

Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy from a Philosophical Point of View

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide a philosophical reconstruction of Frankl's Logotherapy. It clarifies his central concepts like 'person', 'freedom', 'responsibility', 'value' and 'meaning'. It will be argued that Frankl's anthropology is not fully coherent and is based on strong metaphysical premises, which appears questionable from an existential point of view.

Keywords

Logotherapy, Frankl, anthropology, metaphysics, God, freedom, meaning, person.

Introduction

Frankl is best known for his focus on meaning in psychotherapy and his description of the so-called noogenic neurosis. In the following article the main focus will lie not on his conception of the will to meaning but on his philosophical background assumptions. I want to show that Frankl's will to meaning and his concept of freedom are embedded in a strong metaphysical theory. Whereas Frankl's starting point is his objection to determination through biological or psychological mechanisms and his emphasis on freedom and responsibility, on closer examination it becomes obvious that his theory has a deterministic tendency as well, namely finalism. The peculiarity here is that Frankl's understanding of freedom and meaning incorporates elements of determinism.

Frankl's (1986 [1946])¹ primary objective was to avoid all forms of reductionism in relation to human beings. His initial criticism took Freudian psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology to task and described them as reductionist theories. While psychoanalysis tries to understand human behaviour on the basis of a utilitarian pleasure/homeostatic principle, individual psychology understands human behaviour as an expression of the will to power. Frankl, on the other hand, holds the view that human behaviour can and should not be reduced to psychological or biological mechanisms. Human beings are mainly characterised by being spiritual; as spiritual beings they are not determined but are able to act freely and responsibly and to realise value and meaning.

For Frankl (2014 [1969])² human beings ontologically belong to three dimensions: the somatic (body), the psychic (mind) and the noetic (spiritual) dimension. Ontologically seen, these three dimensions are distinct modes of being and are therefore not reducible to one another. According to Frankl the uniquely human phenomena are located in the noetic dimension. Due to the fact that reductionist theories are blind to the noetic dimension they misinterpret such phenomena and are unable to do proper justice to the phenomenon of the human being:

I would define reductionism as a pseudoscientific approach which disregards and ignores the humanness of phenomena by making them into mere epiphenomena, more specifically, by reducing them to subhuman phenomena. In fact, one could define reductionism as sub-humanism. To give an example, let me take up two phenomena which perhaps are the most human ones, love and conscience. [...] Now, reductionism is liable to interpret love as a mere sublimation of sex, and conscience merely in terms of the superego. It is my contention that actually love could not be just the result of the sublimation of sex because,

whenever sublimation takes place, love has been the precondition all along. [...] And conscience is assigned if need be to oppose precisely those conventions and standards, traditions and values which are transmitted by the superego. Thus, if conscience may have, in a given case, the function of contradicting the superego, it certainly cannot be identical with the superego.

(Frankl, 2014: p 6/7)

Because Frankl's aim was a rehumanisation of psychotherapy, most of his writings are concerned with spelling out the noetic dimension. All of his important concepts, including 'meaning', 'values', 'freedom', 'responsibility', 'self-detachment' and 'self-transcendence' belong to this dimension.

His anthropology is based on the following key assumptions:

- (1) Human beings are part of three diverse, non-reducible ontological dimensions: The somatic, the psychic and the noetic, the latter being the actual human dimension.
- (2) Due to the noetic dimension human beings are persons.
- (3) As persons we are not biologically and/or psychologically determined but can act freely and responsibly.
- (4) As persons we have the abilities of self-detachment and self-transcendence.
- (5) As persons our motivation is the will to meaning.
- (6) Meaning can be realised through realising values.
- (7) Values and meaning are objectively given.
- (8) There is only one meaningful answer to each situation.
- (9) In realising meaning we act freely and responsibly.
- (10) We are able to find this meaningful answer by means of our conscience.
- (11) What is meaningful for each of us is predetermined by God because subjective meaning is part of the super-meaning.
- (12) Human beings are related to God, either consciously or unconsciously.

The spirit person³

The core of Frankl's anthropology constitutes his understanding of human beings as persons. The person is characterised by three existential characteristics (Frankl, 2005: p 117 [1975]): First, personal existence is individual and indivisible. Second, personal existence is a complete entity and cannot be merged. Third, each person is something absolutely unique. Due to the first two existential characteristics, Frankl (2005: p 118) concludes that the person does not arise through sexual reproduction because the person cannot be constituted out of something divisible and something that can be merged. Ontologically seen, the person does not belong to the material world like the body and the psyche and cannot arise from the material world. The parents do not create the spiritual person. They only provide its substrate. For Frankl it is clear that the spiritual person is somehow added to the body and is not within the categories of time and space.

From an ontological perspective it seems clear that Frankl supports a substantial ontology. This means that the person is understood as an essence, which is prior to its relation to the world and is not changeable through experiences and circumstances. The contrary ontological position is to take the view that the person is constituted through its relations.

Surprisingly Frankl explicitly rejects the assumptions of a substantial ontology and argues for a relational ontology when it comes to his understanding of a person. He emphasises that ‘to be’ means ‘to be different’:

“To be” equals “to be different” – that is, “to be different from something”; relationship is supremely important. Actually, only the relationship “exists”. We might therefore state it this way: all that is has its being only with reference to something else.

(Frankl, 1986: p 5)

Frankl tries to formulate his concept of a person by referring to this relational assumption with a small change: Personal existence does not only mean to be different but ‘absolute being different, absolute otherness’ (1986: p 72). However, within this thought of absolute otherness, the relational ontology embodies a form of essentialism that implicitly underlies Frankl’s writings and is a precondition for his understanding of freedom and meaning. His understanding of a person from a substantialist perspective becomes obvious when he formulates the purpose of human beings: their purpose is that existence (*Dasein*⁴) approaches its essence (*Wesen*) (Frankl, 2005: p 199). This is only possible if the essence is already given. The connection between existence and essence is meaning because we realise our essence by realising meaning.

It is feasible that Frankl explicitly rejects a substantial ontology because he wants to make sure that the person is not misunderstood as something material or as something ontic. Frankl (2005) often states that the person is not a substance, as it is generally understood, but an ontological entity. Since the person is not a material substance but an immaterial one, the person is not causally determined.

Freedom and responsibility

The spiritual person is fundamentally characterised by being free or, conversely, since human beings are not only psychophysical but also spiritual beings, they are free. Frankl understands freedom as ‘freedom from’ and ‘freedom to’.

All freedom has a “from what” and a “to what”. The “from what” of man’s freedom is his being driven, and the “to what” is his being responsible, his having conscience.

Frankl (2011a: p 59 [1948])

As human beings belong to the noetic dimension they are not subjected to their drives, emotions and dispositions but have the ability of self-detachment. The person can decide if she wants to turn the “suggestions” from the psychophysical dimension into actions. The positive side of freedom is realised in self-transcendence, which according to Frankl, means to intentionally direct oneself towards values and meaning. Interestingly he identifies the positive side of freedom with responsibility. Since responsibility – understood in a moral sense – generally constrains the freedom of action, this equation seems peculiar at first glance. In (contemporary) moral philosophy ‘to be responsible’ is commonly equated with ‘to have an obligation or to refrain from doing something’.

For Frankl, responsibility has a moral connotation as well. It constrains the freedom of the person insofar as it does not only have the possibility to let its life be guided through value and sense but it has the obligation to do so.

Sometimes life demands of us the realisation of creative values; at other times we feel it necessary to turn to the category of experiential values. At one time we are called upon, as it were, to enrich the world by our actions, another time to enrich ourselves by our experience. Man can be “obligated” to experience joy. In this sense a person sitting in a streetcar who has the opportunity to watch a wonderful sunset, or to breathe in the rich scent of flowering acacias, and who instead goes on reading his newspaper, could at such a moment be accused of being negligent toward his obligations.

(Frankl, 1986: p 45)

At this point responsibility turns into the obligation to realise values. As it will be shown later, we have the obligation to choose the most valuable option in each situation because it is only in choosing that we realise meaning. Therefore, in the example above, Frankl can state that the man reading his newspaper does not fulfil his responsibility although he is realising values, because it is not the most valuable thing he could do in that situation. Even more clearly, Frankl (2011a [1948]) expresses this position in *Man’s Search for Ultimate Meaning* when he writes that the task of the conscience is ‘to disclose to man the *unum necesse*, the one thing that is required.’

This raises two questions. First, why is there only one right answer, why is there an *unum necesse* in every situation? Frankl answers this question by stating that each person has a single goal, and there is only one way to reach that goal. Or – to phrase it differently: There is only one way to realise our essence. We will more fully explore this line of thinking below when discussing the connection between meaning and super-meaning.

The second question is: Why are we obliged to realise the most valuable option in every situation? Since only in doing so we reach that goal, that’s what we should do and that’s what we want to do, Frankl answers.

Existential analysis and logotherapy aim at bringing the patient to the point of highest possible concentration and dedication. It is our business, then, to show how the life of every man has a unique goal to which only one single course leads. Steering this course, man resembles the flier who is “piloted” into the airport through nocturnal mists to make a blind landing. The method for this is well known: the radio station at the airport sends out toward the approaching plane two different Morse signals, each covering a sector. At the boundary of the sectors – which marks the prearranged course – the pilot of the plane hears a steady signal tone. The marked course alone leads the pilot to his goal.

(Frankl, 1986: p 55)

The analogy of the pilot who has to find his already given goal provides a first indication of the metaphysical theory underlying Frankl’s thinking. Every one of us has a predetermined goal towards which we should orient our actions. Our course is marked – one could say – through values and meaningful options respectively. Here it becomes clear that we can neither choose our goals nor our values and that to realise our freedom is to follow that single goal. To choose another option would not satisfy Frankl’s idea of freedom. It would be arbitrary.

When we combine this line of thinking with Frankl's conceptualisation of motivation, it becomes clear that what we ought to do goes hand in hand with what we want to do. Since Frankl postulates that our motivation as spiritual persons is the will to meaning, we intend to realise this one most valuable option. It is a voluntary 'ought', so to speak. Nevertheless Frankl states that 'what we should' is prior to 'what we want':

The "ought" is ontologically prior to the will. Just as I can only answer if I am first questioned, just as each reply requires a "to what", and such a "to what" must be prior to the reply itself, so the "to what" of all responsibility must necessarily be prior to responsibility itself. What I feel that I ought to do, or ought to be, could never be effective if it were nothing but an invention of mine – rather than a discovery.

(Frankl, 2011a: p 64)

In other words: Each situation is a question, and there is only one right answer to this question. That which corresponds to the realisation of our freedom and responsibility as a person is always given.

To briefly sum up, we see that Frankl's understanding of freedom is another form of necessity, namely following a predetermined goal. Because the goal is determined, the same is true for every single situation. Although his starting point was to advocate the idea of freedom contra a deterministic anthropology, a new kind of determinism comes in through the backdoor. There are only a few lines in Frankl's writings in which he explicitly postulates a second form of determinism belonging to the noetical dimension but implicitly throughout Frankl's entire corpus. In contrast to causal determinism, Frankl (2005: p 122) calls it a 'higher form of causality or finalism'. There is a kind of meaning which 'intervenes from above.' (Frankl, 2005: p 141). Due to belonging to the noetic dimension the person is open for that type of finalism. As the psychophysical dimension and causal determinism belong together, so do the noetic dimension and finalism. Philosophically seen, the postulation of a second form of causality is highly problematic. It is neither clear how to support this kind of metaphysical postulation, nor how causality and finality can go hand in hand.

Meaning and super-meaning

Frankl's concept of finalism depends on his understanding of meaning as being objective. Meaning has both an objective and a subjective component (the same can be said for values). For Frankl (2011b: p 88)⁵ meaning is 'not something constructed' by human beings but something that is always present within each situation and 'has to be found'. In this sense meaning is objective. It is subjective because what is meaningful in a situation changes from person to person because every person is unique and has its own path to follow.

What exactly does Frankl mean when he states that meaning can be found? Is there a connection between Frankl's idea of finality and the objective side of meaning?

To answer this question we have to take a closer look at Frankl's concept of the super-meaning. Although Frankl states that we cannot answer the question of ultimate meaning, he introduces the concept of a super-meaning.

Actually, our interrogation must be confined to the meaning of a part. We cannot begin to question the "purpose" of the universe. Purpose is transcendent to the extent that it is

always external to whatever “possesses” it. We can therefore at best grasp the meaning of the universe in the form of a super-meaning, using the word to convey the idea that the meaning of the whole is no longer comprehensible and goes beyond the comprehensible. This concept of meaning would serve as a parallel to the Kantian postulate of reason; our minds require its existence at the same time that it is to our minds unfathomable.

(Frankl, 1986: p 30)

Frankl does not explain why the super-meaning should be an equivalent to the Kantian postulates. It is not at all clear why it is necessary to postulate a super-meaning. But it becomes obvious that the super-meaning is something real, something objective. There is a connection between personal meaning and super-meaning insofar as the former is embedded in the latter. Hence Frankl can state that the personal meaning is something objective in the world that can be found. The connection between finality, super-meaning and personal meaning lies in the assumption that the super-meaning ‘always prevails with or without our doing’⁶ (Frankl 1984: p 141) and that a final meaning intervenes in our existence.

Now it becomes clear why there can only be one right and meaningful answer to every life situation. Since the personal meaning is embedded in the super-meaning there is only one option that corresponds to it. Philosophically seen, the super-meaning plays a foundational role in Frankl’s anthropology. Due to the super-meaning the person has the possibility of finding personal meaning on the one hand, and is equipped with the will to meaning on the other. Due to the objectivity of the super-meaning, the personal meaning is objectively given as well. Since the super-meaning acts causally in the sense of finality and the subject orients itself towards it, finality is inherent to the orientation on personal meaning.

The role of God in Frankl’s anthropology

Philosophically seen, God plays a key role in Frankl's anthropology. His core concepts – 'person', 'conscience', 'value', 'meaning', 'freedom', 'responsibility' – are only made fully comprehensible through reference to a transcendental force.

As Rohr (2009: p 354) shows, the super-meaning refers to a transcendental unitarian principle, a personal image of God. The ultimate justification of meaning through God can be found in his *Anthropological Foundations*:

Insofar as I exist, my existence is towards meaning and value; insofar as I exist towards meaning and value, my existence is towards something that is necessarily higher in value than my own being – in other words: My existence is towards something, which cannot be a something but must be a someone – a super-person. In a word: insofar I exist, my existence is always directed towards God. We already said that the highest value is tied up with God [Wertperson, Scheler] and that it is obvious that the very highest value, the super-meaning, is tied up with a super-person.⁷

(Frankl, 2005: p 232/233)

In its self-transcendental orientation towards value and meaning the person always refers to God because values and meaning are grounded in God. Since the person is finally oriented towards meaning and wants to realise meaning due to its will to meaning, the person can only understand itself in relation to a transcendent entity. Each realisation of meaning, one could

say, is a movement towards God. At the same time this movement has its origin in God. This movement corresponds to Frankl's concept of a higher causality in terms of finality.

The person is able to recognise meaning through its conscience, which Frankl describes as an inner voice. This voice is not a person's own voice, it is God's voice:

Through the conscience of the human person, a transhuman agent personat – which literally means, “is sounding through”. It is not up to us to answer the question of what this “agent” is, since our concern with the origin of conscience is anthropological rather than theological. Nonetheless we may be justified in claiming that this transhuman agent must necessarily be of a personal nature.

Frankl (2011a: p 60)

Although Frankl accepts that atheistic or agnostic people do not identify this transcendent voice with God's voice, philosophically seen this identification is inevitable within Frankl's ontology. Frankl emphasises that all human beings are related to God. However, for non-religious human beings this relationship to God is unconscious:

[The transcendent unconscious] means no more or less than that man has always stood in an intentional relation to transcendence, even if only on an unconscious level. If one calls the intentional referent of such an unconscious relation “God”, it is apt to speak of an “unconscious God.” This, however, in no way implies that God is unconscious to himself, but rather that God may be unconscious to man and that man's relation to God may be unconscious.

Frankl (2011a: p 68)

Since we are always in relation with God, it is possible to orient ourselves towards meaning and to answer our life questions in a meaningful way. By realising meaning the person draws closer to God.

Possible implications for psychotherapeutic practice

At this point the question arises if the strong metaphysical assumptions within Frankl's anthropology have implications for psychotherapeutic practice. The loose connection between theory and practice entails this must not necessarily be the case. However, there is some evidence supporting the hypothesis that Frankl's metaphysical theory influenced his therapeutical work.

Although Frankl stresses the importance of the separation between Logotherapy and theology/religion, he draws a connection between a repressed or unconscious religiousness and neurotic symptoms.

*Sometimes the ground of neurotic existence is to be seen in a deficiency, in that a person's relation to transcendence is repressed. But although concealed in “the transcendent unconscious,” repressed transcendence shows up and makes itself noticeable as an “unrest of the heart.” In my book *The Doctor and the Soul* I described a case in which this restlessness precipitated a “psychosomatic”, or really noösomatic, heart condition. So*

what holds for the unconscious in general is also true of unconscious religiousness in particular: Repression winds up in neurosis.

(Frankl, 2011a: p73/74)

In these cases of neurosis, Frankl argues, it is the task of Logotherapy to remind the patient of his unconscious religiousness. This understanding of neurotic symptoms shows that Frankl neither maintains the separation between theology and psychotherapy nor its neutral stance towards religion.

This mix of religion and psychotherapy was sharply criticized from different sides, especially from humanistic and existential therapists.⁸

Weisskopf-Joelson (1975: p 238) for example argues that Logotherapy is not a “scientific psychotherapeutic school in the traditional sense but a [...] secular religion.” She draws a connection between the spiritual nature of Logotherapy and the overemphasis of Paradoxical Intention which consists of the proposition that the patient should accept rather than fight unalterable neurotic symptoms:

The spiritual nature of the proposition that unalterable suffering should be accepted rather than fought and the technique-orientated nature of the proposition that suffering should be exaggerated could be illustrated as follows: before crucified Jesus said, “Father, if thou art willing remove this cup for me, nevertheless not my will, but thine be done” (St. Luke 22:39). But to my knowledge he is not reported to have said: “I shall be glad to drink two, three, four, five, or six cups!”

(Weisskopf-Joelson, 1975: p 240)

The criticism of Pytell (2006: p 490) takes a similar line. He draws a connection between Frankl’s traumatic experiences during the Holocaust, his negligence of the psychic dimension and his assumption of an objective meaning. According to Pytell, Frankl’s focus on the noological dimension is reflected in his therapeutic techniques of paradoxical intention and dereflection. Both techniques are dependent on the assumption that meaning has nothing to do with your inner life or your emotions but has to be found in the world in a self-transcendent manner. Although Frankl proved the effectiveness of these techniques, Pytell (2006: p 494) notes that “the underlying cause of the compulsion or obsession is not resolved.”

The connection between Frankl's understanding of meaning as objective and the negligence of the person’s inner live – its emotions – is straightforward. Because meaning has to be found in the world and not in ourselves – especially not in the psychophysical dimension – the most important aspect of Frankl's anthropology for therapeutic practice is to focus on value and meaning in the world and not on the client's non-intentional feelings, like sadness, anger, disappointment, happiness, etc. Our non-intentional feelings disturb ourselves and hinder us from focusing on meaning. They hinder us from being free for the world and acting in a responsible way. The important thing for human beings as persons is to detach themselves from the psychophysical dimension to be free for meaning.

The negligence of the person’s inner life was sharply criticised by Frankl’s follower Längle (1994) and can be seen as one of the main reasons for the separation of Logotherapy and the Vienna school of Existential Analysis in 1991.

Längle (1994) argues for the importance of the distinction between existential and ontological (objective) meaning. While ontological meaning is deduced from a transcendental unitarian principle, existential meaning is not objectively given but created by the person in a subjective way. The person has to feel what is valuable for itself and has to play an active role in the process of creating meaning.

Längle addresses the challenges of adopting a concept of objective meaning for the therapeutic practice:

Due to the convergence of meaning and absoluteness, Frankl's understanding of meaning can obtain a mandatory and moral-appellative character. Human reality and painful experiences can be pushed back due to the claim to absoluteness. This understanding of meaning can lead to an emotionally excessive demand because there is insufficient space for mental processing. [...] Because Logotherapy is not concerned with how values are experienced and felt, its understanding of meaning remains emotionally cold and cognitive for people who are less religious.

Consequently, Logotherapy is not concerned with emotionality and subjective experience. For Frankl, self-experience for prospective therapists is "anti-logotherapeutical." The engagement with one's biography, which is of decisive importance for how one experiences the world, is understood as an obstacle for the future-orientated focus on meaning.⁹

(Längle 1994: p 19)

Critical summary

Philosophically seen Frankl's strong ontological assumptions lead to various problems. The most obvious one is that Frankl's assumptions are not well clarified within his theory. One example is that Frankl tries to recover a relational ontology throughout his writing while presupposing essentialism. Therefore his concept of a person is not coherent throughout his theory. One way to improve this coherence could be to further explore the idea that the person exists only in relation to God. But Frankl fails to fully disclose this grounding framework. On the contrary, he has a tendency of disguising his metaphysical premises rather than deepening or critically discussing them. This leads to an incomplete understanding of Frankl's central concepts, first and foremost of his understanding of 'meaning' and 'freedom'. His emphasis on freedom, meaning and responsibility is a red herring. Due to his higher level of determinism Frankl does not support an existential view on freedom. His emphasis on freedom, responsibility and meaning appears in a completely different light after a reconstruction of his underlying assumptions. Freedom becomes another form of necessity, meaning loses more and more of its subjective character and responsibility becomes an obligation to realise values. His higher determinism seems somewhat questionable if we take into account that Frankl always opposes deterministic theories.

Since Frankl has a strong tendency to ontologically separate the noetic from the psychophysical dimension, he encounters serious philosophical difficulties, first and foremost the mind-body problem. In light of the mind-body problems, Frankl supports a strict substance-dualism. It is an unsolved question how this duality can be reunified. So far there is no satisfactory solution for understanding the interaction between mind and body (and for Frankl, the psyche as well) once they are strictly separated. In philosophy, the mind-body problem provides a compelling reason to waive strong dualism. Although Frankl always states that humans form a unity of body, psyche and spirit, it is not at all clear how this combination can be spelled out

philosophically. The same is true for his concept of freedom. Frankl postulates two forms of causality without explaining how they converge in detail.

From a philosophical point of view, Frankl's theory is inadequately conceptualised. He refers to numerous philosophers in an eclectic way and combines their concepts with his own without sufficiently addressing issues of coherence. Nevertheless, his focus on meaning plays an important role in psychotherapy. The question remains as to how this concept can be embedded in a sound philosophical theory without postulating a substantial ontology on the one hand or being purely constructivist on the other.

Therapeutically seen, Frankl's metaphysical assumptions do have an influence on psychotherapeutic practice. Although Frankl tries to distinguish religion from Logotherapy, the postulation of an unconscious relationship to God and its connection with some kind of neurosis shows that this separation cannot be maintained in all cases. Due to the separation between the noetic and the psychic dimension, Frankl has to reject the importance of emotions and subjective experience. There is a clear link between Frankl's assumption of an objective meaning, his concepts of self-detachment and self-transcendence and his lack of focus on a person's inner life. The connection between Frankl's strong metaphysical theory and the logotherapeutic practice provides a sound explanation for the criticism exercised by some humanistic and existential therapists who are concerned about the authoritarian tendencies of Logotherapy.

Notes

¹ *The Doctor and the Soul*, originally published in German as *Ärztliche Seelsorge* (1946). This translation originally published, in different form, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. in 1955 and 1965. Here cited from *The Doctor and the Soul* (1986).

² *The Will to Meaning*, first published 1969. In this article cited from the expanded edition, 2014.

³ Frankl emphasises that 'spiritual' is not meant in a theological sense.

⁴ The quotes from *Anthropologische Grundlagen*, 2005 [1975] are translated by the author.

⁵ Quote from the German edition of *The Doctor and the Soul*, this quote is missing in the English version of 1986.

⁶ "Mit einem Wort: die Geschichte, in der sich der Übersinn erfüllt, geschieht entweder durch meine Unternehmungen hindurch – oder über meine Unterlassungen hinweg". English translation mine.

⁷ "Sofern ich existiere, existiere ich auf Sinn und Werte hin; sofern ich auf Sinn und Werte hin existiere, existiere ich auf etwas hin, das mich selbst notwendig an Wert überragt, das wesentlich von höherem Wertrang ist als mein eigenes Sein – mit anderen Worten: ich existiere auf etwas hin, das auch schon kein Etwas sein kann, sondern ein Jemand sein muß, eine Person bzw. – als ein meine Person Überragendes – eine Überperson sein muß. Mit einem Wort: sofern ich existiere, existiere ich immer schon auf Gott hin. Es war bereits davon die Rede, daß der höchste Wert an <<Wertpersonen>> (Scheler) geknüpft sei und daß es naheliegend sei, daß der allerhöchste Wert, daß der <<Übersinn>> an eine Überperson geknüpft ist." English translation mine.

⁸ Weisskopf-Joelson 1975, Bulka 1978, May 1978, Yalome 1980, Längle 1994, Cooper 2003, Pytell 2006.

⁹ „Durch den engen Konnex mit der Absolutheit kann Frankls Sinnverständnis mitunter zwingenden und moralisch-appellativen Charakter bekommen, wo die menschliche Realität und das Gewicht unmittelbarer Leiderfahrung wie auch die belastende Alltäglichkeit vor dem Absolutheitsanspruch zurückgedrängt ist. Dieses Sinnverständnis kann zur emotionalen Überforderung führen, weil für den psychischen Verarbeitungsprozeß (wie z.B. das Klagen) zu wenig Raum ist. [...] Durch die fehlende Beschäftigung mit dem Wertfühlen bleibt das logotherapeutische Sinnverständnis für den weniger religiösen Menschen emotional kalt und kognitiv in der Begründung.

Die Logotherapie beschäftigt sich konsequenterweise nicht mit der Emotionalität, und schenkt dem subjektiven Erleben in den Gesprächen kaum Beachtung. Konsequenterweise ist Selbsterfahrung in der Ausbildung der Therapeuten für Frankl geradezu „anti-logotherapeutisch“. Das Eingehen auf die Biographie, die als Erlebnishintergrund maßgebliche Bedeutung für den Menschen hat, wird in der Logotherapie als Ablenken vom Sinnanspruch, der immer nur auf die Zukunft gerichtet zu sein hat, angesehen.“ English translation mine.

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