

Themes of War and Trauma in Viktor Frankl's: *Man's Search for Meaning*

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Declaration

I declare that the work presented in the Dissertation entitled “**Themes of War and Trauma in Viktor Frankl’s: *Man’s Search For Meaning***” being submitted to the

Department of English, School of Language, Doon University, Dehradun for the award of Master in English is my original research work.

The Dissertation embodies the results of investigations, observations, and experiments carried out by me. I have neither plagiarised any part of the dissertation nor have submitted the same work for the award of any other degree/diploma anywhere.

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Certificate

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled “**Themes of War and Trauma in Viktor Frankl’s: *Man’s Search For Meaning***” submitted by Anushka Lekharu has been done under my supervision. It is also certified that the work in this Dissertation embodies original research and hard work of the candidate.

The assistance and support received during the course of investigation and all the sources of literature have been fully acknowledged.

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Dedication

I dedicate my Dissertation work to my family and friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving teachers. To the hundreds of men and women who are in the community in pursuit of healthy living.

I also dedicate this work to my supervisor Dr. Richa Joshi Pandey, whose constant guidance and support has helped this Dissertation become a success. To the Vice Chancellor of Doon University, Prof. Surekha Dangwal and the Head of Department, Dr. Chetana Pokhriyal for giving me the opportunity to present this Dissertation.

Lastly, I dedicate this work to our Almighty God for the continued blessings. Thank you for the guidance, support, strength, power of mind, protection and skills. All of these, I offer to you.

Department of English (Doon University)

Abstract

The research examines the psychological and physical health repercussions of war and trauma, such as "post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)", as well as issues including sleeplessness, stomach pains, and despair. Children and adults alike suffer lasting physical and mental damage as a result of conflict. The effects of death are far-reaching and inevitable. There are a number of other repercussions, such as widespread poverty, poor nutrition, disability, economic and social deterioration, and mental and behavioural health problems. Having a deeper knowledge of conflicts and the spectrum of mental health issues that result from them is essential for addressing these kinds of issues.

The study aims to determine the extent to which unpleasant experiences recalled during flashbacks provide credibility to the oft-repeated historical facts. As a means of alleviating the resulting pain, it is crucial that survivors take charge of their own mental health. Not underestimating people's self-awareness and adaptability is a mistake that should be avoided.

To this day, "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl remains one of the most influential and thought-provoking novels ever written. The renowned psychiatrist Viktor Frankl spent three years of the "Second World War imprisoned in Auschwitz and other concentration camps", and his experience is both horrifying and inspiring.

This is a book on making it through difficult situations. This book recounts the horrors endured by millions of captives, particularly those housed in Auschwitz.

There have been plenty of stories told about the big atrocities; this one focuses on the little ones. This study focuses less on the hardships Frankl endured and the things he lost than it is about the things that gave him the will to live. Ultimately, Frankl concluded that the desire to meaning is the primary human motivator, and this insight became the core of his ground-breaking theory, Logotherapy.

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Department of English(Doon University)

Themes of War and Trauma in Viktor Frankl's:
Man's Search for Meaning

Department of English(D. O. University)

Introduction

When we go through anything surprising, unpleasant, or hazardous, it may have a significant effect on our psyche. The word "trauma" has become more commonplace in recent years. Stress like this might increase your vulnerability to mental health issues including PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Research into trauma didn't appear until the 1990s. There was an underlying trauma paradigm based on Freudian philosophy. The field of study known as "trauma studies" analyses how traumatic events have affected culture and literature. Factors from psychology, rhetoric, and culture are used to the analysis.

Extreme traumas such as "rape, war, the Holocaust, the Gulag, American slavery, colonial oppression, and racism" can be represented in the cultural context of an individual's or group's experience of trauma. One of the best books to come out of the Holocaust is Viktor Frankl's "Man's Search for Meaning." It's a book written by Viktor Frankl on his time spent as a prisoner in the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz. One of the psychological approaches he discusses is his own creation: Logotherapy. He also stressed the need of maintaining hope and having meaning in one's life regardless of one's situation. The Themes of War and Trauma" in Literature course uses this novel on survival as a text.

Frankl frequently alludes to Nietzsche's adage that "He, who has a way to live for can suffer nearly any How" throughout the book (Frankl, 7). He talks about the prisoners who had given up on existence and seen no future for themselves. For this reason, they were the first to perish. According to Frankl, the inmates perished not so much from hunger or disease as from despair. But it was hope, a simple concept, that came from his wife's mind, that kept Frankl going. He imagined meeting her again following the war, and that kept his optimism alive. His second goal was to help others by lecturing on the psychological insights he had learnt from his time at Auschwitz. Unfortunately, many inmates who actively sought survival ultimately lost their battles with sickness or the crematoria. Frankl is less concerned with how people perished and more with how they were able to survive.

One of his core beliefs, that the pursuit of meaning is more important than the pursuit of pleasure or power (as Freud and Adler would have it) was strengthened by his time spent at Auschwitz. Frankl identifies three places where one might find meaning: one's job, one's love (which Frankl portrays in terms of his wife), and one's religious beliefs.

determination to keep going even when things look bleakest. Despite his assertion that suffering has no inherent value, he argues that our reactions to it always have some kind of significance. He argues that even a brave and honourable person may resort to extreme measures in a time of danger. He claims that, based on his personal observations, few inmates were able to keep their dignity in such a hostile environment.

Finally, Frankl's greatest revelation comes when he says that a person may have everything taken away from them by circumstances beyond their control except for one thing: freedom. Although people have no say over the events that occur to them, they are in charge of how they react to them. Based on his personal experience, Frankl maintains that an individual cannot genuinely escape suffering but they may choose how to live with it, with newfound purpose and meaning. Logotherapy is his philosophy of convincing people that the desire of meaning is more important than gratification. It is true that "Man's Search for Meaning" has gained worldwide prominence. It encourages us to discover a purpose, an importance in the act of life.

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Department of English (Doon University)

Chapter 1

Former faculty member and clinician at the Medical Faculty of the University of Vienna, Viktor E. Frankl specialises in neurological and psychiatric disorders. Up to his death in 1997, he never left the University. He endured three years in various detention camps throughout the globe during World War II. *Man's Search for Meaning* (1946), a memoir, is the most influential piece of Holocaust literature and testimony. It details Frankl's three years of imprisonment at "Auschwitz and other concentration camps". The book opens doors for us as individuals and for contemporary psychotherapy as a whole. During World War II, when the Nazis murdered millions of Jews, Frankl lost every member of his family. He endured a lot of pain and anguish, yet he never gave up. All of his suffering had significance, and he discovered that significance through it. Frankl's observations of the concentration camp inmates and their reactions to the horrors they endured are chronicled in this book.

They call it a “jewel of dramatic storytelling,” which is quite a compliment. The article will examine trauma theory and seek to apply it to the book. This book explores the significance of life and how one might recover from adversity. The writer's pain and “experiences in the Auschwitz camp”, as well as the ways in which he has transformed those events into a meaningful existence via the use of methods like Logotherapy, are also subjects of study in the proposed article.

“Experiences in a Concentration Camp”, Logotherapy in a Nutshell, and The Case of a Tragic Optimism make up the bulk of *Man's Search for Meaning*. In the first part, he describes the atrocities he endured in a concentration camp and how he came up with logotherapy to help him cope with his pain and find the motivation to keep going. Logotherapy's meaning is derived from the Greek term *logos*, which is translated as “meaning” in English. This is the central concept of logotherapy, which is introduced in the second part. According to Frankl, the concept of man's desire for purpose in life lies at the heart of therapeutic treatment. Third, Frankl examines an example of tragic positivism in which a seemingly contradictory goal serves as the driving force. Some say that “*Man's Search for Meaning*” is the most impactful book ever written.

Something happened that Frankl had never seen before in his life. “During his time in a concentration camp”, he witnessed the very worst of humanity. Frankl seen firsthand how torture, humiliation, starvation, and the persistent spectre of death may affect a person's outlook on life. They were battling for their lives every day, and his inmates had lost all hope. This meant that they not only lost their individuality, but also the

significance of their existence. Frankl managed to survive thanks to a combination of good fortune, the desire to reunite with his loved ones, and resignation to whatever fate had in store for him. Frankl made the choice to accept his situation as it was. He knew that if he made a conscious decision to alter his fate, it may hasten his own demise.

Frankl explains how the captives fought tooth and nail just to stay alive. He thinks back to the time when it was stated that a specific number of inmates will be sent to another camp. He begins his account with the selection procedure, explaining how infirm inmates who were unable to work were moved to a central camp equipped with “gas chambers and crematoriums”. Inmates might compete fairly for a set number of spots on each transport by participating in this selection process. During that time, everyone's mind was on one thing: survival, for themselves and their friends. The most violent inmates were singled out for the role of Capo; therefore, the selection process was fraught with gloom. Those captives who managed to survive the years of being moved from camp to camp were willing to resort to any measure—including physical assault, thievery, or betrayal of friends—to escape the atrocities they faced.

According to Frankl, there are three distinct times in a prisoner's mental reactions: when he is first in, when he becomes acclimated to the camp routine, and when he is liberated. Shock is a hallmark of the first stage. He describes an incident in which 1,500 prisoners were crammed into a shack designed to hold no more than 200. Frankl recalls that they were hungry and chilly, and that there was hardly enough space for them to “squat on the floor”.

The message of optimism that Frankl conveys is unmistakable. There is always reason to have faith, regardless of the most ludicrous and discouraging of situations. Experiencing the horrors of the concentration camp first-hand, Frankl realised that neither happiness nor material gain are what really drive us.

neither strength nor affluence, but rather significance. Frankl has had a life full with misery, torment, pain, and suffering. His 65-year-old mother was killed in the gas chamber, his brother was imprisoned at Auschwitz, and his father was sent to another camp. When he was twenty-four, the woman he loved and in whom he had never given up hope was murdered in a Nazi concentration camp in Bergen-Belsen. Having suffered such a significant loss and such a terrible personal tragedy, he has my undying respect. Even after everything that had happened to his family, he insisted that life's transience does not make it useless.

In the mentality of an Auschwitz prisoner, icy curiosity—a form of objectivity—always reigned supreme. Frankl maintains that, in those days, maintaining such a

frame of mind was essential for survival. He illustrates this with a scenario in which they constantly worry about what may happen next. The punishment would be to have them stand in the ambient space while still dripping wet after a recent shower, completely naked. From worry came curiosity, and from curiosity came astonishment; they were shocked to find that they no longer caught cold. Frankl gained invaluable insight into human nature from his time spent in the concentration camps. Amid pain and death, he saw that men still had faith. These guys made it out of the concentration camps alive. Those who didn't care about having a purpose in life were doomed to a meaningless existence.

Beyond the first shock, Frankl recognises two more stages. As a result of becoming habituated to the harsh conditions of prison life, inmates may become desensitised to anything outside of what directly contributes to their own and their comrades' survival. And if he does make it out alive and find freedom, he may have "feelings of depersonalization, moral deformity, resentment, and disappointment". "There are things which must lead you to lose your reason, or you have none to lost", he says, paraphrasing Lessing. Lessing, George. According to Frankl, the second phase of the inmates' psychological responses was characterised by apathy, blunting of emotions, and a feeling that one did not care anymore; these factors finally rendered him immune to the daily and regular beatings. Frankl gives an example of a situation in which beatings happened with the least provocation. They'd all have to wait in line for the rationed bread that was kept in the office. One of the men waiting his turn stood somewhat asymmetrically, which irked the SS guard on duty. Frankl had no idea who was following him or why he had a hard hit to the head out of nowhere. Not until after the event did, he noticed the defender with a stick. According to Frankl, indifference is a defence mechanism that might help to survive.

That fate and death are as much a part of existence as sorrow is what Frankl discusses. Once again, he provides an illustration of how a man's attitude toward his own suffering might help him find more significance in his existence. Even if he maintains his bravery and honour, he may go to animal levels in his quest for survival. Some of the inmates even contracted something termed "give-up-itis," which manifested itself in a loss of hope for survival. One morning, no matter how much the guards beat them, they would still remain in bed. For the rest of the day and night, they remained in the muck. Frankl theorised that the loss of hope dealt a devastating blow to the prisoner's immune system. Due to the constant trauma, they experienced, the captives grew numb to their surroundings. Despite this, in the camps, hope was literally a "matter of life and death" since it gave people the will to fight off depression, disease, and the temptation to give up.

According to Frankl, the guiding slogan for all psychotherapy and psychohygienic activities addressing inmates should be Nietzsche's words, "He who has a way to live for can suffer with virtually any how" (Nietzsche, 84). His definition of "life" is not abstract but rather concrete and specific. As a result, it shapes each man's fate in unique ways. According to Viktor, the objective of his writing was to help people discover significance in the midst of seeming hopelessness.

At this point, Frankl discusses the third phase of a prisoner's mental reactions: the prisoner's post-release psychology. Prisoners reported feeling detached from their own minds, bodies, and emotions, as if they were watching their lives play out in a dream. Many freed inmates felt resentful, disillusioned, and driven to seek revenge. The inhumane conditions of a concentration camp tore people apart. At the bottom of the abyss, the chasm that separates good and evil becomes visible, reaching into the "depths of the soul" that runs through every person. With this account, we want to get insight into the psyche of a recently freed prisoner. Frankl argues that the freed convicts suffered a form of "depersonalization" as a result of their experience. The concept of the term freedom they kept repeating to themselves eluded them.

After his own release, Frankl says he kept thinking about this sentence: "I called to the Lord from my small prison and He replied me in the openness of space" (Frankl, 96). During this psychological transition, he argues, it was clear that those whose natures were more akin to that of cavemen had been profoundly affected by the atrocities they had witnessed every day in the camp. There is just one item

Rather than being on the receiving end of oppression, they had now become the ones doing the oppressing. They turned from victims to perpetrators of wilful violence and unfair treatment. They used to say that their horrific experiences made them a better person, and that this made them justified in their behaviour and acts. According to Frankl, the freed prisoner has two essential experiences that have the potential to destroy his character: bitterness and disappointment upon his return to his previous life. Anger's origin might have been based on a few different factors. As an illustration, Frankl says that people become cynical when they return to the real world and are faced with "shrugs of the shoulders" and tired platitudes. And so, he wonders why he needed to endure what he had. The feeling of disappointment is unique. An someone who has experienced everything bad that can happen to a human being would learn, in Frankl's view, that there is no upper limit to the amount of pain one can endure. According to Frankl, the greatest joy for the returning man is the realisation that, despite everything he has been through, he has nothing to be afraid of but God.

Frankl realised that despite his dire predicament, he was finally free. He was still able to think for himself and act independently of the authorities. He could control any and all emotions. Humans, irrespective of the direst of situations, always have the ability to make a decision. Frankl also found that the inmates who had some purpose in life were the ones who made it through. Those who gave up and lost faith ultimately perished.

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Chapter 2

Frankl didn't stop trying to understand the significance of purpose in life after World War II. Frankl saw people who had no purpose in life spiral fast into rage, sadness, and addiction. When a person's existence becomes meaningless, it inevitably gives rise to an existential crisis. Dismay swiftly filled this hole. Instead, he used logotherapy to assist his patients overcome their inner void. Logotherapy is a form of therapy established by Frankl to help survivors of the Nazi concentration camps rediscover their own sense of worth and significance in life. This significance varies from individual to individual, and even “from day to day or hour to hour”. The smallest of details may hold the greatest of meanings.

“Now, with logotherapy the patient may continue sitting erect but he must hear things which are often quite uncomfortable to hear,” Frankl says in response to the question, “What is the difference between psychoanalysis and logotherapy?” (Frankl, 104). According to Frankl, logotherapy looks toward the future. He developed this treatment method himself. The Greek term logos, from which logo therapy derives its name, refers to the concept of meaning. The title “The Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy” refers to an approach to treatment that centres on questions of human purpose and the pursuit of pleasure. Logotherapy postulates that the search for meaning in one's existence is the driving factor behind all human behaviour. Consequently, Frankl distinguishes between the “will to meaning; will to pleasure and the will to power” advocated by Freud and Alfred Adler, respectively.

Frankl argues that the pursuit of meaning, rather than serving as a “secondary rationalisation” of baser impulses, is what really drives a man. A public opinion poll cited by Frankl found that 89% of respondents agreed that “man needs something” to live for. He explains the desire for meaning and gives several definitions and summaries.

Existential Frustration:

Existential frustration is something that can thwart a person's will to find meaning, as defined by Frankl. Thus, he used the term 'existential' in three distinct senses, each referring to a different aspect of existence: (1) presence, i.e., the uniquely human manner of being; (2) the significance of existence; and (3) the desire to meaning, the struggle to discover a precise meaning in one's own life. Frankl continues by arguing that neuroses might develop as a result of existential disappointment. Therefore, “noögenic neuroses” is a word created by logotherapy. The noölogical plane of human life is the source of noögenic neuroses.

Noögenic Neuroses:

Frankl argues that existential crises, not struggles between motives and impulses, are the source of noögenic neuroses. He used the example of a high-ranking American ambassador who visited him in Vienna to continue psychoanalysis to argue that a man's doubts about the value of his existence are an existential discomfort "rather than a mental illness".

Frankl argues that logotherapy helps the sufferer rediscover purpose in life. Logotherapy, on the other hand, takes into account existential truths like the hope for a meaningful life and the desire to find one, rather than limiting itself to working just with the unconscious. He elaborates by saying that, according to logotherapy, the primary goal of human life is to have some sort of meaningful impact on the world.

Noö-Dynamics:

Again, Viktor Frankl paraphrases Friedrich Nietzsche. They say, "He who has a why to live for can tolerate virtually any how" (Nietzsche, 109). The pursuit for significance in man's life creates discord rather than peace. He recounts an experience he had at a Bavarian concentration camp. He had typhoid fever but was still composing a book on pieces of paper. Before he was captured, he had written a text, which he later recreated. Through this reconstruction, he was able to avoid a cardiac arrest. Therefore, he argues, sanity depends on a certain amount of stress, the stress of knowing there is a gap between one's accomplishments and the goals one still has to set.

What a man really needs, according to Frankl, is a condition of homeostasis, or calmness. Frankl calls it "Noö-Dynamics," which refers to the existential dynamics of a polar field of tension in which a meaning to be realised serves as one pole and the man who must fulfil that meaning serves as the other pole. He uses the scenario of architects who seek to ruin an arch as an illustration. By adding greater weight, they strengthen the connection between the components. In the same way, therapists who care about their patients' mental well-being shouldn't be afraid to provoke their clients by prompting them to question the significance of their lives. As a result, he coined the phrase "existential vacuum" to describe the state of mind of someone who is constantly plagued by the feeling that there is nothing there.

The Existential Vacuum

Victor Frankl claims that the existential void was a common phenomenon of the 20th century. He defines conformism as the desire to act in accordance with the customs and practises of the majority, and totalitarianism as the practise of forcing one to act in accordance with the dictates of a higher authority. He offers a poll that found that onequarter of his European pupils exhibited some form of existential void. Not 25%, but 60% of his American students. Apathy is represented by the existential void. He uses the phenomenon of “Sunday neurosis,” a sort of sadness experienced by those who experience a “content-free Sunday” after a hectic workweek has ended.

Frankl elaborates by suggesting that a drive to power serves as a vicariously compensatory mechanism for a thwarted will to significance. Logotherapy, he argues, is warranted not just in situations of nōgenic but also of psychogenic and, on occasion, somatogenic (pseudo-)neurosis. From a quotation by Magda B. Arnold: “Every treatment must in some manner, no matter how confined, also be logotherapy (Arnold and Magda, 113).

The Meaning of Life

Frankl argues that each individual, each day, and even each hour has their own unique interpretation of life's significance. Thus, it is not the significance of one's life as a whole that is important, but rather the meaning of a person's existence at any particular time. The same is true of human life. There is a calling or purpose for each individual's life that must be realised. Therefore, each person's assignment is as oneof-a-kind as the window of opportunity presented to them. As a result, man should not ponder the significance of his existence, but rather, he should realise that he is the one being questioned. The core of being human is responsibility, according to logotherapy.

The Essence of Existence

In essence, Frankl tells us to act as though we've already had a second chance at life. The reality that one's time here on Earth is limited and that whatever one makes of themselves and their lives will have permanent consequences is something with which everyone must come to terms. As a kind of psychotherapy, logotherapy seeks to increase the patient's sense of personal accountability. This leaves the sufferer to determine whether or not his mission in life is one of social responsibility or of personal morality. Neither a tutorial nor a sermon, logotherapy is an entirely new approach to learning. In the same way that it differs greatly from moral admonition, it is a vast cry from logical argumentation. He uses the story of a painter who aspires to depict reality as he sees it to illustrate his point.

Frankl argues in Logotherapy that there are three ways to find meaning in life: via the creation of a work or action, through an experience or encounter with another person,

and by one's attitude toward inevitable pain. The first, he says, is the path to success, but the “second and third” require further explanation. Last but not least, he argues that one might discover purpose in life by direct experience of anything positive, such as kindness, truth, beauty, or the encounter with another human being through love.

The Meaning of Love

In Frankl's view, love can be the prime way to truly connect with another person. Love opens one's eyes to the other's important qualities and attributes, and it also enables one to perceive the other's unrealized potential that should be realised. Frankl argues that love is as fundamental as sexuality. The act of having sex is a way to show affection for another person. He defends sexual activity to the point of calling it “sanctified,” but only when it serves as a means to express affection for one another. That ultimate oneness is what we mean when we talk about love, so it's not seen as a byproduct of sexual activity. Therefore, he suggests that enduring adversity is the third path to discovering one's life's purpose.

The Meaning of Suffering

Frankl begins with a simple case study about an older doctor of general medicine who sought help from a psychiatrist for his acute depression. The death of the practitioner's deeply loved wife was too much for him to bear, and he committed suicide. Frankl had a conversation with him, telling him that his wife would be spared pain. The time had come for him to put an end to that agony and grieve for his late wife. Since Frankl, the psychiatrist, could neither reverse the man's fate or bring back his wife, he concluded that there was no point in trying to treat him for his depression. However, he was able to shift the man's outlook on his predetermined future such that he might find purpose in his pain.

Frankl argues that there are times when one is denied the chance to work or have fun. However, keep in mind that no matter how optimistic one is, pain is not something that can be ruled out completely. Because the reason of life includes the significance of inevitable suffering, that meaning is unconditional.

Meta-Clinical Problems

Modern patients come to a psychiatrist with human issues, not neurotic ones. Frankl, on the other hand, thinks that a religious leader of the past would have served as a psychiatrist. However, patients increasingly frequently ask their doctors existential concerns like “why am I here?”

The Super-Meaning

Logotherapist Viktor Frankl argues that our everyday conversations take place within a larger context of super-meaning. Logos goes above mere reason. Once again, he describes an encounter with a “rabbi from Eastern Europe” who shared his experiences with Frankl. He had six children with his first wife, all of whom perished in the death chambers of Auschwitz. His second wife was infertile. Then he realised that raising offspring isn't the point of existence. With good intentions, he asked the rabbi if he believed he would one day be reunited with his children in paradise. He was effective since the rabbi's pain subsided when he adopted a fresh perspective.

Life's Transitoriness

The only things that last forever are the possibilities, but once they are realised, they become realities, as Frankl insists on repeating. Therefore, life's impermanence does not render it pointless. However, it does define an individual's level of accountability. Though it recognises the transience of human life, logotherapy takes an optimistic and active stance. As Frankl puts it, the pessimist is like a guy who sees with horror and anguish as “his wall calendar, from which he daily pulls a sheet”, becomes shorter with each passing day” (Frankl, 124). On the other hand, he argues that an optimist can look back on his life with a sense of satisfaction and satisfaction at having lived it to the fullest.

Logotherapy as a Technique

With the help of logotherapy, an individual learns to find purpose in life and develops a stable, reliable set of decision-making skills. The driving force behind most people is the search for meaning and purpose in their lives.

Hyper-reflection, as it is called in logotherapy, is something Frankl discusses. In this interview, he discusses a paradoxical intention approach used in logotherapy. He recalled a young doctor who developed a severe phobia of sweating. After four years of struggling with his fear, the doctor was finally able to overcome it with Frankl's assistance. If the sweating did return, Frankl said, the person should “decide purposefully to show them how much he would sweat.” Whether, he also notes that employing human detachment is essential in this kind of approach. Whenever a paradoxical purpose is put into action, this ability to disengage becomes a reality. In addition, Frankl says that “paradoxical intention” can be used to deal with sleep disturbances. Because of this specific phobia, he recommends that his patient actively avoid sleep. Psychologically speaking, you need to substitute your hyper-purpose to go asleep with the “paradoxical intention not to fall asleep”, and then sleep will naturally come. Intentional paradox is not a magic bullet. However, it is an effective

method for dealing with anxious disorders like OCD and phobias. He wraps off by adding that paradoxical intention, hyper-intention, and dereflection can all help with overcoming anxious anticipation.

The Collective Neuroses

Frankl argues that an individual might experience nihilism in their own existential void. Nihilism is the state of mind in which one sees no point to living. The nihilistic worldview that permeates psychotherapy is reflected in the distorted self-portrait it conveys to its patients.

That notion is dangerous, Frankl argues, since it implies that human beings are nothing more than the product of their biological, psychological, and social environments. When viewed through such a lens, the neurotic sees himself as helpless and a victim of both external and internal factors. Psychotherapy that undermines man's sense of agency only serves to reinforce his neurotic fatalism. Last but not least, it's not freedom from situations, but rather freedom to adopt a stance toward them.

Critique of Pan-Determinism

Frankl begins with an argument that psychoanalysis is unreliable because of its supposed pansexual orientation. For this idea, he came up with the term “pandeterminism.” By this statement, he indicates that people don't give consideration to how capable of action the average guy actually is. The extent to which a man gives in to or resists his surroundings is not predetermined but is instead determined by the individual. Frankl argues that man has the ability to make his own decisions. The word “freedom” is the one he dwells on. Responsibility's positive side is freedom, which is the bad side of the overall situation.

The Psychiatric Credo

“Viktor Frankl now elaborates” on the idea that in neurotic and psychotic circumstances, man nonetheless retains some semblance of independence. So, a psychosis doesn't affect the patient's essential self. In reality, even if a person with incurable psychosis loses his ability to contribute to society, he may still be treated with respect. That, in essence, is Frankl's philosophy as a psychiatrist; without it, he doesn't see the point in practising medicine.

Psychiatry Rehumanized

Frankl concludes by discussing the multifaceted individual. In reality, all things are interconnected and man is free to make his own choices. To illustrate, he describes an

incident from his time spent in a concentration camp. As he spent time in the real world, they saw both the worst and best of his fellow soldiers. He concludes that both possibilities exist inside every individual, but that it is circumstance, rather than choice, that ultimately determines which one will manifest. He uses a quotation in which he says that a man is both the one who comes up with the idea of “gas chambers” and the person who really goes through one.

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Chapter 3

“This final chapter of *The Case for a Tragic Optimism* is dedicated by Viktor Frankl to the memory of Edith Weisskopf-Joelson”, whose groundbreaking work in logotherapy in the United States dates back to 1955. Frankl poses a crucial first question by challenging the very meaning of “a tragic optimism.” He then goes on to explain how, according to logotherapy, one might maintain optimism in the face of a tragic trio. Three factors—pain, guilt, and death—form a triad around which these elements can be understood.

Frankl elaborates on how one may find hope in the midst of tragedy by focusing on the potential of human beings, how one can use remorse to motivate personal growth, and how one can use the fleeting nature of life to motivate responsible conduct. You can't force someone to be positive. For a person raised in Europe, the American cultural trait of being told to “be cheerful” by superiors stands out as a stark contrast to the more relaxed attitude about life back home. Frankl contends that in order to truly “be happy,” one has to have purpose in life. An explanation is like humour; you need it to enjoy it fully. Someone else who desires to laugh should be given a cause to do so, and he uses a joke as an example. This kind of “behaviour pattern” is termed

“hyper-intention” in logotherapy, and according to Frankl, it's a major contributor to sexual neurosis like sterility or impotence.

Finding one's purpose in life not only brings enjoyment but also the strength to endure adversity. Frankl, however, poses the question of whether or not the search for meaning is futile. Frankl suggests that having “enough to live by but nothing to live for” is at the root of this meaninglessness. There are many different kinds of depression, some of which may be traced back to psychodynamic or physiological factors, as Frankl explains, including unemployment neurosis. Frankl argues that a person's experience of meaninglessness is not a sign of illness but rather of their humanity. And there's nothing pathological about it, it might still be dangerous. He says, “there is substantial factual evidence that the three elements of this syndrome—depression, anger, addiction—are linked to what is termed in logotherapy the existential vacuum,” which is a sensation of “emptiness and meaninglessness” (Frankl, 143).

Frankl challenges the whole idea of meaning. He elaborates by adding that “the logotherapist is preoccupied” with the latent significance of the individual challenges one must overcome. Instead of explaining the significance of life in general, he gives us the example of a film. The movie is made up of distinct images, and each of those images has its own significance. However, the full meaning of the film is not revealed until the very end. But you can't make heads or tails of the movie without first grasping its parts, which are the photos. According to “logotherapeutic theory”, meaning and how we understand it are grounded in reality rather than abstract concepts. There are three primary pillars around which logotherapy builds in order to help an individual discover their own personal sense of purpose in life. The first part involves coming up with something to do or making something to create. The next is by direct contact with an object or person. According to Edith Weisskopf-Joelson, “the thought that experiencing might be as meaningful as attaining is therapeutic” because it balances out the way we tend to place more value on the exterior world of success than the inside world of experience (Joelson-Weisskopf, 147).

Frankl argues that the most compelling case against tragic optimism may be found in Latin 'argumenta ad hominem. He uses Jerry Long to illustrate what he calls “the rebellious strength of the human spirit”, a term borrowed from logotherapy (Long, 148). In his discussion of the tragic triad, Frankl moves on to the guilt component. *Mysterium iniquitatis* is what he's talking about; it says that the causes of a crime can't be pinpointed to one single aspect of a person's personality, upbringing, or social environment. Frankl disagrees with the idea of collective guilt because he believes it is

unfair to punish a whole group of people for the actions of a few. As an illustration, he says, "Since the conclusion of World War II I have not grown weary of openly fighting against the collective guilt notion" (Frankl, 150).

Frankl touches on a second, morbid side. And he thinks it has to do with life itself, as death is a permanent part of existence and every minute counts. The purpose of existence, he continues, is to discover unconditional meaning in pain. Each individual possesses inestimable worth because of this meaningless truth. That proves man's inherent worth and worthiness to be preserved forever. A person's worth is not tied to whether or not they are now useful; rather, it is dependent on the past values that person has realised. In truth, being helpful is contributing to the common good. Thus, the conceptual error that leads to equating the dignity of an individual with simple usefulness

found its roots in the scholastic and analytical couch upon which modern nihilism was propagated. Nihilism is the belief that everything is not a valid statement but not necessarily without any value.

At the end, he admits that the society is in a horrible place, but warns that if we don't do what we can, things will only become worse. He concludes with a strong remark in which he defines a dual sense: from Auschwitz, we learn what a man is capable of; from Hiroshima, we learn what is at peril.

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“The Defiant Power of the Human Spirit” was in fact the title of a paper presented by Long at the Third World Congress of Logotherapy, June, 1983.

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Conclusion

In *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl comes to the conclusion that meaning may be found at any time. His outlook is that there will always be significance in life. Frankl said that in order for a person to discover their purpose in life, they must do it at the appropriate time. Frankl learnt a lot about human nature during his time in the Auschwitz concentration camp, and as a result, he concludes that a prisoner's mental state is determined not just by his exposure to hardships, but also by the agency he retains even in the face of extreme adversity.

A prisoner's spiritual fortitude is directly proportional to his hope for the future. If a prisoner loses hope in the future, he will never be able to rediscover his life's purpose, and he will inevitably perish. For Frankl, the ultimate purpose of one's existence is to help others discover their own. The hope of one day holding a finished work sustained him through the brutal conditions of the concentration camp.

The book's suggestions, grounded on real-world experience and insight, indicate the road to fulfilment and achievement. Despite his ordeals, Frankl maintained his optimistic outlook. His story is a testament to the strength and perseverance of the human spirit.

The expectations of others, according to Frankl, might put undue stress on a person. When a person understands that what they really need to be happy and successful is not pleasure or contentment, that's when the search begins. For this reason, according to Frankl, we must accept pain as inevitable if we are to achieve our ultimate objective of conforming to life's current demands. Someone can emerge from their trials more resilient and powerful than before. The author places a considerably higher value on moral fortitude than physical prowess when it comes to ensuring one's survival.

Ultimately, the goal of Man's Quest for Meaning is to preserve his humanity while doing what's necessary to do so. In the end, it teaches us that we must persevere through adversity and hold on to hope no matter how bad things become.

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