other, and not to a *what* which it takes care of, helps the other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and *free for* it” (p. 115, author’s original emphasis). Regarding the second idea, where existence dwells in the world, means that our primary relationship with the world is through an experience in which there is an interplay between familiarity and unfamiliarity, on the one hand, and between closeness and remoteness, on the other. In Heidegger’s (1993/1947) words “[...] man [human being] is the being whose Being as ek-sistence consists in his dwelling in the nearness of Being. Man is the neighbour of Being” (p. 245) or said more poetically “Man is the shepherd of Being” (p. 234). In this sense, dwelling refers to the deepest meaning of the prefix ‘Da’ (a word that means the same as the ‘ex’/‘ek’ in the key word ‘ex-sistence’) in the word Da-sein, i.e. being in close proximity and open (Da) to Being (‘sein’). This openness necessitates taking care for our own being and the being of others (persons and things) in the ordinary everyday, letting them/us be, building a homely familiarity and yet at the same time, remembering our mortal condition as a font of undeniable mystery and hence unfamiliarity, calling us to retain and renew our surveillance of the world and ourselves whilst doing so with the innocence and curiosity of a ‘beginner’s mind’. Such conceptualisation owes a huge debt to East-Asian wisdom, particularly Buddhism, and its appreciation of impermanence, interdependence, present-moment awareness and compassion (Lewin, 2015).

Existence however, as a project to be realized over the path, has a double ethical, and therefore educational, possibility related to its mode of being in the world. This crossroad is expressed by Heidegger with different words depending on whether we consider his early or late stages of thinking. According to this distinction we can find two main dyads that explain the extreme possibilities of existence regarding being-in-the-world: authenticity/inauthenticity (Heidegger I) and meditative/calculative thinking (Heidegger II), respectively. Heidegger (1996/1927) explains the difference regarding the first dyad as an existential-ontological

difference formed by our experience and understanding of ourselves and the world. When existence is inauthentic (a sort of default mode), it understands itself as a subject that lives chronologically in objective time preoccupied by its concerns about things (ontic entities) as the primary form of living, thus configuring a distracted, confused and ego-centred mode of being in the world. Thus, we believe that we are our ideas, emotions, plans, memories, roles, relationships, and so on, whilst hiding our more genuine (ontological) possibilities. Mindfulness practices encourage us to exit this mode of being and learn to observe thoughts and feelings as non-determining phenomena that come and go within our experience. In doing so, existence can dwell more authentically, which means that we awake to an understanding of ourselves as a being open to the mystery of Being, confronted by the finitude of our mortal existence and by the calls of our deep consciousness, which invite us to genuinely be ourselves as we respond in tune with each situation we experience (Brito, 2018). Thus, confusion disappears and our selfhood becomes resolute, free and responsible, whilst attentive and committed to what any situation requires of us.

The call is precisely something that *we ourselves* have neither planned nor prepared for nor wilfully brought about. 'It' calls, against our expectations and even against our will. On the other hand, the call without doubt does not come from someone else who is with me in the world. The calls come *from* me, and yet *over* me (Heidegger, 1996/1927, p. 254, author's original emphasis).

Interestingly, the fact that these calls come from a deep place of authenticity opens important questions about the role of the will and planned action regarding the process of becoming ourselves within and beyond the formal educational process, as will be discussed in the next section.

Regarding the second dyad, Heidegger (1969/1959) distinguishes between two modes of thinking, which perhaps must be interpreted as different ways of being. As one of them (calculative thinking) has already been explained, here we will concentrate on the more positive mode, named by the philosopher 'meditative', offering rich and promising meanings to understand not only an alternative way to dwell within a technical world, but also suggestive of ideas that probe the purpose of education and the contribution of mindfulness. Meditative thinking is an expression that condenses Heidegger's synthesis of the perennial philosophies of both the West and East (see Heidegger, 2006, 1968). As with deep mindfulness practice, meditative thinking requires the effort and discipline to overcome enframing logic, rather like paying attention in a specific way to the world as something with its own order and dynamism.

This type of dwelling is described as a “*releasement toward things*” (Heidegger, 1969/1959, p. 54), which means an attitude of careful openness, contemplation, acceptance and gratitude, alongside a very subtle and particular kind of non-manipulative action towards things. Thus, instead of pre-defining and controlling the world, releasement means a radical relationship of respect toward ourselves, other humans and nature, in such a way that everything can manifest according to its own pace and inherent mystery. In this sense, releasement can be understood as a supreme form of attention (Lewin, 2015) or presence (Christopher, 2018), by which humans can foster a genuine well-being in the three core dimensions of our existence: individual, societal and ecological. Here, we witness the interconnection between a deep understanding of mindfulness practices, ethical orientation and its potentialities within education. As such, the type of ontology underpinning releasement represents not only an educational odyssey, but also “an antidote to the narrowness of the neoliberal educational agenda” (Thomson, 2001, p. 24), insofar it challenges educators to teach not mere thoughts but to think in such a meditative way, thus emphasising presence before any particular curriculum.

Now aware of these distinctions, and following Christopher (2018), we can say that the concept of ‘well-being’, as widely used throughout mainstream educational and psychological literatures, and incorporating MBIs, is understood from a restricted conception of the self, oriented to individualistic and instrumentalised terms. The type of ‘self’ addressed by neoliberal machinations of well-being is commonly constructed as a separate and material, rather than a connected and spiritual, entity (Sellman, 2020). The general understanding and discourse surrounding ‘well-being’, particularly within education, corresponds with a worrisome superficiality that disconnects the self from a more unified network of Being and more profound ethical ties and processes involved in the cultivation of true well-being and inclusive caring communities. While this restricted conception of well-being characterises much of the contemporary literature on well-being, influenced by the positive psychology movement, there are exceptions such as the distinction stated by Joseph (2016) on authenticity as eudaimonia rather than as hedonism, and as a process of ongoing personal development rather than as a fixed outcome. Thus, a genuine concept of well-being implies a recognition of the radical interdependence of all humans with Being and the necessity of ethical and inclusive foundations (Brito, 2018; Hyland, 2016). This is particularly pertinent to the application of mindfulness within education, if it intends to foster an authentic flourishing of human life in harmony with society and the natural world rather than individual technical subjugation, as we will discuss in the next section.

Implications for education arising from the discussion so far address the very purpose of education itself and the role, even the necessity of, predetermined curriculum. The main purpose of education in, at least, the last century has been oriented to instrumental notions of learning and knowledge, as content that ought to be ‘transmitted’ from expert to novice and from one generation to the next through what Thomas (2013) calls a ‘constant curriculum’. From a Heideggerian perspective, insofar existence is an open and interconnected process, the genuine purpose of education must be to cultivate the kind of attention in which the whole mode of dwelling in the world is progressively developed toward a greater sense of appreciation, curiosity and creativity, from which a sort of contemplative thinking can emerge (Ingold, 2017). Contemplative thinking is related to the development of an attitude of presence by which a being mode is emphasized over a doing mode (Kabat-Zinn, 2005b), which implies that attention and studying are held in higher regard than concentration and learning. From a Heideggerian perspective, critical and contemplative thinking must be complementary. Whilst critical thinking involves socio-culturally valued skills such as analysis and synthesis as a means to construct and defend a position or argument, contemplative thinking involves more penetrative observation and radical non-judgemental openness as a means to deeper comprehension. Contemplative thinking subsumes the three seals of reality within a Buddhist tradition: interdependence, impermanence and no-self (Holohan, 2019), synergistic with Heidegger’s concept of serenity. The former (calculative/critical/inauthentic) refers to a desire to obtain and demonstrate forms of memorized knowledge, whereas the latter (meditative/contemplative/authentic) refers to a greater awareness of our existential potentiality and a willingness to suspend goal orientation (Lewis, 2017). Aligned with contemplative thinking, a genuine transformative curriculum must be as free and spontaneous as possible, continuously responsive to the dynamic intentions and diverse experiences of teachers and students, moment to moment (Ergas, 2019b). This puts into question the necessity of what Thomas (2013) calls a ‘testing regime’, by which every aspect of attainment is measured externally under the narrow logic of achievements. At this point, mindfulness as both a way of teaching and as a practice, can support contemplative thinking by developing the curiosity of a ‘beginner’s mind’ and a comprehension of life and education as an ongoing path where it is difficult to anticipate what will be learned in advance rather than as a set of predictable and measurable competencies to be achieved at recognisable intervals along the way.

MINDFULNESS IN/AS EDUCATION FROM A HEIDEGGERIAN PERSPECTIVE

Having laid substantial groundwork, we now consider some core issues regarding mindfulness in/as education from a Heideggerian perspective, allowing us to offer alternative fertile directions. In doing so, we will discuss some fundamental Heideggerian ideas that can be connected with the endeavour of implementing mindfulness ‘as’, rather than ‘in’, education. This direction implies a profound questioning of the current dominant education system and favours a more integral and meaningful approach, attuned to the development of students, teachers and society as a whole.

As discussed previously, teaching-learning processes rooted within an enframing worldview are understood and implemented instrumentally, i.e., as a process of ‘transmission’ of knowledge in a standardised pre-planned and tested form. Against this persistent trend, Thomson (2001), informed by Heideggerian thought, advocates a radical shift toward a ‘pedagogical circle’, whereby teaching and learning are regarded as one unique ontological process. Such pedagogy is responsive to ever changing phenomena, which is approached by students and teachers alike, with openness, curiosity and compassion. This ontological thinking, called ‘meditative’ by Heidegger, can be understood here as ‘contemplative thinking’, i.e., as resonance with the present situation by “attending and observing” rather than the usual calculative notion of thinking as mental ruminative representations or judgments (Ergas, 2015). In order to do this, we must learn to learn, characterised as “an attentive and responsive way of dwelling in one’s environment” (Thomson, 2001, p. 256). Accordingly, implementing mindfulness ‘as’ education corresponds with a process of cultivating a more conscious and compassionate way of being within a broader relational culture of care, rather than a culture dominated by instrumentality in which mindfulness is fragmented into skills and oriented toward an individualistic view of self and well-being.

From the aforementioned distinction between calculative and meditative thinking, we will develop three more key Heideggerian ideas that offer promising possibilities for more authentic and integral education, particularly regarding the implementation of mindfulness; these are: the role of teachers, the notion of time and the place of non-wilful action. Considering the role of teachers, Heidegger was keen to emphasise the necessity of getting out of the way of authentic learning, he states:

Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: To let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than learning [...] The teacher must be capable of being more teachable than his apprentices (Heidegger, 1968, p. 15).

If we reflect carefully on our current educational system, and on mindfulness in education, from this paradoxical standpoint, we find that the role of teachers is generally the opposite. Teachers are trained to command their subject matter knowledge and efficiently pass this on to their students. A teacher is therefore someone that must have successful management of both information and pedagogical strategies with diminished regard for their own being and consequently also for the being of their pupils. Biesta (2016) suggests that current educational practice, and particularly the place of teachers within it, needs to transition from a notion of power to authority, whereby an educator is an existential example for learners rather than an academic instructor (Brito & Corthorn, 2018; Naranjo, 2016; Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). This exemplariness consists of an openness, on behalf of the teacher, to the mystery and unpredictability of experience and the wisdom to cultivate a discipline of attention to such potentiality (Lewis, 2017). In doing so, a teacher embodies mindfulness rather than applies it to a particular challenge. As a sensibility, mindful presence brings a sense of receptiveness and wonder to life and hence it is always possible to convert the ordinary into the extraordinary or, in Heideggerian terms, from an inauthentic into an authentic experience of the world. Thus, mindfulness practices can allow teachers to trust in their own experiences, fostering a relationship with pupils based on genuine resonance, curiosity and creativity whilst at the same time drawing upon the ancient wisdom that lies at the heart of core mindfulness attitudes such as present moment awareness, acceptance and openness (Kabat-Zinn, 2005b), releasing teachers from a pre-fixed curriculum in favour of genuine educational exploration.

From a standpoint consistent with a Heideggerian conception of time, we argue that the application of MBIs within education differ depending on what notion of time is implied. Lewis (2017) rescues the Heideggerian distinction between two different modalities of existential time applied to the purpose of education. The word temporality has two non-congruous expressions in German (*Zeitlichkeit* and *Temporalität*), not available in English, so the distinction of temporality and Temporality can be used. Time can be understood inauthentically as ‘temporality’, i.e., as a lineal and sequential course of factual ‘nows’ with predictable endings. In this vein, mindfulness ‘in’ schools can be understood as positioning learning as a ‘product’ (Purser, 2019) subjected to predictable processes with learning objectives known in advance, materials produced, planned, controlled and assessed in a standardised way (Brito,

Joseph & Sellman, 2021; D’Agnese, 2019; Mertel, 2020; Yun, 2018). Alternatively, time can be understood authentically as ‘Temporality’, i.e., as an instant that condenses the past (traditions and conditioning) and future (possibilities), pregnant with potential meanings but without certainties (Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). Accordingly, mindfulness ‘as’ education can be understood as positioning learning as a process characterised by the cultivation of an attitude of curiosity and patient inquiry. Thus, when time is understood as an instant pregnant with unpredictable possibilities-meanings, education enjoys a relaxed intimacy with the present moment in order to let be whatever is trying to happen spontaneously, reminiscent of Trungpa’s (2011) idea whereby ‘the path is the goal’.

The last relevant idea we raise from a Heideggerian viewpoint is related to the over-valuation placed on what he called ‘wilful action’ within the educational process, in general, and particularly pertinent to mindfulness within education. Interestingly, Heidegger (1993/1946) begins his famous “Letter on Humanism” with a reflection clarifying the difference between utilitarian actions and those that serve a more holistic purpose:

We are still far from pondering the essence of action decisively enough. We view action only as causing an effect. The actuality of the effect is valued according to its utility. But the essence of action is accomplishment. To accomplish means to unfold something into the fullness of its essence, to lead it forth into this fullness-*producere* [...] Thinking does not become action only because some effect issues from it or because it is applied. Thinking acts insofar as it thinks. Such action is presumably the simplest and at the same time the highest, because it concerns the relation of Being to man (p. 217)

According to this, an action can be understood in two different directions: ontically, as a rational and planned behaviour that produces a specific expected effect and, ontologically, as a kind of thinking (meditative) which itself is the realisation of an action in the sense of accomplishing a contemplative presence and relationship within/with the world (Brito, 2011, 2018). This dichotomy serves as an accurate description of the difference between instrumental and integral/critical implementations of mindfulness. The latter overlaps with a distinction made by Lewin (2015), who regards deconstruction of the self and the will, and a comprehension of human agency as an interplay between activity and passivity in which the highest realisation comes from a discipline of attention rather than from any calculative effort. As Lewin (2015) states, “what dominates pedagogy today is the construction, transmission, and refinement of mental representations” (p. 86), thus it privileges ideas and concepts over experiences and relationships, mindful skills over mindful sensibilities when applied to our topic. Mindfulness as education, is more closely related to the experience of time expressed as

Temporality, opening the learning environment to a process, Ergas (2015) calls ‘meta-pedagogy’, in which pupils’ attention, normally oriented to the dominant focus on ‘out there’ (subjects, contents, facts, in order to achieve objective knowledge) is counter-balanced with an exploratory focus on ‘in here’ (states of mind, thoughts, feelings, sensations, in order to cultivate self-knowledge) as well as ‘in between’ (relationships, compassion, altruism, in order to cultivate community and societal flourishing). In other words, the predominance of third-person learning can be complemented, and even transformed, by a systematic and systemic attention to first-person and second-person learning through a pedagogical consideration of a contemplative action.

As discussed previously, the implementation of mindfulness in education has been satirically characterised as McM mindfulness by critiques (e.g. Forbes, 2019; Hyland, 2016; Purser, 2019), which means that mindfulness is commonly introduced in education in an instrumentalised manner, with an individualistic focus and to the behest of performative agendas with little or any questioning of the technical logic in which these practices are framed. In Purser’s (2019) words, the purpose of this kind of implementation is “[...] optimizing individuals to make them ‘mentally fit’, attentive and resilient so they may keep functioning within the system” (p. 19). This phenomenon, called an iatrogenic effect by Brito, Joseph and Sellman (2021), results in an inevitable dilution, if not an outright subversion, of the noble ethical foundations from which such practices emerge even when the intentions underpinning the introduction of such practices are innocent or well-meaning. This, we argue is currently somewhat inevitable because of the sheer power of the epochal context enframing modern mentality.

Thus, aligned with the core features of an enframing worldview, the current implementation of mindfulness in education can be considered, paraphrasing Forbes (2019), as a McM mindfulness Technical Complex, in which predominates an individualistic focus on personal well-being without interiority nor interconnection (Ergas, 2017) at the service of academic achievement and productivity. One of the most basic challenges that we have to cope with related to mindfulness in education is being capable of going beyond our ‘default mind’ and its doing-mode and settle down on the openness of our wisdom and simply being-here, recognising within us the capacity to dwell in a meditative-contemplative way², i.e., in the

² It is possible to establish a parallel between the Heideggerian distinction between calculative and meditative thinking and Kabat-Zinn’s (2005b) contrast between the doing and being-mode. While the doing-mode is a state of mind in which we are thinking most of the time, generally in a manipulative way in anticipation of expected

experience of being fully present within this technical world but, at the same time, maintaining a healthy detachment from it (Heidegger, 1969/1959). From this idea of meditative thinking, mindfulness can be comprehended as a form of education itself (Ergas, 2019a, Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020), which in Naranjo's (2016) terms implies the development of an education of the whole person for a unified world. For a number of authors, such a development is consistent with the argument for a more integral approach to teaching mindfulness (Brito, Joseph and Sellman, 2021; Ergas, 2019a/b; Forbes, 2019; Wilber, 2016). Ergas (2017) describes this endeavour as a process of attending both 'in' and 'out', where the 'outer curriculum', focused on 'knowing thy world' is balanced with an 'inner curriculum' focused on 'knowing thy self'. Such an approach incorporates means of developing awareness of the body, emotions, thinking and relationships; personal, social and ecological consciousness; culminating in a deep ethical orientation that integrates wisdom, authenticity and compassion for ourselves and others.

Accordingly, the current educational system urgently requires not just cosmetic reform but radical transformation, characterised by a shift from mindfulness in education to mindfulness as education with at least two core principles at its heart. First, is to place teachers' and pupils' consciousness at the centre of the educational experience (Sellman, 2020). This is not consciousness studies per se rather an acknowledgement of conscious being and unity with all other beings informing all aspects of the educational experience, encapsulated by such terms as being, presence and embodiment, all within a larger conscious community and culture. Second, to ground every educational decision in the principles of contemplative traditions, acknowledging the importance of wisdom over academic performance by embracing axioms such as inter-dependence, impermanence, awareness of the default tendency of human perception toward delusion and the necessity of permanent effort and discipline toward authenticity and contemplative thinking as a way of being.

CONCLUSION

results, generating constant distractions and engaging with emotional saturation, in the being-mode our attention is at ease with our present experience accompanied by an attitude of openness and acceptance generating mental and physical calm and well-being.

In conclusion, our intention has been to establish some connections between Heidegger's core ideas with the current over-simplified implementation of mindfulness in education rooted in an enframing mentality, demonstrating how its instrumentalisation possesses hidden threats for the educational system, and to offer alternative directions for the future. It is helpful to consider Ergas' (2019a) proposal to distinguish mindfulness within education into three main roles: in, as and of. By way of summary, mindfulness 'in' education refers to its instrumentalised implementation as an external mental health intervention with a focus on academic attainment and well-being, both covertly at the service of productivity. Mindfulness 'as' education refers to an integral approach, whereby mindfulness is understood as an educational process itself and permeates educational culture. Mindfulness 'of' education refers to a critical implementation, by which mindfulness serves as a platform for analysing the educational process itself and its relationship to socio-political and ecological dimensions (see also Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020). In the context of this article, the critique of instrumental mindfulness can be understood as oriented toward a calculative thinking typical of neoliberalism. Whereas the proposal for integral and critical mindfulness can be understood as grounded upon meditative thinking and relates well to the roles of mindfulness 'as' and 'of' education. In this way, we have applied Heideggerian philosophy to contemporary critiques of mindfulness, which we think offers a nuanced understanding concerning education's more meaningful transformative potential at individual, social and ecological levels. In this respect, Heidegger's philosophy possesses much value for educationalists as it offers a trans-disciplinary language with the potential to integrate multiple but divergent perspectives emerging from the traditions of education, psychology, sociology, philosophy and spirituality, among others. As Mertel (2020) suggests, if we are engaged with the noble wish to overcome the dominant and corrosive worldview of enframing, it is fundamental to understand that education is not primarily about knowledge but about transforming our form of life on the planet whilst simultaneously sustaining and enriching it.

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