PH.D. DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

A Franklian Reading of the Book of Job

Desired Committee

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Introduction

This dissertation will develop a hermeneutic based on the existential approach to suffering of Dr. Viktor E. Frankl. The Book of Job will be read in light of this hermeneutic. Special emphasis will be placed on the existential question of whether Job will "curse God and die." The question of disinterested piety, or whether Job “fears God for nothing,” will be explored. Job's final, ambiguous response to the speeches of God will be treated as an existential challenge to the reader. The dissertation will conclude with a discussion of how a Franklian hermeneutic is of benefit in understanding and responding to this challenge.

The term "logotherapy" is used in this dissertation to encompass both the philosophical and psychological contributions of Frankl. Other terms used to describe Frankl's concepts include Existenanalyse, logosophy, Franklian Philosophy, Franklian Psychology and meaning-centered therapy. Frankl preferred the term logotherapy when referring to his ideas in English. He notes, "Often I speak of logotherapy even in a context where no therapy in the strict sense of the word is involved."[1]

[1] Frankl coined the term "Existenanalyse" in the 1930's as an alternative to the term "logotherapy." This was translated as "existential analysis." Beginning in the 1940's, Binswanger's "Daseinanalyse" also came to be translated as "existential analysis." (Ludwig Binswanger. Grundformen und Erkenntnis menschlichen Daseins. Zurich: Munich/Bâle, 1942.) Frankl then began refraining from using the term "existential analysis" in his English publications to avoid confusion. Viktor E. Frankl. The Will to Meaning (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1969), 5.
Logotherapy is more than a school of psychotherapy. In 1979 Sahakian described it this way: "Logotherapy is a youthful philosophy with an exuberance that conveys an atmosphere of hope. Being a young philosophy, it is undergoing an integration process from which is bound to emerge its ability to cohere with many more facts of human experience. It has the potential to develop into a maturity that could accord it a position among major philosophies. Currently, it offers one of the most adequate answers to the philosophical problems of natural evil such as the existence of human suffering. In this respect, logotherapy is a philosophy of religion in addition to being a general philosophy of life." Thirty years later, in 2009, Batthyany notes, “Logotherapy distinguishes itself from a number of other schools of psychotherapy by its broad applicability and interdisciplinarity.” He explains, “…one further, and we believe defining, effect of its interdisciplinarity is that Logotherapy is applicable in settings that at least at first sight would not necessarily lend themselves to be addressed in a psychiatric or psychotherapeutic context.”

Statement of the Problem

The central problem in the Book of Job is the formation of a meaningful human response to unjust suffering. Habel defines the problem in this way: "The crisis of Job is not only the problem of unjustified suffering but also the question of the meaning of life when there is no future, no justice, no relief, and no purpose that he can discern." The nature of God is called into question. As Habel points out, "The way in which God agrees to test Job's integrity ... raises serious doubts about God's own integrity." The focus, though, is on Job and not God. Job and his friends explore the injustice of his suffering. Academic debate and orthodox belief is set against real world pain and

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4 Batthyany, 24.
6 Habel, 61.
suffering. Job, the righteous, is confronted with a world in which righteousness is not rewarded or acknowledged.

As a result, Job is confronted with the existential question: Will he curse God and die? At first, Job's response seems as pious as it does unambiguous: "Yahweh has given and Yahweh has seized; the Name of Yahweh be blessed (1:21)." Job's second response appears a bit more qualified. In 2:10b we read, "In all this, Job did not sin with his lips." Did he sin in his mind? Newsom does not think so, but notes that subtle differences between Job's first and second responses have drawn attention since antiquity. In the first response, Job blesses God; in the second he does not. Job's final response in 42:5-6 remains ambiguous. Newsom writes of a "Bakhtinian loophole" left in its various understandings and notes that Job's response reserves "the possibility of a word yet to be spoken."

Historically, the ambiguity has been addressed in one of four ways. Some see Job's response as complete surrender. Hartley, for example, states, "A person can triumph over suffering through faith in God." He does take seriously the issue of disinterested piety reflected in the satan's question "Does Job fear God for nothing?" However, he argues that Job abandons his vow of innocence as an act of submission to God that leads to his vindication and restoration. Others see reconciliation through Job's increased understanding of God. This is the theme of Boss, who sees Job enacting a drama that changes his consciousness of God, finally, perhaps, transcending theology. He views Job's final statement as a turning away from a previous understanding toward a new sense of meaning. Others view Job's response as ironic or as exposing the
blindness of God. Cox, for example, places Job within the literature of the absurd.\textsuperscript{15} He does not view Job as gaining a new sense of meaning; rather, he views Job as accepting the absurdity of the world as it has always been.\textsuperscript{16} Others see Job's response as an act of defiance. Michel writes that Job "passes the ultimate test" by rejecting a God described as "pompous and abusive."\textsuperscript{17} He supports this position by arguing for the existence of ellipses in 42:5-6 that allow for a reading wherein Job comes to despise and pity God.\textsuperscript{18}

Logotherapy is uniquely situated to address the problem of unjust suffering and of the meaning of life in the face of it. Frankl writes, "There are situations in which one is cut off from the opportunity to do one's work or to enjoy one's life; but what never can be ruled out is the unavoidability of suffering."\textsuperscript{19} He continues to reflect, "A bit later, I remember, it seemed to me that I would die in the near future. In this critical situation, however, my concern was different from that of most of my comrades. Their question was, 'Will we survive the camp? For, if not, all this suffering has no meaning.' The question which beset me was, 'Has all this suffering, this dying around us, a meaning? For, if not, then ultimately there is no meaning to survival; for a life whose meaning depends on such happenstance - as whether one escapes or not - ultimately would not be worth living at all.'\textsuperscript{20} It is anticipated that a Franklian reading will offer a different perspective to the traditional solutions.

\textbf{Method}

This dissertation will develop a Franklian hermeneutic to apply to the problem. Any such hermeneutic must remain consistent with the existential and phenomenological

\textsuperscript{16} Cox, 156.
\textsuperscript{18} Michel, 6.
\textsuperscript{20} Frankl, \textit{Man's Search for Meaning}, 115.
approach that Frankl used to develop logotherapy. The first existential philosopher to
directly address hermeneutics is Heidegger, who argues that hermeneutics is indistinguishable
from ontology. This association between being and hermeneutics recognizes that
different readers will read the same text differently. Frankl goes beyond Heidegger when
he states that "logotherapy is concerned not only with being but also with meaning - not
only with ontos but also with logos - and this feature may well account for the
activistic...orientation of logotherapy." A Franklian hermeneutic will address unique
meanings that each reader may discover in the text.

Frankl's philosophy is founded on three pillars that Frankl describes as freedom of
the will, the will to meaning, and meaning in life. Frankl assumes these pillars through
phenomenology. He makes the wry observation, for example, that only deterministic
philosophers and schizophrenic patients ignore the phenomenon of choice and believe
that their will is under the control of external forces. Frankl sees the first and third of
these pillars as being outside the bounds of science, but he defines the will to meaning as
a source of motivation that is demonstrable through psychological study. Logotherapy
owes is practical applications, including this reading of Job, to the will to meaning. The
will to meaning includes two components: an internal "pull" toward the discovery of
meaning that is characteristic of the human person and an external "demand quality" of a
given situation or text. Each combination of human person and text is unique. The
meaning discovered in the text of Job will be unique to each person reading the text with
a Franklian hermeneutic.

The will to meaning is expressed in three ways: the creative value (creating a
work or doing a deed), the experiential value (experiencing something or encountering
someone) and the attitudinal value (the attitude taken toward unavoidable suffering).

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21 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh
Logotherapy refers to these values as the meaning triad. Failure to discover meaning, or the loss of previously discovered meaning through personal tragedy, may result in a sense of inner emptiness and purposelessness that Frankl calls the existential vacuum.\textsuperscript{26}

Frankl holds that all humans are subject to a particular demand quality that he calls the tragic triad consisting of pain, guilt and death. These universal experiences lie within the "area of fate" outside of free will and may lead to the existential vacuum. Each reader discovers unique meanings depending upon the attitudes chosen toward these elements. These choices will reflect Frankl's attitudinal value and lie within the "area of freedom." Moreover, Frankl holds that the realization of the attitudinal value is superior to the actualization of both the creative and experiential values. It is through the actualization of the attitudinal value that the human person is capable of achieving self-transcendence - the ability to rise above circumstances, or to face the tragic triad as a fully human person. Of self-transcendence Frankl writes, "What I have called the self-transcendence of existence denotes the fundamental fact that being human means relating to something, or someone, other than oneself, be it a meaning to fulfill, or human beings to encounter. And existence falters and collapses unless this self-transcendent quality is lived out."\textsuperscript{27}

The meaning triad can initially be seen when a Franklian hermeneutic is applied to the prologue of Job. After learning his name in 1:1, the next thing we learn about Job is his attitudinal value. In 1:2 we read that Job "was whole and upright and feared Elohim and turned aside from evil." Job's creative value, the result of his work, is implied in 1:3 where it says, "And his herd was seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels and five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred female donkeys and very many slaves. And this man was greater than all the people of the East." Verses 4 and 5 explain Job's experiential value as reflected in his relationship to his children. In verse 5 we read, "And he arose early in the morning and offered burnt offerings in the number for all, for

\textsuperscript{26} Viktor E. Frankl, \textit{The Will to Meaning} (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1969), 111, 106.
\textsuperscript{27} Viktor E. Frankl, \textit{The Unconscious God} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 47.
Job said, 'Perchance my sons have sinned and cursed Elohim in their minds.' Thus Job did all the days."

The prologue then sets the stage for an in-depth analysis of the attitudinal value through the sudden removal of any opportunity to actualize creative or experiential values. This issue is presented by the satan in 1:9-11, "Does Job fear Elohim for nothing?... But indeed, I pray, extend your hand and touch all that is his and he will certainly curse you to your face." Frankl speaks to such a sudden restriction of the area of freedom when he writes, "We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Job's initial attitudinal value is recorded in 1:21, "Yahweh has given and Yahweh has seized; the Name of Yahweh be blessed." It is the further development of this value that is explored throughout the remainder of the book.

Reading the text with a Franklian hermeneutic will provide fresh insight into meaningful responses to unjust suffering. If Newsom is correct that Job is a text of many voices that requires the reader to actively participant with the text, then a Franklian hermeneutic will allow each reader to discover her own attitudes toward pain, guilt and death as reflected in each section of Job. It will challenge her to confront the demand qualities of the text and to clarify her attitudinal values as she reads. As meaning is thus discovered through these preliminary choices, Job's final response will offer the potential for the transcending of suffering.

**Brief Review of Literature**

Frankl published 31 books in his lifetime. His most comprehensive treatment of logotherapy is found in *The Doctor and the Soul*, originally published in German as

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28 Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 86.
Arztliche Seelsorge: Grundlagen der Logotherapie und Existenzanalyse in 1946 and first published in English in 1955. His final expanded thoughts appear in Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning, published in 1997 shortly before his death. Three texts in particular, Man's Search for Meaning (1959), The Will to Meaning (1969) and The Doctor and the Soul (1955), are considered foundational texts for the training of logotherapists by the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy, the organization charged with maintaining and continuing Frankl's legacy. Frankl's entire body of work is considered authoritative in defining logotherapy.

Logotherapy has been expanded by the students of Frankl. Chief among them are Fabry (The Pursuit of Meaning, 1968), Fabry, Bulka and Sahakian (Logotherapy in Action, 1979), Lukas (Logotherapy Textbook, 2000), Graber (Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy, 2004), and Batthyany and Levinson (The Existential Psychotherapy of Meaning: Handbook of Logotherapy and Existential Analysis, 2009). A logotherapy curriculum has been developed largely by Barnes, Rice and Welter. Each of these persons has been instrumental in the work of the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy. Fourteen peer-review journals devoted to logotherapy are published around the world.

Logotherapists have made the Franklian interpretation of film and literature something of a tradition. This tradition began, perhaps, because Frankl himself wrote a dramatic play days after his liberation from the concentration camps. Synchronization in Buchenwald has been adopted as a text by the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy and is used in the training of logotherapists. Fabry writes of the play, "In this drama...sufferers in a concentration camp...grapple with the eternal question first raised by Job: Why do we have to suffer? What is the meaning of an apparently meaningless situation?" The tradition continues today in the form of a standing section in The International Forum for Logotherapy entitled "Movies of Interest to Logotherapists."

29 The most important of these are The International Forum for Logotherapy published in the United States by the Viktor Frankl Institute for Logotherapy and The International Journal of Logotherapy and Existential Analysis (formerly Journal des Viktor-Frankl-Institut) published in Austria by the Viktor Frankl Institute - Vienna.

30 Joseph B. Fabry, introduction to Synchronization in Buchenwald, a drama by Viktor E. Frankl (Vienna: copyright held by the family of Dr. Frankl, 1945), 1.
The majority of these films deal with meaningful responses to unjust suffering, such as *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, a film given a special screening at the 2009 World Congress on Logotherapy.\(^{31}\)

Reading literature in the light of Frankl’s work continues the tradition. Sadigh has published a paper reading Tolstoy’s *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* through the lens of logotherapy. Sadigh focuses on authentic living and final redemption as he compares the inner dialogue of Tolstoy’s Ivan to the experiential value described by Frankl.\(^{32}\) Similar work, but greater in scope, will be the outcome of the present proposal.

As far as I am aware, there has been no detailed study of the Book of Job from a Franklian perspective. The only published work to date is a five-page article that appeared in *The International Forum for Logotherapy* in 1984. In this article, Atlas illustrates that both Job and Frankl address the issue of human suffering. The article uses the Book of Job to explain basic logotherapeutic ideas in the context of pastoral counseling, but offers nothing new to an understanding of either Job or logotherapy.\(^{33}\) This dissertation will build upon the affinity between Job and Frankl that has long been recognized by logotherapists, but that has never been pursued in depth.

Jobian biblical scholarship is extensive. Of particular importance to the present dissertation are those works that address the meaning of the Book of Job. Boss captures the essence of these works when he writes, "As the story of Job unfolds it has theological and philosophical implications, and these in turn raise psychological questions."\(^{34}\) He continues, "If one reads not simply about Job, but also sees oneself as traveling Job's journey with him, then it is possible for the reader to be changed or enriched by the experience."\(^{35}\) Examples of works that address meaning in Job include Habel, Cox,

\(^ {34}\) Boss, Preface.
\(^ {35}\) Boss, Preface.
Newsom and Boss among others. While the importance of historical, social and philological matters cannot be ignored, those works that focus primarily on these issues are not at the center of the current dissertation.

Habel provides a background for both Newsom and Cox. Like Newsom, he recognizes the many voices in the text when he writes "ambiguous images are interwoven with conflicting perspectives." Habel's formulation of the central problem in Job as one of meaning in life in the face of unjust suffering is foundational to this dissertation. He anticipates the existentialism of Cox when he notes, "The quest of the wise...is integrated with a struggle to understand the quest itself..." Habel argues that Job leaves open the question of whether a genuine solution is found in the end, but notes that Job "comes to transcend the moral order by his innocent suffering."\(^{36}\)

A close parallel of the dissertation I propose is found in the work of Cox, *The Triumph of Impotence: Job and the Tradition of the Absurd*. The work is an existential discussion on the meaning of Job that places the book in the tradition of the literature of the absurd, along with Beckett, Camus and Ionesco. He notes that the cultural disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian empire produced Kafka; a similar disintegration of ancient Israel, Cox asserts, produced both Job and Qoheleth. (I note that Frankl is one generation removed from Kafka). Cox argues that cultural disintegration in both cases produced a "sense of dispossession" characterized by loss of tradition, loss of understanding, and loss of meaning."\(^{37}\) All explanations of ultimate meaning have been seen to be illusions."\(^{37}\) The focus of the book of Job is seen as the dialogue between Job and God, with other elements, such as the arguments of the friends, merely foils. Cox argues that the God speeches reveal that an unknowable purpose, an ultimate meaning, does exist.\(^{38}\) Job is restored to his life by acceptance of the mystery of the ultimate and by taking responsibility for his own being. In other words, he actualizes the potentials of the situation through the discovery of his own impotence. My argument will be similar,

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36 Habel, 60-63, 69.
37 Cox, 24.
38 Cox, 162.
with the exception that the potentials of the situation will be actualized through the free choice of Franklian attitudes toward suffering.

Newsom focuses her attention on reading Job as a text of many voices. This dissertation follows Newson in her desire to read Job as a book of our own age, a text of multiple voices read in a world of multiple voices, a text in which the reader is actively involved. Based on Bakhtin's concept of the polyphonic text, she sees each multiple voice in the text retaining its own unique perspective with no single voice rising to a controlling position. The reader must, therefore, approach the text with the understanding that the text will challenge the reader's beliefs. The reader will find voices with which she may share an affinity, and other voices with which she may not. No single voice will dominate the discussion. This degree of active involvement demands that the reader be making exactly the sort of meaningful decisions during the reading of the text that this dissertation with explore.

Boss is the most recent author to address meaning in Job. He notes Job's "persistence in seeking meaning for his suffering" as a matter of character development. While not unaware of multiple aspects to the narrative, Boss reads Job as a coherent whole. Psychological and theological insights are gained as the reader becomes involved with the drama and with Job's changing conceptions of God. Job experiences God as nurturer, destroyer, self-concealing and holy. Along the journey, Job discovers himself and transcends his prior beliefs. This transcendence, perhaps, borders on mystical experience. In like manner, the present dissertation will offer a psychological reading, though the psychology will be specific to logotherapy.

Tentative Outline of the Proposed Dissertation

40 Newsom, 261.
41 Boss, 8.
42 Boss also makes reference to Jung's argument (Answer to Job, 1952, in Collected Works of C. G. Jung. London: Routledge, 1958) that God is changed by the encounter with Job (Boss, 8).
43 Boss, 231.
The introduction will discuss the problems and issues that arise in discerning the meaning of the Book of Job. The direction of the dissertation, namely the development of a Franklian hermeneutic, will be explained.

The next two chapters will deal with logotherapy. The second chapter will explain the basic concepts of logotherapy and its place within psychology. The growth of logotherapy will be discussed with emphasis on the relevance that a Franklian reading has for the Book of Job. The proposed title of the second chapter, "Logotherapy in a Nutshell," pays homage to the title of the epilogue in Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*. The third chapter will discuss the existential and phenomenological background of logotherapy with reference to Heidegger and the great philosophers. Examples of how logotherapy has been used to interpret works of literature and other forms of drama will be explored, including previous references to the Book of Job. The details of a Franklian hermeneutic will be developed.

The remaining chapters apply the hermeneutic to the Book of Job. Relevant textual issues and historical interpretations are discussed for each part. Chapter four begins with the prologue and moves section by section through Job's lament, the dialogue with the friends, the Hymn to Wisdom, Job's avowal of innocence and the Elihu discourse. Frankl's concepts of the existential vacuum and the tragic triad are expected to be particularly relevant. Chapter five focuses the hermeneutic specifically on the God speeches. Questions of ultimate meaning and its relationship to righteousness will be addressed in this chapter. Chapter six focuses on the final response of Job. Job's final response will be examined in light of the hermeneutic with emphasis on existential transcendence.

The dissertation will then conclude with a discussion of the relevance of the study to hermeneutics, biblical and especially jobian scholarship, and to logotherapy.

**Outline of Chapters**
Chapter One: Introduction
Discussion of the issues, problems and directions of the present dissertation.

Chapter Two
1. The Psychological Background of Logotherapy: Logotherapy in a Nutshell
   1.1 The basic tenets and terms of logotherapy
   1.2 Logotherapy's place within psychology
   1.3 The growth of logotherapy and its relevance to a reading of Job

Chapter Three
2. The Philosophical Background of Logotherapy: Formation of a Hermeneutic
   2.1 Existentialism and phenomenology in logotherapy
   2.2 Interpretation in film and literature
   2.3 Defining a Franklian hermeneutic

Chapter Four
3. The Suffering of Job
   3.1 Job and the creative and experiential values
   3.2 Job, his friends, and the tragic triad
   3.3 Job in the existential vacuum

Chapter Five
4. The Theophany
   4.1 The charges against Job
   4.2 The counsel of God and ultimate meaning
   4.3 The piety of Job and the meaning of the moment

Chapter Six
5. Transcending Suffering
   5.1 Job's final response
   5.2 Job and the defiant power of the human spirit
   5.3 Job's transcendence

Chapter Seven: Conclusion
Discussion of the relevance of the dissertation for hermeneutics, biblical scholarship and logotherapy.
Select Bibliography


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Williams, J. "'You Have Not Spoken the Truth of Me': Mystery and Irony in Job." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 83 (1971): 231-255.
