

Book paper man's search for meaning essay sample

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In this paper, I will be interpreting and displaying the various moral, spiritual, and psychological themes within the book "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor E. Frankl, including his theory of logotherapy. INTRODUCTION:

"Man's Search for Meaning" leaves a lot to be analyzed hence why it was a great choice for a philosophy paper. The three themes listed above: moral, spiritual, and psychological all play a major role in the book as each of which describes the feelings and traumatic stages that a prisoner within the Concentration camp would have felt. Logotherapy is the theory that author Frankl came up with in order to structurally find the meaning to one's life, this is an important theme because after the first part of the book he tells you how it relates to his experiences and how it is and has been used to help people suffering from the concentration camps. When reading the book it begins as first-hand experience from the concentration camps, as it continues a concept similar to Ernest Hemingway's Ice-berg concept is revealed. The author breaks up the mental, spiritual, and psychological state of prisoner's into three categories: shock when immediately arriving to the camp, the depersonalization/dehumanization, and the hardships once being free.

These can relate to Hemingway's theory because behind all of what is being told or "seen" there is still much more beneath the surface of the writing, and the people within the writing that are telling much more than what meets the eye. REFLECTION:

Throughout the entire book the author kept each of themes present: moral, spiritual, and psychological feelings. What is unique to this book is that each

of the themes are derived from the common fact that each person in the book was part of a firsthand experience similar to the person in the camp with them. What this means is that when Frankl states his three phases each of them applies to everything within the book, and the themes, essentially the motive or the feelings are mutual.

Phase one begins when people start arriving to the concentration camps, and this phase causes the reaction of most to be shocked. How this applies to the three themes is simple everything they once known is most likely gone or and if not going to be taken from them, so they're shocked, which could define their spirit's, their morals, and more than anything their psychological feeling. A great example of this from the book is this quote: "At that moment I saw the plain truth and did what marked the culminating point of the first phase of my psychological reaction: I struck out my whole former life." (Frankl pg. 33) This quote summarizes and provides a good image of how each person had felt, they had to accept where they were in order to simply survive, let alone become free.

Frankl describes phase two as the feeling of lost interest after being in the camp for some time, which leads you to only care about surviving for yourself and the people around you that you care about. It is in this phase that you begin to see that the people within the camps begin to tune out the daily horrors, and begin to realize they need to worry about themselves and the people around them that they care about. Apathy is what Frankl had called their defense mechanism during this state. Here you can see the psychological and moral themes being affected. The psychological theme is

evident in the sense that they tune out the horrors, meaning they've become accustomed to it, or they are doing what they have to do to survive. More than likely when doing what you can to survive you see people start to lose their morals and this was the case within the concentration camp. Although they've kept their morals to keep surviving and taking care of the ones they're close with you begin to see them deteriorate as people.

What made phase two so interesting is the spiritual theme, and the development or foundation for Frankl. The spiritual theme becomes so prominent when the prisoner's begin to hold secret religious gatherings that showed such a deep belief. It is here that you see that Frankl uses his choice of optimism and hope to carry him through, which in turn helps you understand his reasoning behind logotherapy and the recovery of the surviving prisoner's.

Phase three is when the prisoner's become free and they are left with changes in their psychological, moral, and spiritual self. To be free after what the prisoners had seen left them with no value or understanding to what freedom was, the goal they awaited for so long finally has come and they cannot believe it's true. Even when they were set free many men were to realize that what they had before is gone, and they were left with nothing, this is where they believe their life has no meaning.

In hope of finding a cure for prisoners of the concentration camps and people who believe there is no meaning to their life Frankl came up with logotherapy. In Greek the definition of logos is meaning which justifies for a good name. The concepts of logotherapy are complex, but the goals are

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simple. The goal is to help someone recover and help them realize every life has meaning and every life is unique. What this therapy does is heal each of the three themes presented, it requires you to think differently and understand things that will ultimately help give your life meaning. Some of the things that you would do psychologically is to focus on the future, and leave the rest behind. Another thing that was described by Frankl is a reorientation of what life really is and also to leave the mind at rest rather than think so promptly and thoroughly about the meaning of life. Frankl also states about activities that provide meaning, some of which are volunteering or helping someone, or falling in love.

Works Cited

Frankl, Viktor E.. Man's search for meaning. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.
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