

**“SEARCH FOR MEANING” AND
LOGOTHERAPY: AN ANALYSIS OF DITA
KRAUS’ *A DELAYED LIFE: THE TRUE STORY OF
THE LIBRARIAN OF AUSCHWITZ* AND DIANE
COOK’S *THE NEW WILDERNESS***

BY

KULSOOM MURAD QURESHI



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ABSTRACT

Title: “Search for Meaning” And Logotherapy: An Analysis of Dita Kraus’ *A Delayed Life: The True Story of The Librarian of Auschwitz* and Diane Cook’s *The New Wilderness*

This thesis studies the depiction of trauma in contemporary dystopian fiction, *The New Wilderness* (2019) by Diane Cook and memoir, *A Delayed Life* (2020) by Dita Kraus. Employing the theoretical framework of Viktor Frankl’s Logotherapy and Cathy Caruth’s Trauma Theory, the study aims to explore how these narratives portray the impact of traumatic experiences on the characters and how they cope with their circumstances to find meaning in life. Frankl’s Logotherapy offers a unique perspective on trauma by emphasizing the search for meaning as a fundamental human need. The thesis examines how Kraus’ and Cook’s protagonists navigate their traumatic environments, drawing upon inner strengths and a sense of purpose to endure. Caruth’s Trauma Theory delves into the essence of traumatic experiences. This study examines the portrayal of fragmented memories, recurring patterns of trauma, and flashbacks within the narratives. The analysis sheds light on the character’s struggles to integrate their traumatic pasts into their present lives. By analyzing two distinct genres, this research emphasizes the parallels and differences in how characters experience trauma in dystopian fiction and memoir, as well as their subsequent journeys towards discovering meaning. By intertwining the theoretical frameworks of Logotherapy and trauma theory, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the characters’ psychological journeys, unveiling the complex interplay between trauma, resilience, and the quest for meaning. Ultimately, this analysis contributes to the existing scholarly discourse on trauma literature offering insights into ways in which the characters in the fiction and memoir deal with trauma. The characters in the memoir find solace and a meaning of their suffering in forming deeper connections with other humans while the characters in dystopian fiction resort to their individualistic sense of self.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADL: A Delayed Life

TNW: The New Wilderness

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved Papa.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The researcher aims at analyzing a memoir, *A Delayed Life* (henceforth the title will be referred to as *ADL*) by Dita Kraus and a contemporary dystopian fiction, *The New Wilderness* (henceforth the title will be referred to as *TNW*) by Diane Cook under the lens of trauma and Logotherapy. The researcher explores how a fragmented man in a dystopian setting perceives trauma differently from a Holocaust survivor. It further explains how different it is to achieve meaning in life for characters in dystopian fiction than a trauma survivor in a memoir. The study focuses on examining what kind of meaning of life or selfhood the survivors of these different chaotic settings seek to restore. That is, an analysis of how life and its meaning is achieved during traumatic events between these two different genres.

Trauma is a concept which has surfaced as a significant topic of discussion and is widely researched by scholars over the period of time. Cathy Caruth describes trauma as a “wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind” (*Unclaimed Experience* 3). Caruth’s trauma theory is deeply interconnected with the concept of memory. In her work, Caruth explores how traumatic events disrupt the normal processes of how memory is stored in one’s mind. She argues that a traumatic memory is “not available to consciousness” (*Unclaimed Experience* 4) as it is stored in the subconscious part of one’s brain. She further explains how these events continue to haunt an individual’s consciousness, often re-emerging unexpectedly which shatters their sense of self. Her ideas have had a significant impact on the study of trauma.

Caruth argues that memory indicates a relationship with past events. It impacts how one thinks, feels, and lives in the present. She elaborates that a traumatic memory is not stored in one’s brain similar to how all other memories are stored. Traumatic memories are stored in one’s *subconscious* (stress intended) part of the brain, therefore, the trauma victim remains unaware of these memories. As a result, the trauma victim fails to actively remember the traumatic event. She argues that trauma victims often experience delayed memories of the traumatic event. This is one of the major aspects of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which Caruth argues is a response to an event which is beyond a normal human experience. These memories are fragmented and disjointed, making it challenging for the individual to fully process the traumatic experience

and integrate into his consciousness. This disrupts and shatters the sense of self and identity in a trauma victim.

Traumatic memories can be triggered by various stimuli that resemble or relate to the original traumatic event. These stimuli can evoke intense emotional response in the trauma victim and can lead to vivid flashbacks of the traumatic experience. These flashbacks are involuntary, therefore, the victim relives the traumatic experiences each time they experience a flashback of the event. Caruth's trauma theory highlights the intricate relationship between trauma and memory. Traumatic events can disrupt the normal functioning of memory as they lead to fragmented recall of the experience.

Caruth's work has been instrumental in advancing the understanding of how trauma is processed and represented in literature. Trauma generated in war narratives is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, shaped by the harrowing experiences of war. These narratives often depict profound effects of war on individuals. War narratives portray scenes of violence, destruction, and death. Individuals who directly witness these events may develop traumatic reactions due to the overwhelming and distressing nature of such events. The event of Holocaust during the Second World War is one of the most violent and impactful events of human history. It highlights how suffering can lead healthy and able minds into depths of despair leading to individuals losing the meaning of their entire existence. Individuals in the concentration camps faced death either at the hands of the Germans or chose it willingly due to the despair they had experienced. The violence carried out against the Jews made their lives hollow since they lost their relations, culture and purpose of their lives. Moreover, the grotesque details of their living conditions added to the miseries which left traumatic effects on their psyche. However, the ones who survived the Holocaust, lost meaning of life and had to struggle to cope with their trauma.

Whereas, dystopian fiction depicts a world affected by an apocalyptic situation, extreme living conditions or environmental ruin, all of which gives rise to trauma. Characters in a dystopian fiction are shown apart from their families, and familiar surroundings. This separation leads to feelings of loss and emotional trauma. Furthermore, the erosion of trust between individuals and within society makes forming connections and sustaining relationships difficult. Dystopian environments lead to isolation and betrayals, causing trauma. Similar to war narratives, characters who experience traumatic events in dystopian settings experience post-traumatic stress disorder

(PTSD) symptoms, including flashbacks, nightmares and anxiety triggered as reminders of their traumatic experience. This research aims at exploring trauma in memoir, and dystopian fiction where there is no empathy or warmth left in human relations. In such conditions individuals find it difficult to search for a meaning in their lives.

Although Caruth's theory highlights how trauma is generated, it does not suggest how an individual may overcome his trauma. Frankl's theory of Logotherapy deals with identifying trauma and suggests ways in order to find a meaning in one's life to overcome trauma. Through years of extensive research in the field of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis it can be observed that there are certain inherent drives which play a prominent role in one's life. These drives further affect one's decision making ability ultimately leading to the inevitable goal of human existence that is, achieving self-actualization. According to Viktor E. Frankl's Logotherapy, this inherent drive is the will to search for meaning in one's life. He argues that the meaning of each person's life differs from the other. Everyone has a specific meaning of life instead of a general one. The meaning of one's life may change day to day or even hour to hour depending on the circumstances of his life. Therefore, one is responsible and must remain busy in finding the meaning of his life at every particular moment.

Traumatic experiences may lead to lack of a meaning in one's life, rendering to meaninglessness. These traumatic experiences may include innumerable wars, violence, and chaos. The violence perpetrated by and towards humans over the period of time has left traces on human psyche. Technological advancements over the period of time have transformed the dynamics of every individual's life; life has transformed into a constant chase of acquiring more material. This has caused a growing frustration among individuals and has given rise to the idea that life is not worth living. Frankl a Holocaust survivor, in his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, argues that "a man's concern, even his despair, over the worthwhileness of life is an existential distress" (102). Frankl suggests that questioning the meaningfulness of life is a fundamental aspect of existential distress. He acknowledges that individuals may grapple with concerns and even despair when confronted with the existential question of whether life is worthwhile. He aligns with existentialist themes by highlighting the importance of individual reflection on the meaning of life.

Frankl refers to Schopenhauer's idea in his book *Man's Search for Meaning* that "mankind was apparently doomed to vacillate eternally between the two extremes of distress and boredom"

(106). In the older times, the violence carried out due to wars and bloodshed left traumatic effects on humans, making them question their existence. However, according to Frankl, extreme progressive automation has led to boredom and distress. This dilemma produces in man, existential vacuum; a sense of feeling hollow from the inside and thinking of life as completely and ultimately meaningless.

Logotherapy is based upon the principal of the arousal of inner tension. It suggests that man must realize that it is man who gives meaning to his life, life does not account for meaning. The sense of responsibility of one's life is crucial for a human to be able to make life worthwhile. Once an individual realizes what he has already gained and what he has yet to improve, his struggle to achieve what he lacks gives rise to inner tension. Logotherapy appreciates such tension. According to Frankl, "a tension is inherent in the human being and therefore is indispensable to mental well-being" (105). This inherent tension might encompass various aspects of life such as the search for meaning, the struggle for survival, or the pursuit of personal goals. He suggests that this inherent tension is crucial for mental well-being as it implies that a certain level of challenge or dynamism is necessary for individuals to feel psychologically healthy. Considering this, Frankl has based his theory on Nietzsche's words, "He who has a *why* to live for can bear almost any *how*" (104). He argues that this statement, seemed to prove itself truthful in the Jewish concentration camps where those who had set goals to achieve in the camps, survived. However, those who lost hope of ever getting out of the concentration camps, could not survive. Furthermore, Frankl draws inspiration for his ideas from his own experience in the Jewish concentration camps. He gives his own example of how he had a rough draft of his first book upon reaching the camp, however, it was taken from him by the Germans once he was admitted into the camps. Even then his determination to rewrite the contents of the book never ended. He remained steadfast on his goal of getting his manuscript published once he would be released from the camp. Therefore, he kept his will to survive strong, despite a very difficult life in the camps. Thus, "challenging man with a potential meaning for him to fulfill" evokes "his will to meaning from latency" and serves as a driving force (Frankl 105).

Furthermore, Viktor E. Frankl suggests that "every age has its own collective neurosis" (129). That is, in every phase of the world's existence, humans had to live through violence perpetrated against them and with the catastrophes the planet brought for them. This has left detrimental psychological effects on individuals. During the Holocaust the collective neurosis of

the world, specifically for the Jewish, proved to be absolute physical and psychological violence for them. As a consequence, they suffered through a frustrated will to lead their lives. Since then as the world has progressed, humans on a mass scale, complain about “the feeling of the total and ultimate meaninglessness of their lives” (Frankl 105). Since the chaos is no longer solely physical rather it is also psychological. The quality of life has not exceeded but it deteriorated with the advancement in technology and scientific transformation. As a consequence people have lost their will to live life and the focus on finding a meaning in one’s life has become lost.

This research analyzes a memoir based on the event of Holocaust with a contemporary dystopian fiction with a focus on themes of trauma. The characters in both the memoir and the fiction suffer trauma while finding ways to overcome it, giving meaning to their lives.

1.1 Overview of the Selected Texts

ADL by Dita Kraus is a memoir which recounts Kraus’ life from childhood to youth in the Jewish concentration camps during the time period of Holocaust in The Second World War. According to Sibghatullah Khan, “the reader of an autobiography is likely to get some meaning out of an autobiographical narrative only when he/she links it up with its author and the ‘place’ he enjoys within it” (19). In accordance, Dita gives an insight into her wondrous childhood before the Second World War began and then a recollection of all the sufferings and violence she experiences along with her parents and grandparents in the concentration camps. She shares her experience in different concentration camps including, Terezin, Auschwitz, and Bergen – Belsen. The author highlights the details of her struggle to find meaning by depending on her love for her relations, in order to achieve the meaning of her life in the camps. This struggle further facilitated her in surviving after she is released from the camps despite extreme pain and loss she had experienced.

Similarly, *TNW* by Diane Cook is a contemporary dystopian fiction which highlights a dystopian setting. The story of the novel takes place in a wilderness which is an experimental setting. Bea is a young mother who is forced to leave her life in the city and come to live in the wilderness with her boyfriend, Glen, and her daughter, Agnes, because of Agnes’ health. Agnes’ health suffers from breathing in the toxic city air. Therefore, in order to save her life, Bea agrees to participate in the experiment Glen leads of studying the impact of human lives on the environment by living in the only wilderness left in the world. A group of twenty people, later

known as the Community, participates in the experiment and leaves the city to make a life for themselves in the wilderness.

The community makes a life for themselves without any comforts of the city life. The group is supervised by power figures called the Rangers who implement rules and provide the community with specific tasks to complete, like journeys to different Posts in the wilderness. By participating in this experiment, Bea and her daughter, Agnes live in severe living conditions which puts them in a traumatic situation and they struggle to find a meaning in their life. Characters in the novel depend upon love, relations and their self determination to get through these traumatic events, to find meaning in their lives.

Despite the fact that *ADL* and *TNW* are two different genres, both selected works explore the concept of trauma in similar ways. *TNW* falls within the realm of dystopian fiction. It presents a fictional world where the characters struggle to survive in a harsh and unforgiving wilderness and explore trauma through a futuristic post-apocalyptic world. Whereas, *ADL* belongs to the genre of a memoir recounting real-life events from Kraus' experience as a Holocaust survivor. It offers a firsthand account of historical events. However, both Kraus and Cook focus on vivid descriptions of their characters' emotions and surroundings to present their narratives. Cook employs a descriptive and immersive writing style to create a vivid and atmospheric portrayal of the dystopian world. Her prose emphasizes the physical and emotional struggle faced by the characters. On the other hand, Kraus adopts a more reflective and personal style in her memoir where she draws readers into her own thoughts and emotions as she recounts her experiences during the Holocaust. Her writing style is poignant and introspective, inviting readers to empathize with her journey.

Furthermore, *TNW* follows a fictional narrative structure with a focus on character development and plot progression. It weaves together multiple perspectives to explore themes of human nature, environmentalism, and the consequences of societal collapse. In contrast, *ADL* offers a chronological account of real-life events, grounded in historical context. Kraus' narrative is shaped by her personal recollection and reflections, providing insights into the human experience during a dark period of history. Overall, despite the fact both the selected works differ significantly in genre, they both explore themes of survival and resilience to overcome the trauma faced by the characters.

1.2 Thesis Statement

This research study investigates the concept of “search for meaning” in the selected texts, *The New Wilderness* and *A Delayed Life*. The focus of the study is on the characters who are faced with traumatic situations, during Holocaust in Dita Kraus’ memoir *ADL* and in Diane Cook’s dystopian fiction *TNW*. The concept of trauma has been analyzed to examine the characters’ struggle to find meaning of life to reconstruct their selfhood against all odds. The study brings forth the ways to cope with trauma in these narratives, offering a historical and futuristic imaginary through a study of memoir and dystopian fiction, respectively.

1.3 Research Questions

This research study addresses the following questions:

- i. What kind of meaning of life do the characters in the selected texts seek to achieve?
- ii. How do the selected genres deal with the issue of trauma and selfhood in Diane Cook’s *TNW* and Dita Kraus’ *ADL*?
- iii. What role do flashbacks play in remembering and forgetting the trauma in the wilderness setting of dystopian fiction and the Holocaust in the memoir?

1.4 Significance of the Study

A study comparing Dita Kraus’ memoir, *ADL* and Diane Cook’s dystopian fiction *TNW* through the lens of Frankl’s Logotherapy and Caruth’s trauma theory holds a significant contribution in the field of trauma studies. Both the selected texts explore the concept of will to find meaning in different settings. By analyzing these two genres through the lens of Logotherapy and trauma, the study provides insights into how characters find meaning and purpose in traumatic events. It highlights the characters’ resilience to fight against all odds in order to make their lives meaningful and worthwhile and their will to survive is motivated by a search for meaning in different contexts.

The study adds to field of trauma in dystopian setting. Contemporary dystopian fiction is studied for its speculative element, however this research focuses on how trauma can be analyzed in dystopian fiction. Furthermore the study interlinks two genres, dystopian fiction and memoir to analyze the concept of trauma.

This study contributes to the broader literary scholarship on trauma narratives. Therefore, the analysis of a memoir and a dystopian fiction can have a profound impact on readers. Both genres have the potential to elicit strong emotional responses and to offer a deeper understanding of the human experience. This study highlights man's psyche in his struggle to find meaning for his life in a dystopian narrative and that of the psyche of a Holocaust survivor in a personal account. By studying how trauma is depicted in these two different contexts, the research contributes to discussions not only about how different narratives present trauma but also in narratives related to the past. Moreover, it offers futuristic imaginary to deal with trauma in dystopian fiction. In dystopian settings where the bleak outlook towards life overwhelms individuals, this study offers ways to cope with a probable future with hope.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

Recent research studies are focused on the issue of trauma highlighting a lack of meaning in life. The theme of such lack of meaning in life can also be observed in memoir and dystopian fiction.

Dystopian fiction is a genre that explores grim, often exaggerated visions of future. The term dystopia is used to describe those literary texts that revolve around the theme of a futuristic society in which people have lost hope. Lyman Tower Sargent defines dystopia as, "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived" (qtd in. Teittinen, Korpua, and Isomaa 9). Narrative techniques in dystopian fiction play a crucial role in conveying the underlying themes of the text. Authors depict social structures which contribute to the sense of a bleak and controlled world where individuals have lost their sense of self. Moreover, the use of vivid and detailed descriptions of the physical surroundings allows the author to enhance the reader's connection with the setting. A dystopian fiction portrays deeper meanings through the use of symbolism and metaphors. Objects, actions, or characters represent larger societal issues. In *TNW*, for example, the characters give more value to the objects they have brought from the city rather than their own community member. Cook critiques the loss of sentimentality in them.

Memoir is a genre that allows author to share his personal experiences and thoughts. In order to make the stories engaging, memoir writers use various narrative techniques including,

first-person point of view, imagery, reflection and introspection, flashbacks and character development. Just like fiction, memoirs often have an emotional arc. This arc traces author's journey from the beginning of the narrative to the end, showcasing how they evolve, confront challenges, and ultimately find resolution or understanding. Memoirs are typically written in the first-person which allows the reader to experience the events and emotions directly through the author's perspective. This adds intimacy and authenticity in the text. Moreover, similar to a dystopian narrative, memoir uses vivid descriptions and sensory details to help the reader in visualizing settings, characters and their emotions. This further adds to the technique of reflection and introspection that memoir writers use where they analyze their experiences and personal growth. This introspection provides insight into their emotional journey. Furthermore, memoirs do not always follow a chronological order, authors rather use flashbacks to reveal key moments that shaped their personal growth. Kraus in the selected text, *ADL*, uses flashbacks to present her life's journey through the Nazi concentration camps. For these reasons, memoir is selected for this study.

Analyzing two different genres such as a memoir and a dystopian fiction may seem like an unusual choice, but it can provide unique insights into the human experience with trauma in different contexts. The rationale behind studying *ADL* and *TNW* is to explore how trauma and existential frustration manifest in different contexts and how individuals respond to them, in different genres. It highlights how the characters in both settings are putting in an effort despite all odds in order to find a meaning in their lives. Therefore, this concept needs to be studied with regards to how similar or different psychological condition of people in a dystopian setting is from that of a survivor during the Holocaust. Despite the differences in genre, both works share common themes of trauma, loss, and the search for meaning.

1.6 Delimitations

The current study is delimited to Dita Kraus' *A Delayed Life: The True Story of The Librarian of Auschwitz* and *The New Wilderness* by Diane Cook. The text will be analyzed under the lens of Logotherapy, proposed by Viktor E. Frankl and Cathy Caruth's trauma theory.

1.7 Research Plan

The research is divided into the following seven chapters:

The first chapter introduces and gives an overview of Frankl's idea of Logotherapy and Cathy Caruth's concepts of the trauma theory. The chapter provides details of the characters and their struggle. It analyzes how their perception and trajectory of overcoming trauma is different in both genres.

In the second chapter of my research titled, Literature Review, I situate the selected works within the critical scholarship available in my field of study. I have studied available critical sources and looked for gaps found within the established critiques. In the next chapter I have explained the selected theoretical framework. It also discusses my research methodology.

In the fourth chapter titled, Fragmented Selfhood: An Analysis of Characters, I have compared Bea, Agnes, and Dita and explored how they are similar in their perception of trauma, especially within the context of the effects of the effects of death on memory. I have also shed light on how while the characters are similar in their perception of trauma they differ completely in their approach towards finding a meaning in their suffering. In the fifth chapter named, Finding a Meaning in Suffering: Existential Frustration and Noo Dynamics, I have explored how the characters in both the selected works deal with existential frustration align with Frankl's concept of Noo Dynamics.

In the sixth chapter of my research named, Understanding the Essence of Life in Trauma, I have explored how Caruth's concept of Memory in Trauma Theory plays a vital role in adhering the character's process of overcoming their trauma and how they differ in their ways of finding a meaning in their lives.

In the seventh chapter of my research named, Conclusion, I have assembled my findings and summarized the developed rationalization from previous chapters of my analysis. I conclude how my findings have led me to prove my research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section entails all the relevant research conducted in a broad spectrum of the psychotherapeutic theory called Logotherapy by Viktor E. Frankl and Cathy Caruth's trauma theory and their application on literature throughout the years. Literature encompassing the themes of life having lost its meaning and existential nihilism as well as trauma are written by large during the modernist and contemporary era. In the 21st century this literature has attained a new level of supremacy since the society has touched new horizons of development with regards to the materialistic culture and mass consumerism. As a consequence, a novel sense of oneself being lost and fragmented in the process of finding a purpose and meaning of life has surfaced.

2.2 Critical Sources on Logotherapy

In his review of *From an Existential Vacuum to a Tragic Optimism: The Search for Meaning and presence of God in Modern Literature* by Barbara A. Heavilin, John H. Timmerman highlights the application of the philosophy of Viktor Frankl and his concept of existential vacuum in light of modern poetry and other modern fictional works. Heavilin's approach in her book, according to Timmerman, is examining "the nature and qualities of modernism in an author's work, and then searching for patterns of transcendent meaning either stated or suggested, within that work" (100). Timmerman is of the view that Frankl's "concept of the existential vacuum captures the impact of the overwhelming weight of naturalistic modernism in the twentieth century" (99). Timmerman highlights that Heavilin's book is divided into three sections the first of which focus on the modern poetry in light of Frankl's idea of life having lost its meaning as Heavilin writes in a discussion of Yeats' *The Second Coming* that, "with the death of Christianity, the absence of God, and the loss of morality, there is no language, no meaning; no appeal for mercy, justice, morality- just emptiness, blankness, pitilessness" (qtd. in Timmerman, 99). Moreover, Timmerman suggests that Frankl shares the concepts of Saint Augustine that the "ultimate meaning locates in ultimate Being, which may be named Good or God" (100). That is "the more evil one becomes, the less being, meaning and goodness one has" (100). Therefore, according to Timmerman, Heavilin in her book chooses to explore how characters produced by

modernist authors deal with the process of finding meaning of life and the concept of Good and Evil alongside within the paradigm of religion. Limiting fictional writings to the paradigm of religion and its sense of morality; good and evil, restricts its capacity to be studied. My study fills this gap and maintains how humans deal with trauma and strive to overcome it using their own sense of conscious irrespective of the constructs of religions.

Furthermore, Timmerman highlights Heavilin's application of different concepts of Frankl's philosophy on numerous fictional works and poetry of the modern era divided into three parts in her book. In Part one, *Reflections of God in the Poetic Vision*, Heavilin uses Frankl's concept of tragic optimism, that is, "the search for hope when there is no apparent reason for hope" (Timmerman 100) and discusses T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and demonstrates that "modernism began with the 'inward gaze' of Romanticism, which turned into the flattening existential vacuum of the twentieth century" (100). In the second part, however, Heavilin focuses on Frankl's concept of human "'saint' who freely gives" (101) and applies it on Steinbeck's major novels, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *East of Eden*, and *The Winter of Our Discontent*. Heavilin is of the view that "'Having', the trait of modernism, typifies the present age and corresponds with Frankl's view of the human 'swine', the gluttonous desire for more" (qtd. in Timmerman, 101). Finally in the third part, Timmerman remarks that Heavilin analyses fantasy works under Frankl's philosophy, which further strengthens her idea of the modern age and its conundrum of having lost the meaning of life. While Heavilin's work recognizes and analyzes the external factors of the modern world being the prime reason for individuals having lost their sense of self, she does not take into account the psychological, that is, the internal factors of one's own psyche in this modern world leading up to individual's having lost their sense of self. This is where my research fills this gap. My research highlights how an individual's own struggle to fight the trauma which they have internalized over the period of time in order to find their sense of self.

In another work article, *The Existential Vacuum and Ethan Allen Hawley: John Steinbeck's Moral Philosophy* by Heavilin A. Barbara, she equates John Steinbeck's view, with regards to the modern American society that "self-absorption is a national malaise" (8), to Viktor E. Frankl's concept of existential vacuum. She remarks that existential vacuum results from a state of boredom. Heavilin argues that both novelist and psychiatrist, Steinbeck and Frankl, point towards an excess of leisure time being the source of the ailment in the modern society, as Steinbeck remarks,

As for the use of leisure, we are due to feel that pressure more and more as automation and increase of population force more and more leisure on us; and so far, in human history, leisure has caused us to get into destructive and unsatisfactory trouble. Unless some valuable direction can be devised and trained for in America, *leisure may well be our new disease, dangerous and incurable* [emphasis added]. (qtd. in Heavilin, 8).

Heavilin has suggested that Steinbeck through his fiction offers the readers some “‘directions’ for escaping and overcoming this societal malignancy” (9) which are similar to the ones Frankl has proposed in Logotherapy. They are as follows, “first, there is meaning in work well done. Second, there is meaning in life’s experiences and relationships. Third, there is meaning in a person’s attitude towards unavoidable suffering” (9).

Steinbeck’s character Ethan Hawley in his fictional novel *The Winter of Our Discontent* is a representation of the modern American society which finds itself lost and its people lacking a sense of meaning in their lives. Throughout the novel Hawley fails to accomplish anything worthwhile since he “Ethan, the Every American, succumbs to the corruption of the love of money—a corruption that is a chief hallmark of his times and his country” (Heavilin 12). Heavilin equates this instance with Frankl’s concept of how a man who suffers from existential vacuum tries to compensate the hollowness in his life by seeking money, power, or pleasure. However, when extreme tragedy befalls Hawley he changes his attitude and faces the world with a “mature sense of responsibility” (Heavilin 16) and ultimately overcomes his self-absorption by discovering meaning in a renewed love of family. Thereby, Heavilin through her study concludes that Steinbeck’s and Frankl’s ideas align with regards to the concept of existential vacuum and its application on Steinbeck’s fictional novel depicting the American society. As she remarks, “self-transcendence can overcome the malaise of the existential vacuum and restore meaning to those like Ethan, the Every American, who are caught in the limbo of their own self-absorption” (18). However, Heavilin’s study is limited to the modern age American society and the malaise of existential vacuum to which it succumbs. The research does not compare or address existential vacuum people suffered beyond the American culture or the modern era. My research fills this gap by comparing and contrasting the existential vacuum experienced by people during the Holocaust and the modern era. It also brings into light the ways characters differ in overcoming the existential vacuum in order to find meaning in their lives.

Apart from this, in another work Maxine Greene in her article *The Whale's Whiteness: On Meaning and Meaninglessness* suggests that meaninglessness is “a response that affects people’s conception of themselves, their future, and their world” (51). She argues that contemporary literary fictional works highlight how life has become rather meaningless and the universe empty where humans are portrayed as “merely diminished creatures, but impotent, vulnerable, and blankly, hopelessly bored” (52). She argues that there are symbols in literature as well as other art forms be it lyrics to songs, movies or paintings which articulate meaninglessness of the world. In her analysis of one of the chapters from *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, *Whiteness of the Whale*, Greene equates Ishmael’s recognition of the color of the whale with the idea proposed by Viktor E. Frankl that a man is free to choose accept or reject an idea, “to fulfill a meaning potentially, or else to forfeit it” (qtd. in Greene, 71). Thereby, she establishes that Frankl’s idea of will to suffering in which he argues that “a man can survive anything if he himself defines the purpose of his suffering” (72) justifiably applies to Ishmael’s realization of finding meaning or meaninglessness out of the whale’s whiteness as she states,

Ishmael's recognition that white is “all-color” and “no-color”, good and evil, the all in all. It is illusion; it is the appearances of things; and behind it lies a mystery about which no claims can be made, about which nothing meaningful can be said. One can only accept, one can only create one's own small, contingent orders. (72)

As a result, Greene concludes that her argument about the difference between meaning and meaninglessness for people in today’s world is only a matter of how they perceive their sufferings. However the research only focuses on an individual’s own perception of the sufferings without taking into account the external factors playing a role in the said perception. This is where my research fills the gap. My research highlights external factors including one’s relations and what socializing with them entails in understanding the difference between meaning and meaninglessness. It sheds light on how, in addition to a person’s individualistic understanding of trauma, one’s relations with family and community help him understand the concept of trauma, accept it, as well as overcome it.

In addition to this, in another work Michael Day in his Master’s dissertation *Children of the Anti-world: Confrontations between Children and Adults in the Fiction of Kurahashi Yumiko*, highlights Kurahashi’s intent as an author to create an anti-world “in which morality and

immorality, being and nothingness, clarity and obscurity are unified” (iii). He analyses Kurahashi’s novels and her use of the motif of children in confrontation with the conventions of the adult world and in the process contradicts Viktor E. Frankl’s concepts proposed in his theory Logotherapy. In his analysis of Yumiko’s *The Children who played Butcher* he analyses the characters of Aiko, a young patient to Dr. Miki. Dr. Miki is a psychotherapist who makes use of Viktor E. Frankl’s Logotherapy to treat Aiko and make her realize the meaning of her life and overcome her lack of oneness she feels with regard to her fractured self. During her sessions with Dr. Miki, Aiko develops a romantic attachment to Dr. Miki and as a result comes into harmony with her fragmented self as Yumiko writes, “According to Aiko, all of her, all these previously disconnected parts, had become multiple forms of herself which were now able to communicate with each other... ‘We are all friends - all the Aikos’” (qtd. in Day, 31-32).

Even though Aiko seems to be cured in one way, she still transgresses the moral codes set down by the adults which frown upon a patient and a doctor developing a romantic relation with one another. Therefore, Day argues that Aiko in true sense was not at all cured since at the end of the story she still commits suicide. Thereby, Day questions Frankl’s theory and his methods of curing the neurosis and the meaninglessness children feel in their fragmented selves when confronted with the questions of morality and immorality set down by the adults in the society. However, Day only as much as highlights a problem and questions Frankl’s theory and his methods, whereas, my research puts forth a solution from within Frankl’s theory to fill this gap in research as I suggest that Frankl’s theory suggests that an individual must be made aware of the transitory nature of life in order to understand the real meaning it holds at a certain point in life as young Dita did during her time in the concentration camps in Holocaust in *ADL* as well as Agnes in *TNW* did while she overcome her mother’s abandonment.

2.3 Critical Sources on Trauma

Tea Obreht in her review, *TNW by Diane Cook review – a dazzling debut*, of the dystopian fictional novel *TNW* by Diane Cook gives an insight to the novel’s main characters and the story. She highlights Bea and Agnes as the main characters of the novel and their tumultuous relationship. According to Obreht, their troubled relationship depicts the emotions of the group of people forming the community which inhabits the last state reserve of wilderness after the city has been polluted and corrupted leaving it unfit for living. The city’s poisonous air has been killing Agnes

since the day she was born as a result of which Bea, her husband Glen take Bea's daughter Agnes and leave the city to live in the wilderness. She highlights the "corrosive force of individualism" (Obrecht) that surrounds the community and how humans have a tendency to destroy whatever they may encounter in the struggle of self-preservation. Obrecht is of the view that the objective of the novel and Cook's writing style is to maintain a distance between the readers and the narrative by giving lesser details about the emotions of the characters and thereby maintaining the idea that "how people living with the expectation of death don't put much stock in each other's individuality". She wonders, "how people thrown into this kind of experiment – into a radical reshaping of mind, body, and sense of both society and time – could stay such strangers for so long" (Obrecht). Obrecht analyzes *TNW* with a critical viewpoint focusing on human tendencies to destroying nature in their struggle of self-preservation. It highlights human's resilience, however, it does not shed light on how the characters undergo traumatic experiences and try to overcome them. Obrecht does not analyze *TNW* with a viewpoint of trauma theory or Frankl's Logotherapy. This is where by research fills the gap.

Kirkus in its review of *TNW* by Diane Cook highlights Bea and Agnes', a mother daughter duo, journey along with a group of people to the state of wilderness away from the polluted city which is not fit to inhabit anymore. The city and its environment causes many children's health to fail specially Agnes' who is advised by the doctor to leave the city and move to somewhere where there is cleaner air otherwise she may not survive. Kirkus writes, "The Community, originally 20 adults and children before various births and deaths, travels the wild as a ragtag pack, rife with typical internal politics" (Kirkus). The review highlights the push-pull sort of a relationship between the mother and daughter due to the fact that Bea misses her urban life in the city, however, her fierce motherly emotions and determination to protect her daughter Agnes at all costs makes her remain with the decision of staying in the wilderness. Thereby, the powerful love connection between the mother and daughter despite their troublesome relationship builds the foundation of the novel. Kirkus highlights that the objective of the author, Diane Cook, nevertheless remains to question human emotions and instincts in how far one may go in the struggle of self-preservation and protecting the ones he loves as the review states, "This ecological horror story...explores painful regions of the human heart" (Kirkus).

Emily Schneider in her book review of *A Delayed Life: The True Story of the Librarian of Auschwitz* by Dita Kraus presents to the readers an insight into Kraus' memoir of her life as a

Holocaust survivor from her childhood to her gruesome experiences of violence in the Nazi concentration camps till after her liberation from the camps where she struggles to piece together her broken sense of self. Schneider highlights how Kraus is of the view that she has spent her entire life delaying it, that is, “how she has never been able to fully experience a moment’s reality, instead distancing herself with the sense that every occurrence was merely ‘a kind of preface to the narrative’” (Schneider). She further points out that the autobiography has a psychoanalytical tone as Kraus struggles to make sense out of her sufferings in the concentration camps and troubled familial relationships.

Johnny Belknap in his book review of *ADL* by Dita Kraus recounts the story told by Kraus in her contemporary autobiography as he states that Dita has presented,

in a remarkably matter-of-fact tone, her dramatic transition from a happy childhood in pre-war Prague to utter misery in the Nazi camps, followed by liberation and loss, then oppression in Communist Czechoslovakia, to back-breaking work in an early Israeli kibbutz (Belknap).

However, Belknap is of the view that Kraus despite having gone through such miseries does not lose her “sunny schoolgirl personality” (Belknap) as she powers through her life of constant turmoil and suffering.

2.4 Critical Sources on Dystopian Fiction

In her *Feminist Review*, Helen Snaith explores the role of the elderly within Margret Atwood’s dystopian tales. She specifically looks at the role of gerontology in her collection of short stories *Stone Mattress: Nine Wicked Tales* as she argues that the realms of dystopian fiction provide scope for a gerontological focus within contemporary literature. She elaborates that Atwood utilizes the dystopian narrative in order to address broader social issues that stem from old age in women by focusing on Atwood’s representation of the elderly women in the dystopian narrative. Snaith is of the view that, “Old age is presupposed as a personal dystopia demonstrated through the limitations of sex, mobility, and motility. However, Atwood utilizes the science fiction motif of cyberspace in order to transcend these limitations, thus subverting the stereotype of the older woman.” (119)

Six of the nine tales in *Stone Mattress* focus on elderly women. The female protagonists challenge the stereotypes of old age by focusing on their own sexual desires. They are aware of their sexual desires and go against the societal constraints, utilizing cyberspace in order to find their own identity. Thereby, they use old age as a mechanism that allows them to enact revenge on men who have wronged them in the past, rectifying their dystopic sexual desires.

According to Snaith, Atwood utilizes the dystopian narrative structure to study the contemporary world's trajectories as a sort of warning by drawing upon the anxieties of people in the contemporary world to explore possible futures for humankind. However, Snaith limits the study of dystopian fiction to the lens of gerontology and speculation. Her focus remains only women of the contemporary world fighting the societal constraints against their sexual desires with regard to old age in order to find their identity. My study fills this gaps and maintains how dystopian fiction can be studied under the lens of trauma theory.

Pat Wheeler in his editorial, *Representations of Dystopia in Literature and Film* critiques on *Re-membering the Future: Doris Lessing's "Experiment in Autobiography"* by Aaron Rosenfeld. According to Wheeler, Rosenfeld argues that Doris Lessing explores the relationship between individual and history and between individual and community in her dystopian novel *The Memoirs of a Survivor*. The novel follows a woman in a dystopian world from her childhood to old age trying to find her identity in a chaotic world. Rosenfeld studies the novel with the aspect of how it is structured much more like an autobiography while the subject matter is dystopian nature, as Rosenfeld comments that Lessing's text is as "an attempt at autobiography." (Rosenfeld 46). Wheeler is of the view dystopian fiction tends to present a world where an individual either disappears into abstraction or is granted special status as the last representative of a world gone wrong. Wheeler argues that, Lessing "employs future history's framework of a dislocated world as a metaphor for the subject's struggle for identity within a history that is both personal and collective." (2) Wheeler points out that by combining dystopian modalities with autobiography, "Lessing disrupts the boundaries of both genre and identity" he "seeks to reconfigure a world – historical subject who is both within and outside the frame of the traditional models for narrating future history." (2) The research focuses on how the Lessing has structured the dystopian fiction like an autobiography thus presenting a unique point of view on both genre and a struggle for a sense of identity in a dystopian fiction. This is where my study fills the gap by focusing on the

trauma characters might face in a dystopian fiction while struggling to find a sense of identity is a chaotic dystopia.

Paul March Russell analyzes E.M. Forster's short story, *The Machine Stops*. The story portrays a futuristic world-state that exists underground where inhabitants lead separate lives. A machine, a technological network, provides all the inhabitant's needs. The narrative focuses on Kuno, who disobeys the machine and ventures above ground. His adventure later on leads to a reconciliation between him and his mother, Vashti. Russell argues that this reconciliation is rather utopian in nature, as he argues, "while the social setting of Forster's story is dystopian, the narrative retains a residual utopian element." (56) Russell uses Derrida's notion of aimance to explore the reconciliation between Kuno and his estranged mother, Vashti following the eventual social collapse. This is where my research fills the gap as my research uses Cathy Caruth's trauma theory and Frankl's Logotherapy to explore the trauma a dystopian world leaves on its characters and how they attempt to overcome it.

The works mentioned above highlight the contents of the texts under study in this research as well as the lens of Logotherapy by Viktor E. Frankl and Cathy Caruth's trauma theory opted to be applied on the said texts. However, none of the works depict the rationale of this research since Frankl's theory of Logotherapy and Caruth's trauma theory has only been used to compare and contrast a contemporary war trauma memoir and a contemporary dystopian fiction before. Furthermore, Dystopian fiction has only been researched within a speculative framework and never been studied under the lens of trauma theory or Frankl's Logotherapy. In that sense this research is unique and singular.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This research aims to study the selected texts in light of Viktor E. Frankl's Logotherapy as well as Cathy Caruth's trauma theory; more specifically the role memory plays in the comprehension of a traumatic experience.

Viktor E. Frankl in his devised theory, Logotherapy, argues that man needs a purpose in order to lead his life to the fullest in order to ultimately achieve self-actualization. He suggests in his book *Man's Search for Meaning* that "Logotherapy...is a meaning-centered psychotherapy" (98). It differs from Freud's suggested ideals of psychoanalysis which deal with a person's past and suppressed or conscious/unconscious emotions. It rather focuses on man's capabilities of realizing and then fulfilling his potentialities by focusing more on the future and finding a meaning in life. Logotherapy is less retrospective as well as introspective in comparison to Freud's psychoanalysis. Logotherapy, instead of focusing on a man's inner conscious/unconscious psyche, confronts him with what he is and what he is yet to become. Frankl is of the view that humans have an inherent primary motivational force. This primary motivational force stresses upon human capabilities to the utmost and, as a result, achieving one's full potential. Frankl calls this primary motivational force, the "will to meaning" (99). However, when an individual experiences a traumatic event in their life, their will to meaning gets frustrated since the memories of the traumatic event disrupts their very sense of self.

Cathy Caruth's defines trauma as "a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 3). Her trauma theory is deeply interconnected with the concept of memory. Caruth has explored how traumatic events disrupt normal processes of memory being stored in one's brain. It further sheds light on how these events continue to haunt the individual's consciousness, often re-emerging unexpectedly. Her ideas have had a significant impact on the study of trauma and memory in various disciplines, including literature and psychology.

Caruth argues that memories play a vital role in one's experience of trauma. According to William James in his article *Great Men Great Thoughts and the Environment*, new conceptions and emotions are originally stored in the human brain in the form of images. These images are

then either preserved in the brain or refuted based on the outer environment in which such conceptions and emotions are experienced.

Caruth argues that traumatic memories are a part of the subconscious in one's brain and are actively repressed by the trauma victim. It is due to this repression that they are forgotten and later remembered by slightest of triggers. Caruth depends upon of the major aspects of trauma theory, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). According to the American Psychiatric Association's definition, PTSD is "a response to an event "outside the range of usual human experience"" (qtd in. Caruth, *Trauma* 3).

The arousing experience of such a traumatic event causes the memories in the brain to dissociate, leading to the formation of traumatic memories in the subconscious as fixed ideas. One of the major aspects of PTSD is flashbacks which happen due to the arousal of a traumatic memory. When a trauma victim encounters a situation similar to the one which they had faced when they experienced the trauma, their traumatic memory gets triggered. The memory of the traumatic event comes flooding back in the form of flashbacks. The more the contextual stimuli resemble the conditions prevailing at the time of trauma, the more the retrieval is likely.

As Caruth argues,

there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event (Caruth, *Trauma* 4).

Memories and the recalling of the traumatic experience play a vital role in the transformation and division of one's consciousness. Memories of the event makes an individual relive the experience in different light each time. However, once these memories are triggered and remembered it is necessary to observe how the trauma victim perceives these memories. Caruth argues that, "The historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all" (Caruth, *Trauma* 8). When the trauma victim's memory of the traumatic event is triggered, they are reminded of the event in the form of flashbacks. Through these flashbacks the victim relives the event and experiences it once again. Since the traumatic memory is repressed by the victim,

once it is recalled the experience of reliving it in one's brain is as if experiencing the trauma anew all together. Thereby, Caruth establishes that the experience of a traumatic event leaves it traces on the psyche of an individual each time it is remembered through memory. This suffering creates in the individual a split in their sense of self and identity that is, a dissociative sense of self. As Caruth mentions, "the re-experience of the trauma itself reevokes a dissociative reaction" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 7).

Moreover, the remembrance of a traumatic event is not conscious rather Caruth argues that "the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 2). Caruth understands that external factors affects one's mind and give rise to memories. Writers while writing of a traumatic incident express incoherent and painful emotional state of the characters in order to demonstrate how a traumatic experience restructures perceptions as well as meaning of reality and values for an individual. The traumatized protagonist might experience trauma as a "double wound" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 3) which indicates that the traumatic experience disrupts the previous framework of reality and the protagonist must learn to recognize the self in relation to a new view of reality. As Caruth explains that trauma is like a wound of the mind; it is,

the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world...is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in...repetitive actions of the survivor (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 4).

The notion of memory as an active and revisionary process expressed in trauma narratives suggests that a trauma experience remains frozen in an individual's mind as well as separated from other day to day memories. Trauma is remembered through memories, and it puts the individual in a profoundly inquisitive state. The meaning of the experience and the process of conceptualizing the self and world becomes of utmost importance. This takes an individual on a transformative journey since in the process of finding meaning of the traumatic makes the individual glance inwards as well as grow awareness of the external reality.

Caruth's ideals of trauma highlights how individuals struggle to come to terms with their transformed sense of self and reality. It discusses how a traumatic experience in an individual's life creates a division in one's consciousness by repetitive remembrance of it through memories

yet one strive to find meaning in his life. Whereas, Logotherapy in its various aspects provides man with the ability to realize the meaning of his life after having experienced a traumatic experience. It establishes that human beings do not live only for the sake of living. Rather they survive with a goal that is inherent to their being. It argues that one must strive to search for the meaning of one's existence by realizing one's potential and achieving it to the utmost sense.

However, Frankl in Logotherapy suggests ways to overcome the trauma one has experienced in their life. He is of the view that the meaning in one's life is "unique and specific" (99) and can only be achieved by an individual himself. He argues that there is no singular or general meaning of one's life rather what matters is the meaning of one's life at a particular moment in time. The meaning of one's life may change from day to day or even hour to hour, depending on the person's circumstances. Thus, Logotherapy puts responsibility for one's life on the individual. It argues that an individual's actions are the very essence of existence.

Frankl argues that the ones who fail to realize the will to meaning suffer from existential frustration. The term 'existential' here refers to three dimensions in which a person may feel frustrated. Firstly, failing to understand the reason for the very existence of human beings. Secondly, being unable to grasp the essence of finding meaning in one's life. Thirdly, failing to realize the purpose of the struggle one must go through in finding the meaning of life. People, in today's world, are doubly challenged by this frustration. The modern ways of life have not only diminished traditions on which the basic human instincts rested, leaving them clueless in the *how* (stress intended) to deal with life. Rather Frankl argues that the advent of automation has given man too much distress. Therefore, people nowadays are haunted by inner emptiness, that is, a void within themselves. They are in a constant battle with a feeling of ultimate meaninglessness. Frankl calls this situation "existential vacuum" (106). The deteriorating conditions of the world in terms of automation has given rise to the worsening living conditions by negatively affecting the environment and the planet itself. Therefore, this current situation has engaged people in a constant battle for survival. They are profoundly confronted with a search for meaning in a meaningless world. Modern man is faced with a constant struggle to make sense of the very process one must go through to survive, mentally and physically. The fight for survival against this meaninglessness of life has frustrated man's will to meaning because of which people nowadays suffer through an existential vacuum.

However, Frankl argues that the struggle for finding meaning in life and actualizing one's full potential gives rise to inner tension. He calls this phenomenon "Noo dynamics" (103). To be clear, once one realizes his full potential and strives to achieve what he has yet not achieved, an inner tension in his psyche arises. Logotherapy appreciates such arousal of inner tension since it is of the view that "such a tension is inherent in the human being and therefore is indispensable to mental well-being" (Frankl 105). It helps man to survive through the toughest of conditions. Frankl uses Nietzsche's words in Logotherapy, "He who has a *why* to live can bear almost any *how*" (qtd. in Frankl 104). Thus, Logotherapy argues that mental health is based on a certain degree of tension, that is, the tension between what one has already achieved and what is yet to be accomplished. Frankl establishes that this tension is inherent in human beings instead of mental equilibrium and stability. Once faced with a challenge, man's will to meaning is evoked and he, in accordance with that evocation, fulfills the task of realizing his potential. This is how he ultimately achieves self-actualization.

Although Logotherapy is based on the concept of finding meaning in one's life, as established before, yet every aspect of one's life may differ from another. A man must strive to achieve for the meaning of a particular aspect or moment in life. This concept confronts man with the finality of life, that is, it limits life and its meaning to a single moment. This helps him in survival by realizing his complete potential in order to find meaning in every aspect of one's life. It argues that the transitoriness of our existence does not make life meaningless. Instead it contributes to people's sense of responsibility towards their life "for everything hinges upon our realizing the essentially transitory possibilities" (Frankl 121).

Logotherapy focuses more on the external world while attempting to find meaning for one's life. It presents a critique on a concept Frankl calls "Pan-determinism." By Pan-determinism he means, "the view of man which disregards his capacity to take a stand toward any conditions whatsoever" (131). Thereby, it argues that even in the face of suffering individuals can choose how they respond and find meaning in their experiences. As he writes, "Man is not fully conditioned and determined but rather determines himself whether he gives in to conditions or stands up to them...man is ultimately self-determining" (131).

In order to endure hardships and find a meaning in one's life, that is to reach self-actualization, Frankl proposes the concept of "self-transcendence of human existence" (110).

Frankl believes that the true meaning of life can be discovered “in the world rather than within man or his own psyche” (110). When a person gives himself to something or someone, he becomes more human, that is, he gains more empathy. Human relations, love, and one’s attitude towards unavoidable suffering help him actualize himself. He argues that one must find meaning in love; through the love of another person, one realizes his capabilities and can use them to reach self-actualization.

In conclusion, both the selected theories highlight how a traumatic experience is perceived by the trauma victim. They further elaborate on how the victims deal with the constant remembrance of the trauma where Frankl proposes ideas as to how a victim can overcome a traumatic event.

3.2 Research Methodology

The present research analyzes two contemporary works, a memoir *A Delayed Life: The True story of the Librarian of Auschwitz* by Dita Kraus and a dystopian fiction, *The New Wilderness* by Diane Cook, qualitatively under the lens of Logotherapy proposed by Viktor E. Frankl and trauma theory by Cathy Caruth. The research is analytical in nature as it utilizes Frankl’s notions of Logotherapy as well as the concept of trauma proposed by Caruth to study these two different texts. It analyzes how characters in contemporary memoir set in Holocaust and characters inhabiting a dystopian world are similar or different in perceiving trauma. It further explores how the characters realize the meaning of their lives and sufferings.

The method of analysis chosen for carrying out this research is textual analysis. According to Catherine Belsey, “textual analysis as a research method involves a close encounter with the work itself, an examination of the details without bringing to them more presuppositions than we can help” (Griffin 160). By using this method, the researcher undertakes an in-depth study of the above mentioned contemporary memoir and a dystopian novel. The researcher takes out examples from the text in order to support her argument and to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of this research work. This methodology is appropriate for analyzing the said texts because it provides examples from the texts in order to prove how the characters in both the works find the meaning of their lives and sufferings.

CHAPTER 4

FRAGMENTED SELFHOOD: AN ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS

4.1 Trauma and its Effects

Dita Kraus is a Jewish writer, born and raised in Prague, Czech Republic. Her parents moved to Prague from their native land Brno soon after they got married. Dita's life in the memoir shares her experiences beginning from her childhood to her stay at the concentration camps during Holocaust. She explains horrific reality of the concentration camps and the trauma she experiences there at the hands of Germans. In the concentration camps, she faces violence and loses her loved ones. This not only makes her lose her sense of individuality but also makes her question the meaning of her life.

Dita being the only child, enjoys undivided attention not only from her parents but also from her grandmother. She even receives love from her house maids Mitzi and Maria, who lived with her in Prague and developed a good bond with her. They were her first friends and she shared some of her most beautiful childhood memories with them. Her middle-class family with Socialists parents, never bothered about class distinction and shared their dinner table with Maria, the house maid. Dita lived in comfort for the most part of her childhood apart from minor grievances brought onto her due to her health. She enjoyed a normal childhood with all its perks of being taken care of and pampered. Despite all this, she encounters death as an eight years old. She sees a figure laying, "looking more like a heap of clothes than a body", on a railway track behind her school. This encounter with suicide traumatizes young Dita as she recalls the tragic event later in life, she writes,

It was a moment of profound sadness. I knew it was a suicide; someone who no longer wanted to live, had jumped under a train. The place is forever associated in my memory with tragedy. Even when, after almost sixty years, I stood again near my old school, I was drawn to the same spot at the fence, as if the pitiful figure were still lying there. (Kraus 13)

Dita associated the railway tracks with the trauma of death and suicide she experienced in her childhood since even when she visits the railway tracks later in her life she is reminded of the

experience of watching a dead man on the tracks. These first encounters with death and suicide influenced Dita's memory with the harsh reality of death and despair in the course of life.

Another of Dita's encounters with death in early childhood was when she visited her mother's native village in the German-speaking region called Bohmerwald. She came across an overturned horse cart and the horse laying in the middle of the road with its head and neck hanging over a sloping incline. She waited for the horse to move and get up, however, after a while when the horse showed no signs of movement Dita "began to realize the frightening, terrible fact that the animal would never rise again" (12). For Dita this experience was the "first intimation that the world was not such a bright and happy place, as it had been up to that point" (Kraus 12).

Dita was a thin and an unhealthy child. She underwent three surgeries in a course of a mere few months when she was in the second grade elementary school. The surgeries were a result of an upset belly for years. This further shook Dita's strength to enjoy life as she mentions her recovery as, "slowly I came back to life" (Kraus 69). Her mother, however, had a positive approach towards difficulties and traumas in life. Instead of remaining fixed at Dita's trauma of fighting death in these surgeries, her mother cheerfully remarks on the scars left on Dita's body "You just won't become a belly dancer" (Kraus 69). For Dita's mother the scars do not represent death experiences, she sees them as insignificant. This provides Dita with a positive outlook towards traumatic situations which later helps her overcome the trauma of her surgeries. From early childhood Dita's mother's positive approach towards adversaries in life helps prepare Dita for the trauma she would face later in the concentration camps. As she is influenced by her mother's positivity as a child, Dita grows up to be a positive person who remains steadfast in the moments of harsh realities. Therefore, even though she experiences death, suicide, and even near death experiences on a personal level as a child she grows up to be a resilient person who fights for her life in the concentration camps.

Agnes in *TNW* is one of the main characters of dystopian fiction. She is born in the city but after having suffered extreme illness for years in her young life, she is brought to the only wilderness left on the planet. She comes to the wilderness as a participant of a research experiment aimed at studying human life and its effects on the environment they inhabit. She is accompanied by her mother, Bea and her boyfriend, Glen.

Both Dita and Agnes have a rough start to life with regards to their health which makes them timid personalities. They are both forced to enter into a life of continual hardship and violence which further shapes their sense of identity. For Dita, she faces trauma at the age of ten when World War II breaks out. She is forced to leave Prague, her hometown, when Germans take over. The sufferings for Jews begin with targeted violence by the Germans. Dita is separated from her parents and is sent to live with family friends in Zd'ar initially and later to the concentration camps. She is thirteen and a half at that time. Similarly, Agnes is shown to have no choice but to leave the toxic air of the city life and participate in an experiment to move to a wilderness along with her family. Glen, her mother's boyfriend remarks in a conversation with Bea, "But if we stay, she'll die" (Cook 72). Cook mentions Bea's emotions as, "It came out so flatly, so unequivocally she felt like he'd slapped her.....she looked at Glen and he had that resolute look. That no other solution look" (Cook 72) portraying that they have no other choice but to leave the city and start a new life in the wilderness as part of an experiment.

Both Agnes and Dita were forced into living a difficult life as they come face to face with trauma in their settings. Hence, the study focuses on how the characters in both texts deal with this trauma they are faced with in their lives.

4.1.2 The Meaning of Suffering

Both Dita and Agnes share similar experiences in their growth from childhood to maturity. When Dita came to the concentration camp, Terezin, along with her mother at the age of thirteen and a half, she had come from the comforts of being at home. Although she had suffered from the trauma of losing friends and family during initial war years, her living conditions were better than any facility available at the Terezin camp. Dita describes her living conditions at Terezin as,

At first we were housed in the catacomb-like space inside the thick city wall, a kind of a dark dungeon with slits for windows. All day long my father, my mother and I sat on our rolled-up bedding on the stone floor, together with the hundreds of people, waiting for accommodation. It was November and we suffered from cold. (Kraus 120)

In Smichov camp, Dita loses her right to education during the initial war years. This results in a loss of her friends. All her Jew friends and family members are sent away to concentration camps. All these events add to her despair and she gradually starts losing the meaning of life and happiness

as she says, "...the world grew emptier and there was nothing one could look forward to. There were fewer friends, all the time only transports and deportations" (Kraus 114). Soon Dita is forced to leave behind her childhood and grow into maturity as she is scheduled to leave for her first camp. The evening before her departure, while giving away her possessions, Dita cries at parting with her favorite doll. She remembers this event as a loss of childhood as she says, "Manya and mother were somewhat taken aback, a big girl of thirteen and a half weeping for a doll? They did not know that it wasn't the doll I was mourning; I was grieving for my childhood and the end of the life as I had known it" (Kraus 115). This experience of Dita's resonates with Caruth's trauma theory. As discussed above, Dita slowly and gradually loses all her friends due to which her life is driven into despair as she watches all her loved ones getting taken away to concentration camps one after another. Furthermore, once it's her turn to leave behind her childhood and her life of comforts to go live in the concentration camps she mourns the loss of it all. Dita cries uncontrollably at the thought of losing her childhood as she anticipates the horrors of the concentration camps that await her. According to Caruth, trauma is a "wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (*Unclaimed Experience* 3). Dita's outburst at the loss of her doll portrays how the trauma of her losing her friends, childhood, and life gets inflicted on her mind.

Similarly, when Agnes comes to live in the wilderness she had come from the comforts of being at home with her mother, Bea, and her boyfriend, Glen, who treated Agnes like his own daughter. Agnes received protection from both her guardians and remained a pampered child for quite a few years in the wilderness until her mother, Bea, left her alone one day. When Bea receives a letter of her mother's death, she is heavily struck with the trauma of her death. This causes a sudden shift in Bea's priorities. Bea comes to the Wilderness for the sake of Agnes' life and health. However, once she's faced with the trauma of her own mother's death the meaning of her entire life changes in that particular moment. This resonates with Frankl's Logotherapy in which he proposes the idea that "what matters...is not the meaning of life in general but rather the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment" (108). That is, an individual's priorities at particular moments in life are what make up the meaning of his entire life in those moments. Bea's meaning of life in that particular moment changes from protecting her daughter to overcoming her own trauma of losing a parent. Therefore, she runs from the wilderness by hitchhiking with a truck driver right in front of Agnes' eyes leaving her behind to fend for herself. Cook describes Bea's condition and Agnes' response as,

He looked afraid of her, and she herself felt dangerous because in this moment she would do anything to leave this place...She was under a spell. She rubbed her eyes, trying to wake from the fugue...She looked out the window at the Community, some looking angry, some dumbfounded. She found Glen, a look of panic on his face...and then she saw that his hands clenched the shoulders of her daughter, who stood mouth agape, confusion and fury dancing across her face as her mother drove away. (134-125)

Similar to Dita, Agnes is forced out of her childhood. The trauma of her mother's desertion forces Agnes out of her childhood. Cook describes Agnes' emotions, "She wasn't that silly girl anymore. Having no mother meant that she was an adult now" (143). However, unlike Dita, Agnes does not grieve her loss with tears. She rather channels her anger into coming to terms with her suffering by accepting the fact her mother betrayed her.

According to Frankl, "we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed" (112). He argues that one may achieve this meaning through suffering by changing their attitude towards it, "when we are no longer able to change a situation...we are challenged to change ourselves" (112). Agnes' approach towards her mother's betrayal, a fate which she could not change, was similar to Frankl's proposal of finding meaning in sufferings. That is, the way Agnes chooses not to cry over the loss of her mother and rather take this as an opportunity to take the responsibilities of an adult in the Community aligns with Frankl's idea of changing oneself once challenged with a situation which an individual cannot change. Cook writes, "Now, though, she knew her mother had left and was not coming back. And so what? Those were the words that came to her after she let in the word *gone*" (140). Agnes accepts the fact that her mother has deserted her in the Wilderness and as a result changes her attitude towards the entire situation by realizing that she must act as an adult.

According to Frankl, in such situations where an individual is challenged with a situation which cannot be changed the real triumph is to accept the situation and change one's attitude towards the suffering for the better. According to Frankl, "man's main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain rather to see a meaning in his life" (113). Therefore, once faced with an unchangeable fate, if an individual remains steadfast to overcome the adversities and find a meaning of life through their suffering then they have gained a real triumph as Frankl says, to turn a "personal tragedy into a triumph" (112). Even though Agnes comes to terms with her

unchangeable fate yet she is unable to seek a meaning in her life. She instead of transforming this “personal tragedy into a triumph” (112), as Frankl proposes, channels her anger into hatred towards her mother. Agnes’ hatred towards her mother overpowered her attitude towards this traumatic event in her life and she found pleasure in thinking the worst for Bea. Cook further shares Agnes’ experience, “In her mind she watched the truck her mother escaped on explode in a fiery ball and disappear from the horizon...she felt lucky to have seen fireballs twice in her short life. And now she could imagine her mother has been caught in one. She clapped her hands. Done and Done” (142). Therefore, instead of finding a meaning in her life through the traumatic event of losing her childhood, Agnes insisted on avoiding the pain. Cook describes this as, “She couldn’t wait to leave this place behind. She was eager to be gone, she willed it gone from her memory” (142).

According to the trauma theory, a traumatic experience is “the breach in the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world” (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 4). Trauma disrupts and shatters all representational capacities and a sense of self and identity. Because Agnes chooses to avoid the pain of losing a parent, her sense of self and identity gets shattered. Therefore, she is unable to understand the meaning of her life through her suffering. Both Dita and Agnes experience traumatic events in their lives through violence and loss of friends and family which make their sense of self and identity fragmented.

4.2 Finding Meaning through Suffering

According to Frankl an unavoidable suffering is a part of one’s life. One must strive to find a meaning in their suffering, instead of waiting for the suffering to end. Frankl is of the view that in order to find a meaning in one’s suffering, one must challenge his attitude towards his unaltered fate; “changing his *attitude* towards his unalterable fate...he could at least see a meaning in his suffering” (113). Bea’s attitude towards the harsh realities of her life resonates with Frankl’s idea of finding a meaning in one’s suffering.

Similar to Dita’s experiences in *ADL*, Bea is forced to abandon her life in the city and surrender to the experimental life in the wilderness. However, when she initially decides to move Agnes to the wilderness due to her health, she believes that the protecting Agnes is the sole purpose of her life. For this reason only she faces the harsh environment of the wilderness with steadfastness even in the worst of conditions. One such example is when Bea gives birth to her

stillborn daughter, Madeline, in the middle of the woods. She is surrounded by coyotes waiting to leap at the dead body of the child as soon as Bea leaves it alone. Cook uses animal imagery to heighten the anxiety Bea felt during the delivery of her child all alone in the wilderness. Cook narrates, “Bea heard the scuffle and yips behind her. And though the dogs’ rising excitement resembled a newborn’s cry, Bea knew it was just the sound of hunger” (6). This further elaborates on how Bea feels anxious being alone during delivery. When Bea returns back to the Community and lays down with Glen and Agnes in their skins, her contact with Agnes reminds her of her love for her daughter. This helps her overcome her trauma of losing a newborn. Cooke mentions, “Against her ankle, Bea could feel Agnes’ blood pulsing through her hot clutching hand. She breathed in and out to its rhythm, and it focused her” (11).

The way Bea responds to coming in contact with Agnes after such a traumatic incident aligns with Frankl’s ideas where he proposes that, “in some way, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice” (113). Bea depends on her relation with her daughter, Agnes that helps her alter her attitude towards suffering. This also gives meaning to it as Cook writes about Bea’s emotions, “I have a daughter, she thought, and no time for brooding. She was needed here, and now, by someone. She vowed to move on quickly. She wanted to. She had to. It was how they lived now” (11). Bea is reminded of her responsibilities towards her daughter. This helps Bea redirect her emotions; she is reminded of the meaning of all the sacrifices she has made until then in the Wilderness. Thereby, her suffering ceases to be suffering, according to Frankl’s ideals.

One of the key aspects of Frankl’s theory is an individual’s ability to overcome tragedy. Frankl is of the view that one of the unique human potentials is to “transform a personal tragedy into a triumph, to turn one’s predicament into a human achievement” (112). Bea’s approach aligns with Frankl’s ideas in this manner as well. Bea suffers hunger, loss of community members who were more like a family to hungry bears, hypothermia, wild mushrooms, cougars, accidents and to long walks as a part of their seasonal migrations. Through all her hardships, she remains steadfast on striving to give all her suffering a meaning. Bea’s approach towards her suffering resonates with Frankl’s ideas as Cook writes about Bea, “She realized...Agnes was like a colt, bounding, curious. And healthy for the first time in her short life. For the first time, Bea let herself believe Agnes *would* be long for this earth. And Bea was surviving when others had perished, others

stronger than herself. It soothed her anxiety stroked her ego” (20). When Bea watches her daughter regain her healthy slowly and gradually it boosts her ego. It allows her to feel the sense of accomplishment since she had moved to the Wilderness for the sole purpose of improving her daughter’s health. Thus, despite all the hardships she faces in the wilderness, Agnes’ improved health proves to be her achievement. Her tragedy is turned into triumph when she watches Agnes healthy and improved. This adds meaning to her life and helps her get through all her sufferings in the wilderness.

Furthermore, according to Frankl, “Man is *not* fully conditioned and determined but rather determines himself whether he gives in to conditions or stands up to them” (131). Bea’s attitude proves to be aligning with Frankl’s idea here as well as she chooses to change her attitude towards her suffering of trauma and alters her attitude in an instant whenever she is faced with a suffering. Whenever Bea gets flashbacks of Agnes’ traumatic health condition she reminds herself of how she is a better and healthy child ever now that they have moved to the wilderness. Cook writes, “*But no, Bea reminded herself. She is well. She’s healthy. She’s safe. Not only that, she is extraordinary. You did it*” (117). Whenever Bea doubted her decision of coming to the wilderness, Agnes’ good health gives her a purpose to live. Cook writes about Bea’s thoughts, “*Maybe this was the right decision. Maybe this will be all fine. Maybe we aren’t insane.* It was her mantra. She thought it almost daily” (20). Therefore, by altering her attitude and turning her sufferings into a triumph, Bea finds a meaning in her hardships which makes it easier for her to get past the pain.

Dita, much like Bea, depends on her relations to overcome the hardships of the time she spends in the concentration camps. Just like keeping Agnes safe and healthy is the driving force for Bea in *TNW*, Dita’s will to get through the sufferings is her driving force. Dita’s mother accompanies her in the all the concentration camps where she lives. Dita takes it upon herself to protect her mother and takes care of her as her mother. Dita, her mother, and her friend Margit reach Bergen-Belsen after a long torturous train ride where they lose their camp mates to hunger. It is Dita’s first experience of seeing anyone die of hunger and her mother loses all hope and strength. Experiencing her mother in such a state Dita writes, “Mother did not want to get up. She sat on the floor, her face unwashed, her hair uncombed. It made me feel miserable, I wanted to cry. I started pleading with her, coaxing her” (194).

However, Dita remains steadfast and alters her attitude towards her suffering with the love she feels for her mother. She succeeds in encouraging her mother to gather more strength to face the overwhelming conditions of the concentration camp as Dita mentions, “I succeeded that time. She pulled herself together and, with my and Margit’s support, she kept on. For the time being I was relieved” (194).

Moreover, Dita mentions that everyone in the camps formed units of friends who kept together and held one another. She writes, “The support of a friend was often the only way to overcome a black mood, some pain or illness, homesickness and loneliness” (Kraus 169). The women in the camps encouraged one another and fought against the tortures inflicted upon them in the camps. In this manner, Dita’s approach towards her suffering resonated with that of Bea’s who depended on her relationship and love for her daughter. Dita writes,

We were totally exposed to each other. You couldn’t let her down when she needed encouragement, when she lost her will to struggle on and survive. It helped you to overcome your own depression when you had the responsibility to boost her morale. You talked yourself into new hope and made both of you believe it, for the next time it would be her turn to do the same for you. (170)

Furthermore, much like Bea, Dita’s approach towards her suffering resonates with the concepts of Frankl who argues that one must alter their attitude towards suffering in order to find meaning. In Terezin, when Dita suffers from hunger she determines to get through the overwhelming condition of starvation. Frankl argues that “man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become in the next moment” (131). Dita shares her experience,

I remember my mother saying to someone, ‘We are suffering from hunger.’ I asked her, ‘Is this what hunger means?’ Her answer was, ‘Yes, we are starving.’ Suddenly I felt great relief. If this was hunger, then I can bear it without problems. I could eat all the time if I had food. But I wasn’t suffering. (129)

She determines for herself that starvation is only being hungry. She decides that it has no significance for her, as she had already experienced it in her life earlier. By determining herself to stand up to the overwhelming conditions of starvation and repeating her mantra like Bea, “an inner

voice kept repeating: I will not die, I will not die” (138), Dita manages to find meaning in her suffering which helps her overcome the trauma.

4.2.1 A Shattered Sense of Self

Caruth in her trauma theory considers that the “responses to traumatic experience, including cognitive chaos and the possible division of consciousness, as an inherent characteristic of traumatic experience and memory” (qtd in. Balaev 150). That is, when an individual faces a traumatic condition their sense of self and identity are shattered as a consequence of the traumatic experience and its memory which comes back to the survivor in flashbacks. In accordance to this, both Dita and Bea go through a trauma after suffering difficult and violent living conditions and lose their sense of sentimentality.

Bea after giving birth to her stillborn daughter “stood, stretched out her sand-pocked knees, wiped the desert off her skin and ragged tunic...She turned without another look at this girl she had wanted to name Madeline” (Cook 6). Bea’s monotonous reaction towards giving birth to a child who was already dead in the middle of the forest while animals like coyotes “pranced impatiently and licked her yellow teeth” (Cook 6) highlights her response to the traumatic experience. It creates a possible division in her sense of self as Bea thinks “the Wilderness had cast all sentimentality from her” (Cook 6).

Similarly, when Dita and her camp mates are locked in Bergen-Belsen with no food or water, left inside to starve and die, Dita experiences a loss of sentimentality. In the course of those days, Dita goes through the trauma of seeing her camp mates die of starvation. They are degraded to mere animals, and she even experiences cannibalism when she sees a group of women cooking a human liver to eat. She describes her reaction to these traumatic events, “I felt no sorrow, no pity. I felt nothing at all. I understood that what I saw was horrible beyond human understanding, but I felt no emotion...I existed on the biological level only, devoid of any humanity.” (Kraus 199).

In response to this loss of sentimentality, Dita remained steadfast and remained close to her relations, like her mother and friend, Margit. She relies on her relations to overcome the trauma of a shattered sense of self. Dita writes, “There still remained Friendship. Margit and I stuck

together; we were support of each other. And I still cared for my mother and tried to perk up her morale” (Kraus 199).

Bea, on the other hand, is an individualistic character, unlike Dita. Whenever she is faced with trauma she shuts herself down which affects her relationship with Agnes negatively. On the way to Middle Post, when Bea finds out that her mother has died, she completely shuts herself. Instead of finding refuge in her Community members and daughter, she pushes them all away. Cook writes, “None of these people, she realized, really knew her...she felt her expression morphing into disgust. Bea heard a whimper and looked down. Agnes had tears in her eyes...And this enraged Bea, as though Agnes were trying to take ownership of this pain, of this relationship” (132). Cook describes how Agnes felt about her mother’s behavior whenever she was faced with trauma, “There would be a shield around her mother for days that made it impossible for Agnes to touch her...She’d wondered if she ought to have given comfort to her mother. But her mother was a wall and Agnes assumed her mother didn’t need anything from her” (212).

Both Dita and Bea experience a numbing of their sense of sentimentality as a result of their experiences; a shattering of their senses of self. The flashbacks of their traumatic experiences haunt them. Caruth argues that “the traumatized...carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely process” (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 5). That is, according to Caruth, the trauma survivors are unable to completely process the traumatic experience and the memory of such experience is reminded to them constantly in flashbacks. Once faced with such flashbacks, the trauma survivors are reminded of the traumatic experience again as if they were living it again. Thus, they carry the pain of the trauma within themselves their entire life. Similarly, the characters in both the selected works are constantly haunted by their traumatic experiences. However, the way both characters respond to trauma differs from one another, even though Bea finds meaning in her sufferings by focusing on her daughter’s health, she often questions if it is worth the pain that she is going through. According to Frankl, the meaning of one’s life is not general “but rather the specific...at a given moment” (108). That is “as each situation in life represents a challenge to a man and presents a problem for him to solve, the question of the meaning of life may actually be reversed...man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather he must recognize that it is *he* who is

asked.” (Frankl 109) Similarly, the meaning of life changes for Bea at every major turn of events in her life as described above.

Bea does align with Frankl’s idea in striving to find a meaning in her life at every given situation, however, her individualistic approach towards life distances her from her relations and self-actualization. Whereas, Dita remains steadfast in her commitment towards her relations and uses them as a source of determination to overcome her sufferings. She not only confronts her traumatic experiences and memories but also helps her loved ones to overcome them.

CHAPTER 5

FINDING A MEANING IN TRAUMA

Viktor Frankl's theory of Logotherapy presents the concept that humans are motivated by a search for meaning and purpose in their lives. Central to his theory is the concept of existential frustration, which occurs when individuals are unable to find meaning in traumatic experiences. This chapter explores the concept of existential frustration in Frankl's Logotherapy in selected texts, *ADL* and *TNW*.

5.1 Existential Frustration

Frankl describes existential frustration as a feeling of meaninglessness, emptiness, and boredom that occurs when individuals are unable to find meaning in their lives. According to him, existential frustration arises from the need for meaning and purpose in life and it is an inherent need in every human being. He argues that humans have a unique ability to create meaning and purpose in their lives. However, finding a meaning in one's life at every particular stage in life requires effort and will. Without this effort, individuals may fall into a state of apathy and despair, leading to mental and emotional distress. Their lives may become meaningless and have no purpose of existence without a will. Logotherapy refers to a person's will as a drive to find meaning in their lives which has become frustrated. It argues that one's meaning in life may become frustrated due to three different aspects; the phenomenon of *being* (stress intended) itself, the essence of existing and having a meaning, and the struggle, that is, the strive and process of finding a meaning in one's life. According to Frankl, the term *existential* (stress intended) can be used in three ways as to refer to, "(1) *existence* itself, i.e., the specifically human mode of being; (2) the *meaning* of existence; and (3) the striving to find a meaning in personal experience, that is to say, the *will* to meaning" (101). When one is faced with traumatic events, their sense of self gets entirely disrupted. Traumatic events question one's sense of self and purpose of existing. According to Cathy Caruth trauma is "the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world" (*Unclaimed Experience* 4). Caruth further argues that "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely not known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on" (*Unclaimed Experience* 4). Such a rift in one's sense of life makes life meaningless and brings into

question the very effort needed to strive in finding a purpose of human existence. If one feels frustrated about his existence as a human being or does not understand the purpose of striving to find a core meaning in one's life, then they become existentially frustrated human beings.

Frankl argues that such existential frustration can lead to a neuroses for which Logotherapy has coined the term *noogenic neurosis* (stress intended). Unlike the theory of Psychoanalysis, noogenic neurosis does not emerge from conflicts between drives and instincts or owing to the failure of their fulfilment, it emerges due to existential problems. Among such problems is frustration of the will to meaning. However, Frankl argues that a man's major concern and his despair over the meaninglessness of life is an existential distress and crisis, yet it is by no means a mental disease. He is of the view that such despair, this neuroses, can be treated by finding a meaning in his life. Logotherapy, "...does not restrict its activity to *instinctual* facts within a person's unconscious but also cares for *existential* realities, such as potential meaning of his existence to be fulfilled as well as his will to meaning." (103) Thereby, noological dimensions in Logotherapy attempt to make a person aware of what he actually longs for in the depths of his being so that he may be able to overcome his existential frustration or trauma.

5.1.1 Existential Frustration in *TNW* and *ADL*

The selected works explore themes of existential frustration and the search for meaning, which are central to Viktor Frankl's theory of Logotherapy. As discussed above, existential frustration, according to Frankl, arises when an individual is unable to find meaning in his life. This feeling can be triggered by a variety of circumstances, including traumatic events, societal pressures, or even the monotony of everyday life. This part of the chapter explores the concept of existential frustration in the selected memoir and the dystopian fiction. The chapter examines how the characters in these texts experience a frustration of their will to meaning and lose their sense of existence in the face of existential challenges.

In *ADL*, Dita Kraus describes her experience as a Holocaust survivor and the struggles she faces in finding a meaning in her life in a memoir. Dita Kraus experiences profound existential frustration during her time in the concentration camps due to the brutality she faces at the hands of the Germans. Having been subjected to the extreme violence which she faces in the concentration camps, Kraus' sense of self gets shattered. The violence at the camps drives hope

out of her since the living conditions get so extremely bad that she starts believing that they might not ever be able to leave the camps. It frustrates her will to live her life because of which she loses the meaning of her existence. Kraus notes that “There was no point in thinking. Thinking was a luxury. It was impossible to think about anything except the moment... There was no past or future, only a perpetual present” (60). For Kraus, the brutality and uncertainty of life in the camps left her questioning her own purpose of existence. She wondered why she strived so hard to even live on in such extreme conditions. She was a victim of suicidal thoughts and even wished to end her life at some point in the concentration camps because the living conditions became unbearable for her. Midst all this chaos, Kraus was he was unable to find meaning in her existence, and she felt adrift in a world devoid of purpose. When Dita and her mother reach Auschwitz, the trauma of violence she faces overcomes her entire existence. She loses the essence of existence itself, that is, she loses the worthwhileness of the human mode of being. Her sense of striving to find meaning of her personal existence becomes frustrated as well. As she writes in *ADL*, “Hopelessness and desperation overcame us. At this point Mother and I decided to die. We had reached total despair. There was no spark of hope left and we didn’t want to live. Yet there was no practical way to commit suicide; we had no weapon, no rope, no knife. We had to go on.” (136) At another incident where Dita sees an old woman die by falling off a truck hauling Jews from Auschwitz to another camp, she says, “Yet, she was perhaps the lucky one, spared the long, suffering and a more horrible death” (137). Her emotions of despair and memory of the old woman who was left dead in the middle of the road portray how Kraus loses the meaning of the worthwhileness of life.

Furthermore, after Tiefstack Kraus was moved to another concentration camp, Bergen-Belsen, along with her mother and Margit, her friend. At Bergen-Belsen the food rations started becoming less and less day by day. The war was experiencing a shift, as the Front in the war moved closer the war seemed to be coming to an end. However, this resulted in even more misery for the Jews in the concentration camps. Soon the SS guards left the concentration camps and the captives with no food or water. Dita along with the other captives came close to starvation. Dita loses all her hopes for life as she writes, “We dared not hope that liberation would reach us in time. In the neighboring compounds all around us the dead lay everywhere” (193). Soon Dita’s will to existence became frustrated as she lost hope of survival midst starvation. She writes, “I became aware of the imminence of our death... So this is the way one dies of hunger, I thought. And I knew that this was what would happen to all of us” (193). Like others, Dita’s mother loses her sense of

self. A few days after their arrival to Bergen-Belsen, Dita sees her mother losing herself. She sits with her face unwashed and hair uncombed on the verge of letting herself die slowly of starvation and the miserable life they lead at the camp. She writes, “Mother did not want to get up...I knew that she was at the point of becoming a *Muselmann*” (194).

However, while suffering through these traumatic times in the camps, Kraus focuses on her relation with her mother and friend Margit. The other inmates in the camps give up on their will to survive, that is their will to survive is frustrated, because of which they stop fighting for their lives. Despair overcomes them as Kraus writes, “They had given up and stopped fighting for survival. These people died very quickly. They had a name. They were called *Muselmanner*” (194). But Dita remains steadfast in her attempts to protect her mother and friend. She focuses her energy on their well-being through which she finds a purpose in her life. This purpose to protect her mother and friend provides her with the driving force to keep on surviving and face the adversities of the camps with resilience. Thereby, she finds a purpose and meaning of her existence despite her suffering.

Similarly, in *TNW* Diane Cook explores the concept of existential frustration through the character of Bea who is struggling to find meaning in her life along with the other characters. The characters in the selected dystopian novel are faced with the reality of a world in which a destroyed city life is the setting. The protagonists, Bea and Agnes, are forced to confront the futility of their actions in wilderness where survival seems increasingly unlikely. The characters' search for meaning in this bleak wilderness setting causes existential frustration in their lives. For example, when the community first arrives in the wilderness, they are immediately struck by the absence of city landmarks and familiar terrain. As Bea notes, “It's like the earth just swallowed everything up. Like it never existed” (Cook 6). The characters struggle to make sense of their surroundings in the wilderness, yet they are unable to. This leads them to lose the sense of having a meaning in their lives. This feeling of disorientation is a hallmark of existential frustration.

In the beginning of the novel when Bea gives birth to her stillborn daughter she tries to resuscitate her dead child and ends up in distress for trying to give life to an already dead baby. Her desire for wanting her child alive makes Bea realize the trauma of losing a child and living a bleak life. Cook writes, “She thought the Wilderness had cast all sentimentality from her” (6). The despair of living a life in the wilderness made her lose touch with her sentimentality. The other

community members felt the same way. Cook writes that over the time the community stopped celebrating their rituals, "...rituals took time and effort, and the more time they spent in the Wilderness, the less they wanted to celebrate" (22). The existential frustration the group experiences due to the life of strife they lived in the wilderness overwhelms them. It pushes them deeper and deeper into despair much like Dita in *ADL* who loses her sense of emotions even when she sees everyone around her dying of starvation in Bergen-Belsen. Dita has to step over dead bodies in Bergen-Belsen, she writes, "I felt no sorrow, no pity. I felt nothing at all. I understood that what I saw was horrible beyond human understanding but I felt no emotion" (199). She even considers dying as an easier option than living the life she has in the concentration camps.

Bea's troubled relationship with her daughter Agnes further makes her overwhelmed with despair and she questions her entire existence. Cook writes,

Bea thought about all their original reasons for coming to this strange Wilderness. Had everyone altered their reason for being here by now, or were they still clinging to adventure, health, opportunity? Opportunity for what? Had she? Looking at her daughter scowl made Bea laugh at her reason: To keep my daughter well. This was an overture to a girl who now seemed to loathe such overtures. She wondered if it was martyr's overture too. One couldn't live like this for unselfish reasons alone. But nothing she landed on felt true anymore. Was fear for her daughter enough? (97)

With time, Bea grows weary of Agnes since she realizes that saving her daughter's life was not a strong driving force for her to remain in the wilderness anymore. This further frustrates her will to find a meaning in her life. She continually questions herself whether her daughter's health and life was worth the miserable life she lived in the wilderness. The rest of the community keeps questioning their existence as they are troubled by living conditions in the wilderness. Cook writes, "Sometimes it feels as though civilization is half a day's walk away' Debra said, eyeing the fence...*Why are we even here? What is the point?*" (157). They realize that their lives have no meaning, therefore, the struggle to make a life for themselves in the wilderness is not even worth it.

Similarly, Bea questions herself every day whether life was worth living in the wilderness and finds herself with questions, "Maybe this was the right decision. Maybe this will all be fine. Maybe we aren't insane". Cook writes, "this was her mantra. She thought it almost daily" (20) so

that she could cope with her overwhelming sense of despair and fight her existential frustration she felt. According to Logotherapy, once an individual's will to meaning and existence has been frustrated, this gives rise to an inner tension. Logotherapy terms this condition, Noo Dynamics.

5.2 Noo Dynamics

Logotherapy explains that man's search for meaning gives rise to an inner tension rather than finding an inner equilibrium, peace, or stability. However Logotherapy appreciates such arousal of inner tension since it is of the view that this inner tension helps man to survive even the worst conditions. As it has been stated before, Logotherapeutic study is based on Nietzsche's words, "He who has a *why* to live for can bear almost any *how*" (Frankl 104). Logotherapy explains that mental health is based on a certain degree of tension, that is, the tension between what one has already achieved and what one still ought to accomplish or become.

According to Frankl, those who have a task waiting for them to fulfill at the end of a traumatic phase are more apt to survive and live through any sort of trauma rather than those who have nothing waiting for them at the end of such a journey. For example, at the Nazi concentration camps, those who had a life waiting for them outside of the camps, or goals to achieve, were stronger and fought more for their survival as opposed to those who didn't have any goals or aims. Frankl himself is an example of this case since he had gone into the Nazi concentration camps while he had the manuscript of his first book in his possession. However, the Germans seized his manuscript, he still pursued the idea of publishing his book. This passion for him to publish his work allowed him to survive through the horrors of the concentration camps, as he says, "I am sure that this reconstruction of my lost manuscript in the dark barracks of a Bavarian concentration camp assisted me in overcoming the danger of cardiovascular collapse" (Frankl 104).

It reflects that one's mental health is based on a particular degree of inner tension. This tension allows an individual to strive and struggle to achieve worthwhile goals, a task which one may choose for himself. Logotherapy discusses that an individual must be challenged with a potential meaning to fulfill, a purpose to live for so that their will to meaning is evoked from its state of latency. Frankl has coined the term "Noo Dynamics" for this state and describes it as, "the existential dynamics in a polar field of tension where one pole is represented by a meaning that is

to be fulfilled and the other pole by the man who has to fulfill it” (105). However, the characters in both selected texts differ in their ways towards finding a meaning or a goal to strive for.

5.2.1 Noo Dynamics in *TNW* and *ADL*

The selected works explore themes of noo dynamics and the search for meaning, which are central to Viktor Frankl's theory of Logotherapy. As stated above noo dynamics proposes that individuals have an innate drive towards achieving meaning and purpose of life. In his theory of Logotherapy, Frankl argues that this drive is a fundamental aspect of human nature and is essential for psychological health and well-being. This part of the chapter explores the concept of noo dynamics in the selected memoir and the dystopian fiction by examining how the characters in these texts navigate their search for meaning and purpose in the face of existential frustration.

The characters in *TNW* are continually faced with a lack of meaning and purpose in their lives since they spend their days battling with traumatic situations they face in the wilderness. They are unable to engage in activities and experiences which would give them a sense of fulfillment or purpose in their lives. The protagonist, Bea, struggles to find her purpose in the life. She writes in her diary, “I’m looking for something...a sense of purpose, a way to connect with something bigger than myself” (Cook 50). She questions herself when she is faced with challenges, reassures herself that her purpose in life is the safety of her daughter, Agnes. However her purpose and passion to save her daughter wavers as the plot unfolds as she continually questions herself whether her daughter’s life was worth the struggle of living in the wilderness. Yet, she strives to find a meaning in her life. Bea’s search for meaning reflects the concept of noo dynamics, as she is driven by an innate need to find purpose and fulfillment in her life.

Bea and her daughter, Agnes, have a troubled mother-daughter relationship throughout the novel. Bea is often found questioning whether moving to the wilderness just for the sake of Agnes’ health was worth it or not. However, her inherent sense of survival and her struggle for living overcomes her despair. As proved, at one instance when Bea gives birth to her stillborn daughter in the beginning of the novel, she is torn by having to go through the trauma of losing a child. She is further triggered by Agnes’ behavior. She questions her purpose of existence in the wilderness. She strives to find meaning in her suffering by using the love she has for her daughter. Cook writes, “I have a daughter, she thought, and no time for brooding. She was needed here, and now, by

someone. She vowed to move on quickly. She wanted to. She had to. It was how they lived now” (11). At another instance, driven by her inherent need to find a meaning in her life, Bea comforts herself by repeating to herself, “Maybe this was the right decision. Maybe this will all be fine. Maybe we aren’t insane. It was her mantra. She thought it almost daily” (20). This repetition shows her determination to find meaning in her life.

However, Bea finds that Agnes’ health is not the driving force she needs to find the meaning of her existence, rather it is her own life and self. Therefore, she makes the decision of leaving the wilderness alone, without Agnes and her boyfriend, Glen. When Bea finds out that her mother has died while she was stuck in the wilderness battling the existential challenges, her survival instinct kicks in and she decides to leave with the truck which had come to convey to the Community the name of their next destination. Cook writes, “‘I have to go’ she announced, and she moved toward it mechanically, automatically. As though it were a magnet attracting all her minerals and metals... ‘Get me’- she panted- ‘out of here’ ...in this moment she would do anything to get out of this place” (134). Thus, Bea’s attitude towards the existential frustration she while she was living in the wilderness aligns with Frankl’s ideas of an individual having an inherent need to make life worthwhile.

Other characters in the novel also display having the characteristics of an inherent need to find a purpose in life. Glen is another character who is the least suited to a life in wilderness. He experiences existential frustration as he engages in routine activities like hunting, preserving meats etc on a daily basis which do not provide him with any sense of fulfillment. Cook writes, “Glen was a terrible hunter. He knew it...it disappointed him...So Glen was trying to master making tools, wanting to be of use in a way he had always dreamed of being...despite his shortcomings, he was having the time of his life” (17). Even though Glen felt disappointed at his shortcomings, yet his determination to continue taking part in activities like hunting and tool making shows that he wants to find a purpose in life.

In the struggle to find a purpose in life, the characters in *TNW*, are more inclined towards the concepts of individualism and power as opposed to the characters in *ADL*. Characters like, Carl and Val in *TNW* make use of the concept of will to power in order to give their lives a purpose to strive for. That is, they strive to attain the leadership of the community and come into power so that they might have a purpose of existence. Cook writes, “Carl...hadn’t any grand plan for

leadership. No agenda or way forward. He just wanted to be leader and have everything go through him. Once that was secured, he delighted in being the enforcer” (281). Even though Carl did not have any agenda of ruling, yet he enjoyed simply being in power and leading the community. Having power gave his life a purpose and meaning.

At another instance, Cook writes about Val and Carl, “They enjoyed being at the top too much. Every chance they had, they tried to subvert a Community decision to follow their own idea, and were gleeful when it worked” (96). Thus, instead of finding a meaning in their existence, Carl and Val focus their energies in will to power, which according to Frankl is a faulty approach.

Furthermore, due to the extreme living conditions in the wilderness, the characters lose their sense of self. They focus on the objects they bring from the city in order to extract a sense of self and tradition from them as these objects remind them of the lives they previously had and the city they belonged to. In attempts at finding meaning in their lives, they fight against the existential challenges and form attachments with things they had brought from the city. These objects from the past serve as their identity for them which they uphold in order to have a sense of self. However, in attempts to conform to their past objects, and to protect them at all costs, they lose their sense of sentimentality for humans. For instance, on their big walk the Community crosses a huge river and a Community member, Caroline, dies in a horrifying accident. Two other members, Carl and Juan, are saved by Bea. However, after the incident instead of mourning Caroline’s death, the group is more saddened for losing their best rope which they use while they are trying to save Caroline, Carl says, “But it was our best rope” (Cook 15). Cook further writes,

Debra and Val ran along the bank to see if Caroline resurfaced...her hair tangled in the branches of another log, her face submerged, her body limp. Her body and the log were snagged on something for a moment, and then were freed, speeding again down the river.

There was no way to retrieve the rope. And not much to do for Caroline. (15)

The way Cook mentions the horrifying imagery of Caroline’s dead body juxtaposed with rope highlights how the Community focuses on material attachments rather than human life. The significance is laid on the rope rather than Caroline’s body. In another instance, when Adam suddenly disappears from the Community and nothing but a pool of blood is left where he usually sleeps, the Community is more worried about finding the Cast Iron pot, a few skins and a pouch of jerky which also goes missing at the same time. Thus, the Community strives to stick to their

material possessions in order to maintain a sense of self and find meaning in their everyday lives rather than other humans and their connection with them.

Moreover, the Community focuses on the individualistic approach instead of striving to make life better for one another. Cook writes about the Community,

When they first arrived in the Wilderness, they imagined living there might make them more sympathetic, better, more attuned people. But they came to understand there'd been a great misunderstanding about what *better* meant...it might have only meant better at surviving, anywhere, by any means. (36)

At another instance, when the Community faces bitter cold and loses another member, Tim, they are more inclined towards individualistic approach of survival rather than helping one another. Cook writes, "That night, they knew he was suffering, but everyone was suffering. And in that moment something innate kicked in. It surprised them how easy it was to misunderstand a cry for help. Even to ignore one" (55). Even Glen comments on the state of the people in the Community as he says, "I thought a group of people who wanted to be here would figure out how to be here together" (246). Moreover, even the protagonist, Bea acts for her survival first rather than her own daughter or boyfriend. When challenged with an inner tension to overcome her existential frustration in traumatic conditions, Bea chooses herself leaving her family and the entire Community behind and escapes to the city.

On the other hand, Dita in *ADL* portrays a completely different approach. When faced with traumatic events in the Nazi concentration camps, Dita's inherent need to find purpose in her life is activated from the state of latency. That is, according to Frankl's concepts of noo dynamics, Dita experiences an inner tension within her sense of self to overcome her existential frustration, to find a purpose of her entire existence. When she is faced with adversities in the camps she loses hope of survival. This frustrates her will to keep surviving thereby, leaving her devoid of a sense of purpose in her life. This hollowness in herself gives rise to an inner tension where she strives to find a meaning in her life so that she may have hope and a reason to remain steadfast despite the extreme living conditions in the camps. Unlike the characters in *TNW*, Dita remains focused on the *now* (stress intended) rather than the future. That is she makes most of the present moment and the resources available to her to find a meaning of her existence rather than dwelling on the idea

of ever having to escape the camps. Kraus' experience in the concentration camp is an example of the human struggle to find meaning with others in the midst of traumatic conditions.

Despite the horrors of the concentration camps, Kraus finds meaning in the act of learning at Terezin camp. When she is at Terezin, Kraus is still a child so she participates in the lessons which the adults at the camps organize discreetly after work hours. They consist of different subjects the adults can teach. In addition to the lessons, they also hold rehearsals for the opera for which Kraus writes, "but the best times were the rehearsals for the children's opera" (125). The rehearsals for the opera give Dita a chance of learning which she uses to find hope in her life. By focusing on the present moment and enjoying whatever resources were available to her, Dita finds a meaning in her life.

Furthermore, Dita becomes the librarian of maybe the smallest library of the world at Terezin. Instead of being overcome by despair at her living conditions and the violence being perpetrated around her, she focuses her energy on preserving books and educating children. Thus she finds a meaning in her life in the act of preserving books and educating children in the camp. She writes, "Books have always been my passion. They are a source of knowledge, comfort, and inspiration... In Auschwitz, books became the very essence of my being" (144). Through her work in the camp library and her role as a teacher, Kraus is able to maintain a sense of self, purpose, and identity in the face of traumatic conditions.

When Dita reaches camp BIIb, she meets people from her old camp, Terezin, who talk about people being burnt alive in the gas chambers. Even having the knowledge that a cruel fate awaits her too she does not lose hope as Kraus writes, "yet an inner voice kept repeating: I will not die, I will not die" (138).

Unlike the characters in *TNW*, the people in the concentration camps face trauma with the support of one another and depend on relations to overcome despair. Kraus writes, "the support of a friend was often the only way to overcome a black mood, some pain or illness, homesickness and loneliness" (169).

Similarly, Dita uses her inherent inner tension to make her mother overcome her despair and maintain a sense of self. In one instance, when Dita and her mother are close to starvation in Bergen-Belsen, Dita pushes her mother to keep heart and not lose herself to despair as she writes,

“I started pleading with her, coaxing her. ‘How do you look! You haven’t washed your face. Comb your hair, don’t let yourself go like this’...I succeeded this time. She pulled herself together and with my and Margit’s support, she kept on. For the time being I felt relieved” (194). Thus, Dita uses her relations and her passion for learning and books to keep her going in the face of trauma at the camps. Whereas, the characters in *TNW* focus on personal benefits over sentimentality and humans. They hold an individualistic attitude to pave their way to finding meaning and purpose in their lives.

Despite the difference in genres, both texts highlight the concept of noo dynamics and existential frustration in traumatic experiences. The characters in both works are driven by a desire for finding meaning and purpose. Their search for meaning shapes their actions and attitudes. While Kraus confronts the horrors of the Holocaust, Bea and other characters in the wilderness struggle through a traumatic phase with a lack of connection to the real world. They live a life devoid of any comfort under an experiment. The comparison of these works provides a unique opportunity to examine how noo dynamics and existential frustration allows individuals to find a meaning in the face of trauma. Kraus remains steadfast on using her relations as a beacon to overcome her existential frustration and find meaning, Bea and other characters find meaning in their individualistic benefits. Overall, the comparison of these texts underscores the need for individuals to find meaning in their lives in order to achieve psychological well-being during challenging circumstances.

CHAPTER 6

UNDERSTANDING THE ESSENCE OF EXISTENCE IN TRAUMA

6.1 Introduction: Caruth's concept of Memory in Trauma Theory and Frankl's idea of The Essence of Existence

The concept of trauma has been widely explored in the fields of literature and psychology. It is crucial to understand the impact which traumatic events leave on individuals and how they overcome the traumatic phase in life. Cathy Caruth is one of the most prominent scholars in this field and she suggests that traumatic events are incomprehensible and cannot be fully assimilated into an individual's psyche. These events make an individual's sense of self fragmented. This chapter examines the concept of trauma by stressing upon traumatic memories and compares its functions in the lives of characters in the selected works. The chapter also analyzes how characters differ in understanding Frankl's concept of the essence of life in traumatic experiences.

According to Cathy Caruth, trauma is an overwhelming experience which exceeds an individual's capacity to process it and therefore leaves the individual with a sense of incomprehension and disconnection from own experiences. As Caruth writes "The power of trauma lies in its ability to disrupt and destroy what we believe to be the basic foundations of our lives and of our sense of self, and in so doing, to alter our relationship to the world around us" (97). In her trauma theory, Caruth stresses on the concept of memories and how trauma is in actuality a breach in one's mind's experience of reality. Therefore, trauma victims fail to willingly come in contact with a traumatic memory. Memory is a fundamental aspect of human experience. But it can be complicated by trauma since traumatic events in one's life can disrupt how an individual accesses one's memories as a norm. Traumatic memories, according to Caruth, are stored in one's subconscious part of the brain and are only remembered through flashbacks or nightmares, symptoms of PTSD, thus leading to fragmentation and disorientation.

Traumatic events are those, as proposed by Caruth, which disrupt the continuity of time, memory, and language. They become indelible and are often uncontrollable in an individual's psyche. Trauma or traumatic experiences in one's life are not only an event that happened in the

past, rather it is an ongoing experience which the trauma victim may revisit again and again. These events may shape individual's present as well as future. As Caruth mentions, "...trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely not known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on" (*Unclaimed Experience* 4).

Furthermore, Caruth distinguishes narrative memory from traumatic memory. She argues that narrative memories consist of mental constructs which are not novel to an individual, that is, narrative memories are made out of experiences which make sense to an individual since they're familiar and expectable. Therefore, such expectable experiences are automatically processed and assimilated without much conscious effort to particular details. However, frightening, overwhelming, and novel experiences do not fit easily into the existing cognitive schemes of one's brains and are not available for retrieval under ordinary conditions. Such memories, therefore, become dissociated from one's conscious awareness and voluntary control and come back in flashbacks, thereby disrupting one's sense of self. Caruth calls this period as latency, in which the effects of the traumatic experience are not apparent. The flashbacks of the traumatic experience after the latency period impact one's behavior and are a symptom of PTSD, "a response to an event outside the range of unusual experience" (Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 3). She argues that "to be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or an event" and thus the traumatic symptom cannot be easily understood as a "distortion of reality" rather as, "the traumatized...carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely process" (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 4-5). The flashbacks occur once the trauma victim comes into contact with situations which may be similar to the ones prevailing at the time when the victim faced the trauma. This may trigger one's traumatic memory. Caruth elaborates that, "the historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all" (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 8).

Central to Frankl's philosophy are the concepts of essence of existence and self-transcendence. Frankl proposed that the essence of human existence is characterized by the search for meaning. He suggests that life's meaning is not inherent rather it is something each individual must discover for himself. He presents a critique on a concept of "Pan-determinism." By Pan-

determinism he means, “the view of man which disregards his capacity to take a stand toward any conditions whatsoever” (113). This concept contrasts with Freud’s ideas which argue that human behavior is primarily driven by unconscious processes or external forces. Frankl believes that even in the face of suffering individuals can choose how they respond and find meaning in their experiences. As he writes, “Man is not fully conditioned and determined but rather determines himself whether he gives in to conditions or stands up to them...man is ultimately self-determining” (131).

Frankl’s idea emphasizes the importance of taking responsibility for one’s own life and choices, even in the midst of challenges. He contends that by finding meaning, individuals can endure hardships and find strength to move forward. His personal experiences during the Holocaust and his will to overcome the adversities present a deep understanding of the human capacity for resilience and the search for meaning.

In order to endure hardships and find a meaning in one’s life, that is to reach self-actualization, Frankl proposes the concept of self-transcendence. Frankl believes that the true meaning of life can be discovered “in the world rather than within man or his own psyche” (110). One can transcend themselves by reaching beyond their own needs and concerns and contribute to something greater than themselves. This self-transcendence can be manifested in various ways, “(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” (Frankl 111). By focusing on something greater than oneself, individuals can find a deeper sense of purpose and fulfillment.

6.2 Finding the Essence of Existence

Despite the fact that *ADL* and *TNW* are two different genres, both selected works explore the concept of trauma and traumatic memories in similar ways. Where *ADL* is a memoir by Kraus, recounting her experiences of living in the Nazi concentration camps, *TNW* is a dystopian fiction that explores trauma through a futuristic post-apocalyptic world. Dita’s memoir accounts the loss of her family and the trauma of sheer violence perpetrated against her and the Jewish community. Whereas, the novel *TNW* follows the lives of a group of individuals who are forced by the worsening quality of city life to leave their homes and enter into the wilderness where they must survive and navigate new challenges similar to those experienced by Kraus in the concentration

camps. The trauma in both the selected works is represented through loss of familiarity, the breakdown of society, and the challenges of survival. Cook's dystopian world represents a rupture in the continuity of time, and memory which is similar to the concepts of trauma proposed by Cathy Caruth. Similarly, Kraus' personal experiences of battling the trauma of the violence she comes across in the concentration camps aligns with Caruth's ideals of trauma theory.

Memory plays an essential role in the experience of trauma in Kraus' memoir. According to Caruth, since trauma is an overwhelming, frightening event outside of ordinary human experience, it causes an individual to experience a "speechless terror" (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 172). Thus the experience is preserved in one's unconscious memory and cannot be organized on a linguistic level, therefore, it comes back to the victim only in behavioral reenactments or flashbacks. Caruth argues that in traumatic situations, the victims often practice the concept of *repression* (stress intended), that is, they remove themselves from the memory in such a way that they feel dissociated with the memory of their frightening experience. When they later on suffer from flashbacks or recall the memories they become amnesic. This causes a disrupted sense of identity in an individual as Caruth elaborates, "The survivor's uncertainty is not simply amnesia; for the event returns...insistently and against their will" (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 6).

Kraus at one instance in her memoir mentions how whenever she tries to recall all her horrific experiences in the Nazi concentration camps, she finds herself digressing as if a defense mechanism within herself diverts her thoughts to other channels. She says, "Every time I start speaking of the Holocaust, I seem to be drifting to those post-war experiences. Although they are directly connected to our suffering, they are still peripheral, as if I could relate only to the edges but not to the wound itself" (197).

Similarly, Agnes in *TNW* faces the trauma of her mother's betrayal after the Big Walk. When Bea abandons Agnes in front of the entire Community and escapes the wilderness on a guard's truck, Agnes is left broken. She undergoes repression and dissociation of a traumatic memory. In order to deal with the trauma of her mother's abandonment, she dissociates herself from the memory of her abandoning her in her consciousness. She creates a faulty memory of her mother dying. As Cook writes, "She couldn't wait to leave this place behind...she willed it gone from her memory. In her mind she watched the truck her mother escaped on explode in a fiery ball

and disappear from the horizon” (142). Whenever Agnes is asked about her mother by the other children in the Community, she always tells them she had gone to the city and died in order to deal with the trauma she experienced.

However, according to Frankl trauma survivors need to accept their traumatic situations and find a meaning in their suffering in order to come to terms with their pain. In order to come to terms with her trauma and find a meaning of her existence, Kraus attempts to face the memories preserved in her subconscious as she says, “...those darkest pictures that exist in the hidden crevasses of memory. I must plunge beyond the barrier and bring them into the light of conscious reality” (197). Yet, even in doing so, the actual trauma of the Nazi concentration Camps remained distant, preserved in her subconscious making it impossible for her to truly connect with her own history as Caruth writes, “the traumatic event is experienced as a rupture in time that makes it impossible to fully integrate into one’s personal or collective history” (*Unclaimed Experience* 10).

Memory in trauma incurs effects that have been conceptualized as temporary or permanent interruption of the ability to represent traumatic event or make meaning of it. Trauma hinders the brain to interpret the meaning of the experience or understand it at any level. According to the concept of narrative memory, Caruth claims that sufferers of a traumatic event are unable to narrativize their response to the traumatic event.

Kraus’ experience at the concentration camps aligns with Caruth’s idea of experiencing trauma as at one instance in her memoir she talks about how numbness overcame her emotions in the face of severe adversity. When Kraus was in the Bergen-Belsen camp, the captives suffered starvation. Most of the women and children died of hunger or bloody stools. The camp portrayed the sights of a graveyard since at every corner Kraus found dead bodies of fellow women and children. At this instance she writes, “the emotions...were encased in some frozen place inside me, unreachable now, but somehow protected from total loss. I retained the knowledge of feelings like a past memory” (199). Such a traumatic experience disrupts and shatters all representational capacities and sense of self and identity. Kraus felt devoid of her own sense of self and identity since her emotions which made her human went numb. She felt as if she retained only a distant knowledge of them. She further expressed, “I existed only on a biological level” (199) that stresses on the idea of her traumatic experience that disrupted her consciousness and dissociated her sense of self from the actual event which was taking place.

At another place in the memoir, Kraus talks about herself having permanently lost the sense of emotions even after coming back from the Nazi concentration camps. As she writes, “I spoke about people dying and going ‘into the gas’ as a matter of fact. I knew that one was supposed to cry and mourn for the dead; I tried to feel sorrow, but was unable to stir up any emotion at all. All I could feel was an icy wall around my heart” (246).

Similarly, Agnes in *TNW* felt devoid of any emotion when she was abandoned by her mother in the wilderness. At first Cook writes that she didn’t believe that her mother really had abandoned her as she mentions, “Agnes didn’t believe her mother was gone until the dust from the truck settled...And it took a very long time for the dust to settle. She didn’t know how long. Maybe it took days. The dust made her lose time” (140). Agnes’ traumatic experience dissociated her from consciousness and the reality of the world by disrupting her sense of self, time, and conscious time and world. According to Caruth, “to be traumatized is to be possessed by an image or an event” (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 4-5). Agnes, in accordance to Caruth’s idea of being traumatized, remains possessed by the event of being abandoned by her mother and lost her sense of sentimentality much like Kraus. Cook writes, “Now though, she knew her mother was not coming back. And so what? Those were the words that came to her after she let in the word *gone*” (140). Agnes continued to believe that her mother had died and repeated the make-belief idea to all those who asked her about her mother, so much so that she began to believe it. Cook further writes, “In her mind she watched the truck her mother escaped on explode in a fiery ball and disappear from the horizon...she clapped her hands. Done and done” (142). Similarly, Kraus writes in her memoir, “I sensed this blunting of my emotions for many years and I am not sure if I ever recovered completely” (246) indicating that both characters in the memoir and the novel portray the concepts of traumatic experience. The experience distances the victims from reality as she writes, “The traumatic symptom cannot be interpreted, simply, as a distortion of reality, nor as the lending of unconscious meaning to a reality it wishes to ignore, nor as the repression of what once was wished” (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 5). Thus, despite the generic differences in the selected texts, both Cook and Kraus make use of their narrative styles to present the emotions of the characters they felt once faces with trauma. At another instance, Caruth suggest that a traumatic experience causes numbness of emotions in the trauma victims, as is elaborated above with regard to characters in both the selected works, “There is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of...behaviors stemming from the event,

along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience” (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 4).

6.3 Traumatic Memory and Flashbacks

One of the hallmarks of PTSD is re-experiencing a traumatic memory. The trauma or elements of a traumatic memory might be re-experienced through involuntary flashbacks in the form of nightmares or remembrance when a victim is exposed to a situation which is similar to the traumatic experience. Caruth’s theory of trauma posits that traumatic experiences are often too overwhelming to be fully processed at the time they occur, and therefore they resurface in the form of flashbacks or other fragmented memories later on. With this lens, both the selected works can be analyzed as to how they depict the psychological impact of trauma through the use of flashbacks.

Kraus mentions vivid and fragmented flashbacks in her memoir to show her memories resurfacing, often triggered by seemingly innocuous events in her present-day life. Caruth is of the view that traumatic memories are reactivated when a person is exposed to a situation which is reminiscent of the one when the original memory of the traumatic event was stored. At one instance, when Dita mentions her experience at Bergen-Belsen when she along with other captives went through starvation, she reveals that she came across cannibalism. She is remembered of this traumatic memory by putting herself in a similar situation, rethinking of her entire experience of the Holocaust. She says, “I had forgotten the scene. The details begin coming into focus while I am writing this” (202). These flashbacks are portrayed as intrusions into her current reality, disrupting her sense of time and space, and emphasizing the ongoing and pervasive nature of her trauma.

When Dita travels from Czechoslovakia to Israel, she comes across living conditions aboard a ship which were similar to the ones in the concentration camps. Being exposed to similar living conditions, Dita is reminded of her horrific memories and the trauma of Holocaust which come rushing back to her. She writes in *ADL*, “it was too much and I started crying uncontrollably” (311).

Similarly, Agnes in *TNW* after her mother’s betrayal returns to the same location where she had lost her sister, Madeline. When she comes across Madeline’s bones and a leaf covered

with her thickened blood, she involuntarily picks it up and smells it, “what a strange thing to have done. She couldn’t say why she’d done it” (Cook 213). Coming across Madeline’s remains, Agnes is reminded of her trauma of losing a sister and her mother’s coldness towards her; “she hadn’t known what to think about her. But now, again, she felt a deep lonesomeness for Madeline” (Cook 213).

Furthermore, Agnes experiences flashbacks of the traumatic memory of losing her mother in the form of nightmares. When Bea abandons Agnes in the wilderness, Agnes often times is reminded of the trauma in her dreams which lead her to relive the traumatic memory and suffer through the pain. Cook writes, “And maybe some nights in her middle sleep, she thought she’d felt the blanket pull back on her at the foot of their bed and felt her mother warm the bed like no other could, sliding her foot to Agnes so Agnes could clutch it for safekeeping. Only to wake grasping at air” (140).

Caruth’s theory is evident in how Dita’s and Agnes’ flashbacks are portrayed as involuntary and fragmented, reflecting the disjointed and fragmented nature of their traumatic memories as she writes, “the traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess” (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 5).

Because the selected texts differ in genre the way their writers present their narratives differ as well. Where Kraus makes use of flashbacks in order to provide insights into her experiences at the Nazi concentration camps and to recount real-life historical events, Cook uses flashbacks to provide insights into the protagonist Bea’s past. These flashbacks of her traumatic time spent in the city with her sick daughter provide context for Bea’s actions and decisions in the present and reveal the traumatic events that have shaped her character. However, unlike *ADL*, the flashbacks in *TNW* are presented in a more linear and coherent manner, reflecting Bea’s attempt to make sense of her past and integrate her traumatic memories into her present reality. Whereas, the flashbacks in Kraus’ memoir are Dita’s attempts at remembering real-life events.

In both the selected works, despite the difference in genre, the use of flashbacks serves to depict the fragmented and disjointed nature of traumatic memories. The texts highlight ways in which trauma can continue to affect individuals long after the initial event. However the portrayal of flashbacks in each text differs in terms of their coherence and linearity. While Kraus presents

flashbacks as more fragmented, reflecting the chaos and disruption caused by trauma having the sole purpose of recounting historical events, Cook presents them as more integrated and purposeful, reflecting the characters' attempts to make sense of their past. Cook also uses these flashbacks to give her readers some context and reasons for her character's behaviors in particular situations. These differences in the depiction of flashbacks align with Caruth's theory of trauma which suggests that the experience and portrayal of trauma can vary greatly among individuals and contexts.

6.4 Determinism to Find Meaning

Frankl is of the view that every individual is responsible for giving meaning to life. He uses the term *Pan-Determinism* (stress intended) to criticize an erroneous and dangerous "view of man which disregards his capacity to take a stand toward any condition whatsoever." (131) He suggests, "Man is not fully conditioned and determined but rather determines himself whether he gives in to conditions or stands up to them...man is ultimately self-determining. Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be. What he will become on the next moment" (131).

It is evident in both the selected works that characters are determined to find meaning in their lives and even in their suffering despite the fact that the particular meaning differs for each individual. Both works vividly illustrate that traumatic events can be too overwhelming to be fully processed at the time of occurrence, leading to delayed and fragmented memory. This phenomenon is exemplified by the characters' experiences in the concentration camps and the dystopian wilderness respectively which shape their memories and emotions over time. However, the characters' quest for meaning and purpose, as conceptualized by Frankl, emerge as pivotal aspects of their survival and coping strategies. Kraus' ability to find purpose and courage to overcome the trauma she experiences in the camps, as well as the characters' determination to find meaning in the wilderness, mirror Frankl's assertion that a sense of purpose can uplift the human spirit even in the darkest times. These narratives illustrate that the quest for meaning is an inherent and essential aspect of human existence, serving as a guiding force amidst trauma and adversity. The characters prove that they're not fully conditioned and determined rather they are self-determining. They fail to give in to their severe living conditions and stand up for themselves against adversity. This aligns the selected texts with Frankl's critique at Pan-determinism.

Nonetheless, the characters in both selected works differ in their approach towards finding a meaning in their suffering. Frankl is of the view that the true meaning of life can only be discovered in the world rather than within man's own psyche. He calls this process of finding meaning, "the self-transcendence of human existence." (110) He argues that "the more one forgets himself – by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love – the more human he is and the more he actualized himself." (110 – 111) This phenomenon is only evident completely in Kraus' memoir and partially in characters of *TNW*.

Kraus makes it her mission in the concentration camps to look after her mother. She strives hard to remain hopeful that they will not be killed in the camps at the hands of Germans. Her hope for liberation for both, her mother and herself, keeps her strong and allows her to find a meaning in her suffering. Frankl is of the view that when a person loves another person they are able to not only find a meaning in their own suffering but also aid the loved ones to overcome trauma. He writes,

By his love he is able to see the essential traits and features in the beloved person...he sees that which is potential in him...by his love the loving person enables the beloved person to actualize these potentialities. By making him aware of what he can be and of what he should become, he makes these potentialities come true. (111 – 112)

When Dita's mother loses all hope and is near death in Bergen-Belsen, Dita realizes the potentialities in her mother to overcome the severe conditions. She encourages her to overcome the adversities and succeeds in reviving her mother's hopes of liberation. She gives herself to the love of her mother, thereby, finding true meaning of her suffering and life, by not focusing within her own psyche but with selflessness. Moreover, when she becomes a librarian to a mere handful of books in Auschwitz, she doesn't dwell on the fact that she might soon be destined for the gas chambers along with the other children in the camps. She remains steadfast in her belief that somehow she will be saved. She focuses on the task of being a librarian no matter how traumatic living conditions became for her. She gave herself to a cause of teaching the children in Auschwitz, as Frankl suggests, in order to keep them hopeful of a better future. By shifting her focus on a cause and a person to love, Dita actualizes herself. Thus she gains self-transcendence and finds true meaning in her suffering.

However, some characters in *TNW* fail to reach self-transcendence as their approach towards overcoming adversities is rather individualistic. Bea and Carl remain in a tussle over being the leader of the Community throughout the novel. Therefore, instead of focusing on her daughter or and her boyfriend, Glen in the dystopian wilderness Bea remains focused on gaining power. Thus, her approach does not align with Frankl's idea of self-transcendence. Whereas, Agnes throughout the novel strives to protect Glen in the wilderness by helping him in the big walks, saving extra food for him, and sleeping with him when the rest of the Community cuts him off. In the end of the novel when Rangers start rounding up each of the Community members, Agnes finds an orphaned baby in the wilderness whom she adopts. She names her Fern and spends the rest of the days trying to protect and raise Fern. By giving herself to the love of another person and investing her energy in her protection, Agnes' approach aligns with Frankl's idea of self-transcendence.

In essence, *ADL* and *TNW* depict the complex interplay between trauma and the search for meaning. Caruth's framework helps understand how trauma impacts through memory and influences one's sense of self, while Frankl's philosophy illuminates the enduring human capacity to find purpose even in the most challenging circumstances. Through these lenses, these works offer profound insights into the intricacies of the human experience when confronted with trauma and the quest for existential meaning.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Dystopian fiction projects a catastrophic view of life and emphasizes people's feeling of meaninglessness in life. The traumatic state of the dystopian fiction and chaos shows its characters as lost, constantly struggling to discover their sense of identity. Similarly, the selected memoir presents a personal account of a Holocaust survivor who is in a constant struggle to overcome her traumatic memories and finds herself bereft of a meaning of her life. The traumatic conditions depicted in the selected works mirror the trauma experienced by the characters. *ADL* is set in Holocaust during the Second World War, and it is marked by violence and traumatic conditions that shatter a sense of identity among characters, whereas, *TNW* depicts a dystopian world and the characters' journey of survival in a wilderness and its harsh realities. Although comparing a memoir and dystopian fiction may seem unconventional, but the research has offered valuable insights into how characters, though in different settings, navigate trauma. The purpose of the research by analyzing Dita Kraus' *ADL* and Diane Cook's *TNW* was to examine how trauma, existential frustration, and will to meaning in order to achieve self – actualization are manifested in different genres. As established, despite the variations in genres and subject matter, both works share the concepts of trauma, and the pursuit of meaning. Both texts, *ADL* and *TNW*, present unique and powerful depiction of the experience of trauma and the search for meaning in the face of adversity.

In *ADL*, the trauma and loss experienced by Dita Kraus and her fellow prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps is on a scale that is difficult to comprehend. They are stripped of their humanity and subjected to inhumane treatment, i.e. having to go to latrines with no doors on them, burning of people in gas chambers, cannibalism etc. This treatment leaves deep physical and emotional scars on people. The loss they experience is not only of their freedom, but of their families, their culture, and their sense of self. Their trauma is a result of the violence and severe living conditions they witness and endure.

On the other hand, in *TNW* the trauma experienced by the characters is though more subtle, but no less significant. The characters in the novel have to leave their old lives in the city behind and enter a wilderness where they hope to start anew due to the worsening living conditions in the

city. The modern world becomes almost inhabitable since quality of life, psychologically as well as environmentally worsens every day. This gives rise to an outbreak of numerous diseases. This condition forces the characters to leave the city and move into the wilderness. They are forced to adapt to a harsh and unforgiving environment. Their trauma is a result of the constant struggle to survive, the loss their former lives and identities which is similar to Kraus' life history in her memoir.

Frankl's theory of Logotherapy and Caruth's trauma theory sheds light on the profound impact of the traumatic experiences on individuals and their subsequent journeys of survival, and meaning making. Frankl's Logotherapy emphasizes the importance of finding meaning and purpose as a means of coping with suffering and trauma. As discussed in the study, the characters in both, the memoir and the dystopian fiction, perceive and cope with trauma differently. In their quest for survival the characters in both the selected works take to different measures. The characters in *ADL* find solace and a meaning of their suffering in forming deeper connections with relation to others. Whereas, the characters in *TNW* resort to their individualistic sense of self. Dita's determination to save her mother and to educate her fellow prisoners in the concentration camps becomes her lifeline, enabling her to maintain her humanity. She finds solace in the midst of unimaginable horror with these methods. Similarly, in *TNW* the characters' quest for survival amidst harsh conditions of wilderness becomes a reason, to finding meaning in a world stripped of its natural order.

Caruth's trauma theory explores the psychological and emotional impact of trauma on characters. Both selected works vividly depict the long-lasting effects of trauma, as characters navigate a range of psychological responses such as survivor's guilt, flashbacks, and the constant struggle to reconcile the past with their present. The characters in both the memoir and the dystopian fiction are haunted by their traumatic experiences, carrying the weight of their past with them and strive to find ways to heal. They consider their trauma as a means of strengthening their will to find a meaning in life. However, the meaning of life and suffering differs for the characters in both the works. The characters in *ADL* realize that the meaning of suffering and life is struggling to find deeper connections with their relations, whereas, the characters in *TNW* figure that focusing on their individualism and relying on their own self is the key to finding a meaning in life. The characters in *TNW* portray that an inflated individualistic sense of self is actual strength and relying

on relations is rather weakness. This is where the research concludes how the characters in similar emotional turmoil, belonging to two different settings, differ in perceiving and processing trauma and in their struggle of finding a meaning in life.

The analysis of these two works reveals experiences of trauma and the human capacity to transcend and overcome adversity. Despite the different narrative styles of these genres, both *ADL* and *TNW* underscore the importance of resilience and the search for meaning in the face trauma. These works remind us of the indomitable human will and its remarkable ability to find light in the darkest of circumstances.

7.1 Recommendations for Further Study

This research study comparing *ADL* and *TNW* through the lenses of Frankl's Logotherapy and Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory opens up several avenues for further exploration and study. Building upon the findings and insights presented in this research, the recommendations discussed below are suggested for future investigations.

A Comparative Analysis of Additional Literary Works is a suggested recommendation. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of trauma and resilience within the context of literature, future studies could expand the comparative analysis to include a wider range of literary works. Exploring narratives from various genres, time, periods, and cultural contexts would contribute to a broader understanding of how different authors represent trauma and resilience, and how Logotherapy and Trauma Theory can be applied to diverse literary texts.

Furthermore, Intersectionality and Trauma Narratives is can also give deeper insights into the works. Considering the intersectional aspects of trauma narratives could be an intriguing avenue for further exploration. Analyzing how gender, race, class and other social categories intersect with trauma and resilience in the selected texts would deepen our understanding of how diverse identities shape experiences of trauma and influence the effectiveness of Logotherapy and Trauma Theory in addressing different forms of trauma.

Moreover, Clinical Applications of Logotherapy and Trauma Theory can also provide readers a chance to use this academic research to study real-world practices. While this research thesis primarily focuses on literary analysis, future studies could explore the practical applications of Logotherapy and Trauma Theory in therapeutic settings. Investigating how these theoretical

frameworks can inform and enhance therapeutic approaches for individuals who have experienced trauma would bridge the gap between academic research and real-world practice.

In addition, expanding this research analysis to include other psychological theories and frameworks would provide a more comprehensive understanding of trauma and resilience. Examining how Logotherapy and Trauma Theory intersect or diverge with theories such as cognitive-behavioral theory or narrative theory could contribute to a nuanced understanding of trauma and the mechanisms underlying resilience.

By pursuing these avenues of further study, researchers can deepen our understanding of trauma narratives, resilience, and the application of theoretical frameworks like Logotherapy and Trauma Theory. This ongoing exploration will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the fields of literature, psychology, and trauma studies, ultimately benefiting individuals affected by trauma and informing therapeutic interventions.

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