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# Why is it Better to Suffer and Not to Die through Euthanasia? A Multi-perspective Analysis

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**Abstract**
The paper underpins the argument that the experience of suffering cannot be a basis for the practice of euthanasia. Albeit, the advocates of euthanasia believed that the personal experience of suffering as sufficient motivation and justification to terminate life. The paper counter-argues through multi-perspective views on pain and suffering, which highlight the 'instrumental value' of pain and suffering to attain the genuine essence of happiness. Multi-perspective views include John Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism, the different religions understanding, and luminary writers such as Viktor Frankl and Philip Yancey. An evaluation of the value of human suffering using Aristotle's understanding of the ultimate good completes the discussion. By seeing the importance and value of human suffering, one can adequately prepare for an indeed 'good death,' the root word of the misused term: Euthanasia.

**Keywords**: Euthanasia, Pain, and Suffering, Instrumental Value, Ultimate Good

## 1. Introduction

The debate over euthanasia is becoming more strident mainly because of the confusion about the terminology describing the care of the end of life. Etymologically speaking, euthanasia originally means 'a good death' (*eu-thanatos*). Unfortunately, modern society shifts its meaning to the medical procedure of freeing a person from anxiety and pain through an eventual death (Black, 2018). The brand name of euthanasia, which is commonly known today, is 'mercy killing' that is an intentional ending of a person's life to cut-off the experience of suffering (cf. Seal 2018; Ariyarathne & Hulathduwa, 2019; May, 2019; Tagi, 2019).

Euthanasia is quite a controversial issue as far as morality is concerned. It has been a moral issue in philosophy. There are opposing views on the rightness and wrongness of this act. The morality of euthanasia is anchored on the problem of the existence of pain and suffering. Literatures agreed that in a near-to-death experience, there is

nothing quite as personal as the physical and psychological suffering of an individual (cf. Zimbardo, 2017; Coulehan, 2018; Greenwood et al., 2018; Rodrigues et al., 2018; Schlieter, 2018; Sellers, 2019). The personal experience of suffering, thus, is the main projected reason why euthanasia is practiced and advocated by many individuals who find their lives useless and worthless. Peter Singer (2000) states in his book, *Writing on an Ethical Life*, that medical personnel (e.g., Doctor of Medicine) relieved an individual from pain or distress from an incurable illness through euthanasia. Thus ironically risking a murder charge against the requesting patient. The legalization of euthanasia has generated controversies around the globe (cf. Kondaurov et al., 2017; Mazloom et al., 2017; Stolberg, 2017; Hovhannisyan, 2018; Keown, 2018; Tao et al., 2018).

The problem of euthanasia has been aggravated in our age that is characterized by advancement in medicine. Later studies of Wingham et al. (2017), Pillet et al. (2018a), (2018b), Tada (2018), and Bovero et al. (2019) purported that advocates of euthanasia project the suffering of a terminally ill patient as a meaningless feeling of futile and agonizing experience that will only worsen the situation of the individual. However, this doesn't mean that the existence of human suffering, of any kind, can give moral justification to the acceptance of euthanasia.

**Brief Historical Review**

The practice of euthanasia had been a controversy even in ancient times (Montaguti et al., 2018). Michael Manning (1998), in his book entitled, *Euthanasia And Physician-Assisted Suicide: Killing or Caring?* wrote about the account of euthanasia. Three different eras are presented, namely: euthanasia in Greece and Rome, the post-classical period, and eighteenth century enlightenment and beyond. In classical Greek antiquity and into the Christian era of the Roman Empire, the term euthanasia did not have a narrow and technical meaning (Manning, 1998). Rather, the focus was on what manner one dies and not the death itself (Manning, 1998).

Moreover, ancient accounts of 'euthanasia 'practice testified that such exercise had been applied to desperate individuals experiencing terrible suffering. For instance, the Assyrian and Indian physicians would suggest that irredeemable patients were drowned in the rivers of Euphrates and Ganges, respectively (cf. Manning, 1998; Garett, 2018; Montaguti et al., 2018). The Greek physicians would put an end to the extreme suffering of patients by giving medicine that could instantly kill the later (Manning, 1998). Suetonius (as cited by Garett, 2018) provided the oldest record of the usage of the term 'euthanasia' in Greek history. Seutonius described the death of Augustus Ceasar. He wrote that

*"...while he was asking some newcomers from the city about the daughter of Drusus, who was ill, he suddenly passed away as he was kissing Livia, uttering these last words, Live mindful of our wedlock, Livia, and farewell, thus blessed with an easy death (euthanasia) and such a one as he had always longed for."*

In the Post-Classical Period in Europe, Christian teaching opposed euthanasia for the same reason as Judaism (cf. Manning, 1998; Garett, 2018; Montaguti et al., 2018). Christianity emphasized the value of respect to human life and that humanity has no right to take away its life (Manning, 1998). No serious discussion of euthanasia was accounted in Christian Europe until the eighteenth century Enlightenment (Manning 1998). In this time, the church was attacked by its dogmatic teaching, which includes its view regarding euthanasia and suicide. David Hume (as cited by Shneidman, 2018), in his book, *On Suicide*, wrote boldly that,

*"...suicide and painless death may often be consistent with interest and with our duty to ourselves, no one can question, who allows that age, sickness, or misfortune, may render a burden, and make it worse even than annihilation."*

The practice of euthanasia in the nineteenth century was regarded as "a peaceful death" (cf. Manning, 1998; Garett, 2018; Montaguti et al., 2018). The social circumstances of the time fundamentally drove the active practice of euthanasia in the nineteenth century (cf. Manning, 1998; Garett, 2018; Montaguti et al., 2018). For instance, Samuel Williams (as cited by Vangouver, 2019) wrote a conceptual implication of 'medicalized' euthanasia. William specified that

*"... in all cases it should be the duty of the medical attendant, whenever so desired by the patient, to administer chloroform, or any other such anesthetics as may by and by superseding chloroform, to destroy consciousness at once, and put the sufferer at once to a quick and painless death; precautions being adopted to prevent any possible abuse of such duty; and means being taken to establish beyond any possibility of doubt or question, that the remedy was applied at the express wish of the patient."*

The idea of William established thoughtful consideration in medical journals and at scientific meetings. Albeit, alleviating the experience of pain and not to advance death (Vangouver, 2019; Vulcănescu, 2019). The dispute over euthanasia forwards to the twentieth century. In America, for instance, issues on suicide and mercy killing were fueled by the rise of cases of depression and the eventual economic crisis (cf. Manning, 1998; Vangouver, 2019; Vulcănescu, 2019). While in Europe, the British House of Lords debated over the legalization of euthanasia (Vangouver, 2019).

Until now, the debate has not yet closed. Advocates of euthanasia believed that the act of killing the suffering person is justifiable and a practical exhibition of 'compassion.' The contention of non-importance of life due to the experience of pain and suffering seemed to become a pragmatic reason for justifying the acceptability of euthanasia. As contended by Keowen (2018), Faneye (2019) and Wee (2019), euthanasia is an action or an omission which of itself or by intention causes death, so that all suffering may in this way be eliminated. Thus, advocates of euthanasia see that the personal experience of suffering as sufficient motivation and justification to terminate life.

**Main Objective of the Paper**

Euthanasia is one of the most significant ethical issues of our times (cf. Knesl et al., 2017; Paterson, 2017; Goligher et al., 2017; Kipperman et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2019). With the extension of human life expectancy and the rapid development of medical technology, the issue of euthanasia has become more and more complex. The dilemma to choose between enduring and ending up one's excruciating experience of pain and suffering is at hand. This paper argued that the primordial query is not whether euthanasia is ethical or not. Instead, it asked how the society, in general, looks at the reality of pain and suffering since pain and suffering become the primary factor why euthanasia is strongly favored by many. Hence, this paper highlights the necessity of presenting the value of pain and suffering as a mean to enlighten those who are enduring excruciating pain and not to resort to euthanasia as the only way out.

## 2. Methodology and Limitation

The paper collects different notions of pain and suffering from different points of view. The multi-perspectives of pain and suffering comprise 1.) John Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism, emphasizing the utilization of suffering in attaining happiness; 2.) The different religions understanding; and 3.) Other luminary authors, such as Viktor Frankl and Philip Yancey. A separate part is provided to evaluate the value of human suffering using Aristotle's understanding of the ultimate good by which the experience of suffering can be an 'instrument' in attaining it. The paper concludes with understanding a preferable alternative to euthanasia, as argued by different references that help create a more robust and acceptable argument.

It is necessary to point out that this work limits its idea of pain and suffering from the works cited above. This paper would be relatively acceptable to those who believe in the importance of human life and see its value as 'sacred.' Thus, life should be respected and honored.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### *3.1. Notions of Pain and Suffering*

In exposing euthanasia's history, it cannot be denied the fact that it is a problem concerning understanding the experience of pain and suffering that makes such an act acceptable despite its being unethical. It is the negative

outlook of the experience of pain and suffering that leads to thinking that life has become useless and futile. The following perspectives hereon provide different positive notions of pain and suffering in lieu of evaluating the practice of euthanasia.

### *3.1.1. John Stuart Mill's Concept of Pain*

One of the fundamental principles in understanding the notions of pain and suffering is John Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism. We have to make a clear distinction between the latter's principle and that of Jeremy Bentham. Although it is clear that it was Bentham who made the first step to use this principle and that Mill was an aspirant of such thought, who started with the same general ideas as Bentham, however, Mill took a different approach, which made his work varied and unique.

Nevertheless, this principle is believed to be an offspring of the ancient Hedonists, and Epicurean approaches of things as far as usefulness is concerned (Oleś & Jankowski, 2018). Moreover, Utilitarianism is also confused with Pragmatism, which mainly interprets truth in terms of its practical effects (Kellogg, 2019). Defining Mill's Utilitarianism like that of Epicureanism and Pragmatism would only mislead those who tried to practice this kind of morality. What they do not know is that Mill's theory has more to speak of other than exerting greater emphasis on pleasure and avoidance of pain (cf. Ebenstein, 2018; Forder et al., 2018; Compton & Hoffman, 2019; Biswas, 2020).

It is true that Utilitarianism, at least, that of Mill, is founded on the morals of Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle. But this doesn't mean that it promotes pleasure by preventing pain since. In the first place, it doesn't define pleasure as the greatest happiness man can ever achieve but as one of the sources which man can utilize to attain happiness (cf. Ebenstein, 2018; Forder et al., 2018; Compton & Hoffman, 2019; Biswas, 2020). Thus, presumably, it doesn't eliminate pain also as a possible vehicle, so to speak, in arriving not just to happiness but also to 'value-making,' which for Mill is the highest form of happiness (Biswas, 2020).

Thus, as far as happiness is concerned, pain and suffering could also be utilized by man to achieve it. Pleasure may not always be the only way to safeguard oneself from harm, but by managing one's negative side, which shows one's imperfections (Balint, 2018; Robertson & Long, 2018). Thus part of that which brought pain and suffering will help a person in finding the real value of life which is the greatest happiness a person could ever achieve. Hence, for Mill (as cited by Ebenstein, 2018), it is better to be a human being dissatisfied because of the many pains one has to endure than a pig satisfied because one has contented its appetite yet still remains a brute. Mill's Utilitarianism, therefore, is not a principle that promotes pleasure that degrades one's humanity by merely indulging oneself to one's lower appetite like that of the idea of Epicureanism (Ogan, 2018). Pain and suffering will help to seek for the real meaning of one's dignity as one loses one's aspirations due to the loss of intellectual taste and are brought by indulgence to inferior pleasures (cf. Coulehan, 2018; Habermas, 2018; Roberts, 2018; Edkins, 2019; Svenaeus, 2019). Mill's Utilitarianism, hence, is directed to attain an end, which is the cultivation of nobleness of character, which could also be realized through enduring and finding the meaning of one's pain and suffering.

### *3.1.2. Religions Understanding of Pain and Suffering*

Sorrow and suffering, death, and devastation are an inevitable part of human existence. For most religions, this fact is crucial. Indeed, the human response to suffering and the reality of evil around us may be critical elements to defining how religions function in human life (cf. Peterson, 2018; Rouzati, 2018; Whale, 2018; Clack & Clack, 2019). As observed, religions look beyond the world in a variety of ways to seek out the so-called 'Holy,' or what in philosophy is called the 'Absolute.' As a result, stories and myths are developed and became the source to make sense of life by imagining how things came about and how they continued to depend upon that reality which is beyond life including the connection between religions and suffering (cf. Peterson, 2018; Rouzati, 2018; Whale, 2018; Clack & Clack, 2019). Sorrows, disappointments, diseases, and death are the facts of human existence that need explanations (Peterson, 2018).

When people ask why there is suffering or why the experience of pain occurred, they are not looking for scientific explanations but for the religious account, which offers 'meaning-beyond' (Clack & Clack, 2019). Religions' answers on the inevitability of suffering vary as much as religions have differences. The differences of religious beliefs, however, do not reject the value which suffering itself entails. Moreover, this proves that despite the disparity of personal views, there is still a commonality that human suffering implies.

Religion provides a 'sense of meaning within chaos,' which is equivalent to giving meaning to human suffering (cf. Captari et al., 2019; Keefe-Perry & Moon, 2019; Pederzini, 2019). Peter Berger (as cited by Teslia, 2019) suggests that

*"... it is precisely the chaos of life, especially disaster and suffering, that inspires the social construction of religious worlds which leads society to come together to construct an explanation through which religion is born. Thus, making a theodicy of making an effort of explaining philosophically why God or the gods create or allow the suffering of their beloved humans."*

Moreover, monotheistic religions, like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, viewed suffering concerning human responsibility (cf. Kent, 2005; Black, 2018; Rouzati, 2018). Kent (2005), in his book *Understanding Religion in a Global Society*, wrote that

*"... one important explanation in Judaism maintains that human suffering is a punishment for violating the covenant with God…. This is due to the belief of the fall of Adam and Eve as they disobeyed the commandment of God in the Garden of Eden… for Christianity and Muslim, the emphasis seems to be a bit different…. Muslims may interpret suffering as a test of whether or not one will continue to submit to Allah… Christianity describes suffering as an opportunity to grow in virtue and faith. By doing so, suffering may be seen as a promise for a great eternal reward."*

The Christian tradition emphasized a redemptive characteristic of the value of suffering. This spirituality-connected value of suffering corresponded to the Christian belief on the concept of salvation. For Christians, human suffering is viewed as a trial to be sustained. John Paul II (as cited by Cataldo, 2019) wrote in *Salvifici Doloris* that

*"... suffering as it were contains a special call to the virtue which man must exercise on his own pat. And this is the virtue of perseverance in bearing whatever disturbs and causes harm. In doing this, the individual unleashes hope, which maintains in him the conviction that suffering will not get the better of him, that it will not deprive him of his dignity as a human being, a dignity linked to awareness of the meaning of life."*

The experience of suffering doesn't only promote virtue to the person who experiences the suffering but also those who witness it. John Paul II (as cited by Cataldo, 2019) continued in saying that

*"... when this body is gravely ill, totally incapacitated, and the person is almost incapable of living and acting, all the more do interior maturity. Spiritual greatness becomes evident, constituting a touching lesson to those who are healthy and normal."*

Even then, other polytheistic religions also interpret suffering in their traditional practices. Hinduism, a religion that teaches reincarnation, accepts the idea of "Karma" as a way to explain suffering. Reincarnation may help to explain suffering by giving people the sense of ultimate fairness and justice. Buddhism, on the other hand, believes in the first noble truth, which sees life as a 'suffering *dukkha*' (cf. Kent, 2005; Captari et al., 2019; Keefe-Perry & Moon, 2019; Pederzini, 2019). For Buddhists, then, life is not a struggle against a sea of suffering but an acceptance of reality, which includes the recognition of suffering to one's life (Keefe-Perry & Moon, 2019). Such acceptance of suffering in Buddhism found resonance in the teachings of Taoism in China. For the Taoist, like the Buddhist, taught that suffering and illness are, after all, simply part of life (Pederzini, 2019).

To some extent, eastern and western religions supply an understanding of suffering, but they vary significantly on how to react to suffering. Each religion offers a distinct explanation that implies a solution to suffering. The most reasonable acceptance of suffering is found in those religions which taught suffering as part of life. At its most extreme, suffering may be seen to have a positive or purgative value; that is, in some religions, physical suffering is intentionally taken on because it purifies the body from the so-called sin" (Captari et al., 2019). Hence, suffering gives us good reason to fight against and to rage the evils in life.

### *3.1.3. Other Perspectives of Pain and Suffering*

Humanity never stops in finding the real value of human life, which includes even the most incredible experience that accompanies him/her now and then. Such becomes the reason why the search for the meaning of life has still been the interest of some thinkers. Viktor Frankl, a survivor of the holocaust and Philip Yancey, a writer who wrote the experience of Dr. Paul D. Brand with the leprosy victims, explains the importance of suffering in our life.

#### *3.1.3.1. Meaning of Suffering*

Viktor E. Frankl offered an alternative insight of the experience of suffering and pain rooted from his personal experience as a survivor of the Second World War (cf. Ritchie et al., 2018; Uemura, 2018; Von Devivere, 2018a; 2018b; Edwards & Van Tongeren, 2019). Frankl's experience led him to discover his understanding of the nature of human beings, which tuned out to be a new psychological paradigm away from that of Freud and Adler (Ritchie et al., 2018). Frankl called this as "Logotherapy" based on the Greek term 'logos', indicating 'meaning.' Based on Nietzsche's aphorism, *"...he who has a why to live can bear with almost any how,"* Frankl conveyed the significance of finding the meaning of life. Thus, a person who can see the purpose of one's existence can certainly overcome eventual circumstances, no matter hard and painful these would be (Von Devivere, 2018a). Frankl observed this 'meaning-finding' approach back in his experience in a Nazi concentration camp (Edwards & Van Tongeren 2019). He posited three triads of meaning-finding: (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering (cf. Ritchie et al., 2018; Uemura, 2018; Von Devivere, 2018a; 2018b; Edwards & Van Tongeren, 2019).

Moreover, Frankl also found the irrevocable unity between the meaning of life and suffering. As part of human existence, suffering is a glaring, undeniable element of life. The challenge it posits, however, is the ability to metamorphose suffering to an event that will help a person find one's value. In so doing, a conversion of mere experience of suffering to a purposeful avenue to appreciate life itself (Edwards & Van Tongeren, 2019). However, Frankl warned that the inability to find meaning amid suffering could lead to 'existential frustration' (cf. Ritchie et al., 2018; Uemura, 2018; Von Devivere, 2018a; 2018b; Edwards & Van Tongeren, 2019). This condition, which results from the dearth of characters, initiatives, and values to direct one's conduct, gives rise to an 'existential vacuum.' The existential vacuum is essentially exhibited in states of dullness, indifference, tenacious hunts of corporeal desires, and unchallenged conventionality to the supreme central communal leanings.

Frankl added that logotherapy could help a person overcome the existential despondency over the seemingly meaninglessness of life (Von Devivere, 2018b). However, logotherapy does not aim at providing the individual with a ready-made meaning. Instead, it facilitates the discovery of meaning by the individual who lacks it. Thus, meaning-finding remained to be necessarily a prime responsibility of a person (Uemura, 2018). Lastly, the message that is prevalent in the writings of Viktor Frankl is that no matter what type of suffering a person endures, as long as one holds to his or her faith that everything happens for a reason, he or she can survive. By doing so, individuals can combat the storms of their lives with the strength and determination to overcome the trials of life.

#### *3.1.3.2. The Gift of Pain*

Philip Yancey (2000), wrote his celebrated book, The Gift of Pain, about the investigation of Dr. Paul Brand on the mystery of pain. Dr. Brand is renowned for being a medical surgeon of leprosy victims in India (Yancey, 2000).

Yancey (2000) accounts mainly focused on *"enabling people with leprosy to live healthy and productive lives."*

Dr. Brand discovered that lepers lost the ability to feel pain (Yancey, 2000). Lepers lived as if they unnoticed pain, which could eventually harm themselves, especially when they cut a part of their body. Although leprosy is not a contagious disease, the loss of ability to feel any untoward feeling leads leper to develop 'bad flesh.' Thus, the absence of pain is the greatest enemy of the lepers (Yancey, 2000). Throughout the book, Dr. Brand reiterates that because lepers cannot feel pain, they are without the body's most basic protective mechanism (Yancey, 2000). Such experience leads Dr. Brand to discover the gift of physical pain. He claimed that because leprosy damaged the awareness of pain in the affected parts of the body, victims harmed themselves without them noticing it. From this clinical finding of Dr. Brand, the need for pain is inevitable (Yancey, 2000).

Pain is an essential aspect of human health. It is an indicator that tells us something is wrong. It has a value that becomes clearest in its absence (Yancey, 2000). Pain could act as a warning that will help prevent further injury. As opined by Brand (as cited by Yancey, 2000),

*"…the pain signal begins with an alarm which goes off when nerve endings sense danger. The pain signal can be blocked before it reaches the brain. The spinal cord and base of the brain act as a gate to sort out which of the many millions of signals from different parts of the body deserve to be forwarded to the brain. There the prescreened messages are sorted, and the brain decides on a response. Pain doesn't exist until the entire cycle of the signal, message, and the response has been completed."*

Pain offers with a caution which we have to listen to (Yancey, 2000). We need to 'befriend' pain despite being an 'unwanted' gift. Pain is the method our body tells us that noteworthy modification is stirring in the human body. It is the very unpleasantness of pain that makes it so effective at protecting humankind (Yancey, 2000). Pain is not the enemy, but the loyal scout that announced the enemy (Yancey, 2000). Thus, pain truly is the gift which, unfortunately, nobody wants.

### *3.2. Pain and Suffering as Sources of Happiness*

Human suffering can be meaningful, depending on how we deal with it. Kapoor et al. (2018) purported that of all the goods that human beings seek, happiness would seem to qualify as the ultimate aim. From such stand point, this paper inquires whether pain and suffering can somehow help us in finding real happiness. How can my suffering help me attain happiness? This question becomes very interesting since the idea of happiness is equated to pleasure. Thus, the problem of defining happiness is not just an abstract, theoretical problem but a practical issue that confronts humanity from time to time.

#### *3.2.1. Happiness in the Context of Pain and Suffering*

Happiness is a summary judgment about the way the episodes in the life of individual extract values from the situations in which one finds oneself (cf. Cassol et al., 2018; Kewalramani & Ahirwar, 2018). It is not, therefore, fulfilling an ideal life that is free from any painful experience and only seeking for what is pleasurable but is, instead, about responding to what has value in our situation. This view explains why people of ordinary ability or some disability often reported being happy even under dire conditions. And why people with rapidly rising expectations under conditions of plenty, as well as enormously successful people, can nevertheless be unhappy, for they have not yet learned to grasp what is genuine value in their circumstances (cf. Compton & Hoffman, 2019; Binder, 2019).

All things in the universe have 'a purpose or end,' according to Aristotle (cf. Dahlbeck, 2018; Wladika, 2019). For Aristotle, in achieving happiness, 'virtues' must be developed through an optimistic outlook of life (Çifçi, 2019). Hence, for Aristotle, it is through cultivation of virtues, which a person acquires, through a constant disposition of oneself towards the proper good that is genuine happiness. An adequate theory of happiness must explain why it is more than simply feeling good about life. Aristotle proposes a definition that will help us better understand what

it means of being truly happy (cf. Dahlbeck, 2018; Wladika, 2019). Happiness is a pattern of activity and judgment through which one finds meaning, through the use of reasoning, in each of the many different experiences that a person has. By so doing, one acquires virtues that will enable the person to seek the 'purpose of one's existence.' Aristotle (as cited by Wladika, 2019) wrote that

*"...living life according to reason is our purpose and living a remarkable life is to reason well and act accordingly. To achieve such a life is to achieve happiness. It is our ultimate purpose, the end to which all other goals are subordinate."*

Just like any other experience, the experience of suffering is directed to an end. If a person wants to be happy, one must respond to any experiences in ways that produce the dispositions and attitudes associated with happiness (Çifçi, 2019). Thus, one fails to be genuinely happy if one cannot deal with any experiences positively. The vulnerability of experience makes them valuable (Çifçi, 2019). Happiness does not arise from making oneself invulnerable by evading unbearable suffering but by acknowledging vulnerability and by having successfully cope with it through developing the 'attitude of care' (Çifçi, 2019). So that, through recognizing the value and vulnerability, one understands the importance of human suffering as an essential part of the fragility of life that will help a person in the cultivation of virtues and attainment of the real purpose of one's life which is to be truly happy (Çifçi, 2019).

### *3.2.2. The Instrumental Value of Pain and Suffering*

The discussion above pointed to the reality of pain and suffering as an experience that helps a person to cultivate virtue, which directs a person to achieve happiness. The 'instrumentality' of pain paves a way to discover the value of human life. Immanuel Kant, for instance, (as cited by Eberl, 2018a, 2019b, 2019c) proposed a moral theory on happiness that valued proprietorship as owning. Albeit, euthanasia advocates, see the action-itself as a defining behavior to alleviate and regulate the destiny of a suffering person (cf. Tada, 2018; May, 2019; Miller et al., 2019; Taqi, 2019). What they fail to know is that an individual could be more positive in one's action by 'redefining' one's fate through looking for the meaning and value of the experienced rather than merely rejecting it.

The cultivation of virtue and exercise of autonomy of an individual does not only focus on a superficial finding of the value of the experience of suffering. Rather it holistically defines interrelatedness of lives between the suffering individual and persons surrounding the former (Eberl, 2018a, 2019b, 2019c). Fowler (1996) contends that

*"... we do define ourselves in suffering both as individuals and as participants in the shared human condition. It is in suffering that we profoundly sense that our afflictedness at once is both intensely private and isolative, and yet held in common with all humanity. Our creatureliness, our lack of control, our consanguinity, our individuality, and our co-humanity confront us in suffering. Suffering is not ours to control in terms of how we respond to it individually and collectively."*

Here, autonomy is not merely an exercise of controlling the experience of suffering, which would be very unlikely to happen since the excruciating experience of pain is undeniable, but, more importantly, by responding to suffering positively. Such positive responding could be done if the whole community supports an individual who is suffering. By this, we argue that the instrumental value of pain and suffering is defined by the proper understanding of real autonomy that is collective and holistic. The whole community exercises the universality of response by appreciating the instrumental value of pain and suffering. Such could be done by allowing the spirit of solidarity between the person suffering and the surrounding community.

Solidarity is a gesture that actively and positively transforms the anguishing experience of suffering and pain of an individual through the help and encouragement of the community. Ebert (2019c) opined that*"...when community supplies solidarity and purpose, suffering becomes an avenue to find the real essence of happiness."*

When the whole community showed solidarity and encouragement to the person who experiences pain and

suffering, one would grow in his or her interpersonal experiences with others. The person in pain could sense unity and respect to the dignity of self by seeing genuine care from those who surrounded him/her. One could spirituality grow, which made him/her psychologically and physically strong to some degree to fight for life. The opportunity to develop and to express the virtuous character, in exercising the duty to serve, and experience mutual love and respect, can increase the sense of self-esteem and overall self-fulfillment, which will eventually lead to the cultivation of virtue and achievement of the true meaning of happiness.

## 4. Conclusion

In summary, even if the practice of euthanasia were to be confined to those who voluntarily request an end to their lives, no physician could, in good conscience, participate in such act. To decide directly to cause the death of a patient is to abandon a cardinal principle – to do no harm to one's patient. The relief of suffering does not extend to an act. That presupposes that the life of a patient who is suffering is not worthy of being lived. Such would also mean that not even the patient, who is dying, cannot justifiably and unilaterally universalize the principle by which a dying life would be declared to be worthless.

The passive acceptance of suffering and inevitable death can lead to a patient's powerless defeat that will ultimately lead to the loss of control over one's destiny. While euthanasia offers some level of control to the patient or other persons who are to decide the fate of the patient, yet it includes resignation to suffering, a sense of surrendering one's will and power, by being in the act of escaping from it.

The recognition of the instrumental value of pain and suffering takes power and control over pain and suffering, thereby putting them in the hands of the patient and medical persons around him or her. Such becomes a profound exercise of one's autonomy and self-fulfillment for one to promote the value of pain and suffering rather than to allow suffering to devalue the patient by quickly taking its life.

To understand one's experience of pain and suffering, one must learn to accept that these experiences can have instrumental value for oneself and others as well. People who are surrounding the terminally ill patient are called to recognize that a suffering patient is a person in need of respect and love and is not like a broken machine that only requires a repair. They must assist the patient in realizing that one does not suffer and face death alone. The patients' pain and suffering are not vainly there but a way by which one can see the importance of life and how one's approach to suffering can be fulfilling to one's part and others through the cultivation of virtues. When the patient could recognize the instrumental value of suffering, one may gain a sense of right autonomous control over one's experience. Such that he or she can accept suffering as a friend or tame it as a pet, rather than wasting one's energy in fighting it as an enemy or escaping it as a predator. Thus, by seeing the importance and value of human suffering, surely one can adequately prepare oneself for one and indeed 'good death,' the root word of the misused term: Euthanasia.

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