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Confinement

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Editor's Note

The Pandemic And The System

In the advent of the recent pandemia, the program of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychiatry* was changed in order to reflect about the current situation in our society. Due to an invisible virus that originated in China from a bat, the world has changed in just a few weeks. Before this pandemic, we had a general feeling that the system could not really be challenged. Though people often wanted a change in the system, the promise of changing the current system worked well for political campaigning mainly. As soon as the politicians were elected, we understood that they could not change the system as they were part of it. In fact, we all were still in the system and even the whole anti-system idea was part of the system too. Moreover, we now realize that anti-system ideas have resulted to be quite profitable within the system. However, this system that we thought could not be changed has now been challenged in the way that we least expected. Now, with the current pandemic crisis comes an opportunity to change. What we don't know is how things may change from here but what is undeniable is that we now have an opportunity to change.

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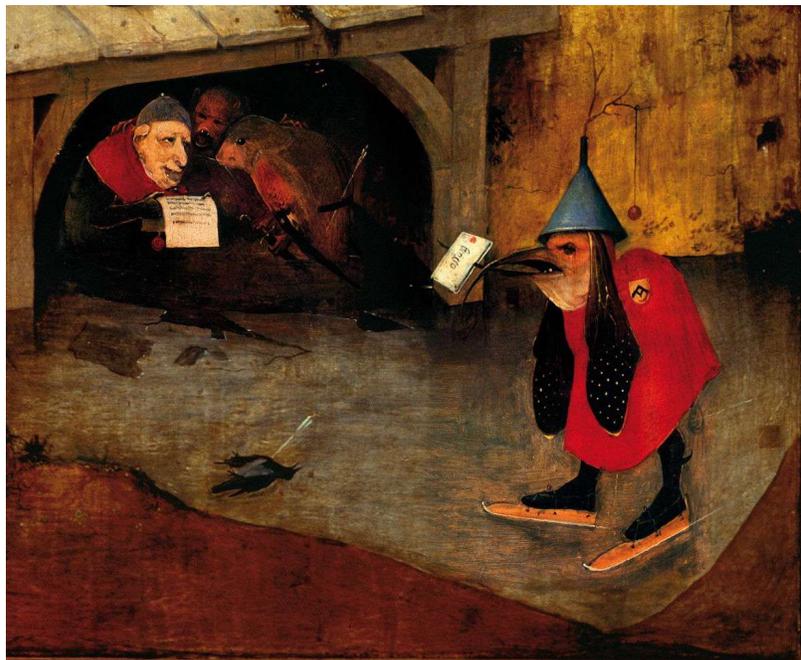
Icons of Psychiatry

Symbolism in Bosch's Temptations of Saint Anthony and Monastic Confinement

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Hieronimus Bosch was perhaps the most innovative painter of his time. His paintings are charged with magic symbolism. The Spanish monarch Philip II became infatuated with his genuine style and acquired much of his work. Today El Prado Museum in Madrid contains much of Bosch's work including "The Garden of Delights" among others. The Temptations of Saint Anthony is



a triptych painted around 1500 CE. The painting is now at the National Museum of Art in Lisbon. Bosch in a way anticipated surrealism and modern art.

In the detail of this painting, we can see a an anthropomorphic bird figure that reminds us of the plague. The bird has a funnel on the head, an icon of madness. He also carries a message to a person that appears to be confined. This person has to deal with the monsters inside and outside his lore. In our minds, a threat can look worse in the imaginary than in the real. During this recent pandemic, people who were confined seemed to have more anxiety than other people like health workers, who due to their job requirements, had to experience the pandemic differently. An understanding and a real experience of the situation, can certainly relieve our anxieties about the threats of the pandemic.

Saint Anthony Abbot was born in Lower Egypt around the 3rd century CE. As an adult he became a Christian and followed an ascetic life. According to his hagiography, for fifteen years he lived as a hermit. Stories of these so called, Dessert Fathers, inspired the creation of a monastery system in Europe during the Early Middle Ages. This system has survived to our contemporary times. Today, there is a still small percentage of people in society who embrace a monastic life. In these cases, confinement and isolation are considered the good values. Through confinement, a person can detach themselves from the mundane distractions and connect with their own spirituality and transcend.

Essays

“From The Notorious B.I.G.’s ‘Suicidal Thoughts’ to G Herbo’s ‘PTSD’: How Rap Music Is Addressing Mental Health

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At the end of February this year, Chicago-based rapper G Herbo released his third album entitled *PTSD* with its title track featuring Chance the Rapper, Juice WRLD, and Lil Uzi Vert. At the time of this review, *PTSD* has over 50 million listens on Spotify and the album peaked at Number 5 on the *Rolling Stone* Top 200 Albums Chart. In an interview with *Complex* [1], Herbo describes being inspired to create the album because of his experiences with therapy beginning in 2018 following his arrest for unlawful use of a firearm. While the overall gritty, almost nihilistic tone of the album is in-line with Herbo’s background as a drill artist, the title track is unique in its vulnerable, stark portrayal of post-traumatic stress disorder. *Pitchfork* aptly describes the track as being “like watching him argue with a therapist through a crack in the door.” Notable lyrics include “I can't sleep 'cause it's a war zone in my head... A million dollars ahead, I'm still angry and seeing red. How the f--- I'm 'posed to have fun? All my n----- dead” [2], portraying the lingering nightmares, paranoia, and anger in the aftermath of his experiences living with trauma. Lyrics from the song’s featured artists’ further expand on similar experiences of “seeing [the] past everywhere”, dependence on “sex, drugs, and money”, loss of structure and peace, disruption of sobriety, and being “le[ft] with anxiety” [2] - many lines of which seem eerily prescient having been sung by rapper Juice WRLD who passed away suddenly from a suspected drug-induced seizure in December of 2019. His face is amongst 49 other deceased rap icons whose images replace the stars of the American flag on *PTSD*’s album art including

XXXtentacion, Pop Smoke, and icon Nipsey Hussle who all died of gun-related violence within the past year.

Surrounding the album release, Herbo has been exceptionally vocal about his intention to destigmatize mental health issues within the black community and encourage others to seek treatment, especially young people who have been exposed to trauma [3]. But he is not the only one to do so - rap music has long been suffused with themes of surviving trauma and its effects on one's personality and surrounding communities. While the outright discussion of mental health visibility has been a relatively recent development, rap has always served as a medium for people to share their personal struggles. Released in 1994, The Notorious B.I.G.'s track '*Suicidal Thoughts*' is a searing depiction of a suicide note that continues to serve as a lasting reminder of the consequences of severe depression. Recently, an increasing number of highly influential artists including Kid Cudi, Logic, and Jay-Z have shared their own experiences with mental illness.

This growing vulnerability and emotional relatability of rap music plays a huge role in what makes it such a powerful tool of cultural change. Given hip-hop's influence, it has the potential to significantly change the lives of countless people who find solace in music. I am reminded of my first day rotating on the child and adolescent psychiatry service as a medical student. I asked a young man what he did to cope with difficult times - to which he answered, "I don't need much. I have rap."

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Flash Point: Emergency Psychiatry In The Course Of A Pandemic

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After seeing the meme “*stay at home unless you want to be intubated by a psychiatrist*” on social media we feel pangs of fear for what this *global emergency* means for mental health hospitals, where acuity is high and resources are stretched at the best of times. According to ‘The Washington Post’, the ability for the US Healthcare System to provide good quality physical healthcare is lately cramped, along with non-emergency procedures being postponed amid covid19 pandemic. The effect on mental health provision has so far been undocumented. Through a professional lens we will examine how this virus, along with its colossal deployment of resources and public attention, will affect our mental health care infrastructure.

Why Now?

We are currently living through the greatest catastrophe of our time, which will no doubt shape our society for generations to come. From a professional perspective there is little literature

available which could have prepared us for our new daily working reality. At the time of the last true pandemic, the Spanish Flu in 1918, psychiatry was mainly confined to *lunatic asylums* and was largely divorced from the rest of medicine. We have had a challenging history of fighting for the legitimacy of our field within medicine, tackling stigma, and attempting to build the trust of the public and our own patient group. As the public becomes better informed, resources have been allocated towards more common mental health difficulties; however, patients most affected by their mental health (many of whom spend their life in and out of hospital) seem to have been forgotten. Will a marginalized group veiled in stigma ever get the resources and attention they so desperately need? And how has the sudden and drastic diversion of resources toward physical health treatment affected the care of the most vulnerable in society?

According to the **World Health Organization**, individuals suffering with **severe mental disorders** have a **10-25 year reduction in life expectancy** compared with that of the general public. This alarming figure existed before corona virus began sweeping our world. The majority of these deaths are due to **chronic physical health conditions**, placing this group amongst the most vulnerable facing the pandemic. Furthermore, due to the nature of psychiatric wards being full of acutely unwell patients unable to comply with guidance on spreading the virus, the spread of infection within the wards is rapid and has led to a number of deaths. **Suicide** is another important cause of mortality, responsible for taking the lives of around **800 000 people per year**. In a society currently combating uncertainty, poor physical health, breakdown of routine, loss of employment, financial burden, prolonged isolation, untreated mental illness, and an increase in substance misuse and domestic violence, the prognosis is not good.

Last week, I got in touch with an old friend who happens to be a third-year psychiatry resident at a renowned hospital in New York City. While discussing the current state of affairs, especially in New York, he divulged how he anxiously arrived at work the day after his workplace experienced an outbreak of Covid19, and the complexity of the situation swiftly became apparent. He assessed a man with a history of alcoholism who had tragically relapsed and made a serious suicide attempt. This was likely triggered by the sudden withdrawal of his community support, or perhaps the fear of how this deadly virus will affect his underlying lung

condition. They seriously deliberated whether psychiatric admission was the correct course, weighing the risks to him in the community against the danger of bringing him into hospital, and concluded there was no right answer. 80% of patients on the ward had tested positive for corona virus, and with a large number of staff also off sick, providing safe care would prove next to impossible. What was once a secure place of care had literally overnight turned into a life threatening node of transmission, where social distancing, mask use, hand washing, and self-isolation are often impossible. Across the room from them was a manic gentleman with bipolar disorder eating food off the floor to ‘build his immunity’, and an elderly delirious lady with COVID-19 who was refusing to keep her oxygen on.

On a daily basis doctors have been dealing with ethical dilemmas, highly volatile scenarios, the effects of entire psychiatric hospitals being shut down, changes in mental health legislation, staff members being redeployed, retraining in physical health care, and the questionable Personal Protection Equipment allocated to professionals who are all too frequently involved in close physical restraint, often with infectious patients.

It is safe to assume that the COVID-19 pandemic is at the forefront of everyone’s minds and will have lasting implications on our biological, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual wellbeing. We currently have an opportunity to examine, adapt, and improve our current practice. This pandemic has emphasized the need to upscale our physical health skills and resources, improve infection control, and invest in digital platforms to optimize efficiency. Mental illnesses and infectious diseases are amongst the most stigmatized ailments in history. There is no place where they are more prevalent than a psychiatric inpatient unit during the outbreak of a highly contagious virus.

According to Nicole Allen MD and Adrienne D. Mishkin,MD, MPH (March 30 2020), Consultation-liaison psychiatry in particular will have to adjust and reassess the best approach in this situation. Consultation-liaison psychiatrists generally have the closest relationships with medical/surgical teams and the most experience regarding these colleagues’ struggles. Consultation-liaison psychiatrists also travel throughout the hospital system, which we must now avoid because they can be vectors of disease throughout the various patient units.

Telehealth is one tool that could be utilized to the greatest extent reasonable for consultations. It can be done by simply adjusting usual face-to-face encounters to align with best practices to minimize exposure of both clinicians and patients. In doing so, doctors are not, as some may fear, undermining the importance of the work. This might demonstrate that psychiatry can be a flexible, adaptable, and practical specialty responding in a medically appropriate manner to this public health crisis while continuing to provide excellent clinical care to the patients.

In encouraging others in our field to consider adopting telehealth as the preferred modality during this pandemic, we should think about public health first and foremost, and endeavoring to provide pre-eminent care for patients in a pliable way that doesn't put anyone at unnecessary risk. None of that means psychiatry is optional or inessential, it means we are medical doctors who are part of the solution, not the problem. The effects of this pandemic will be persistent and bleak, and we, along with our public health colleagues, will play a vital role in convalescence.

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Articles

Man's Search For Meaning And The COVID-19 Pandemic: Psychiatry Resident's Reflections

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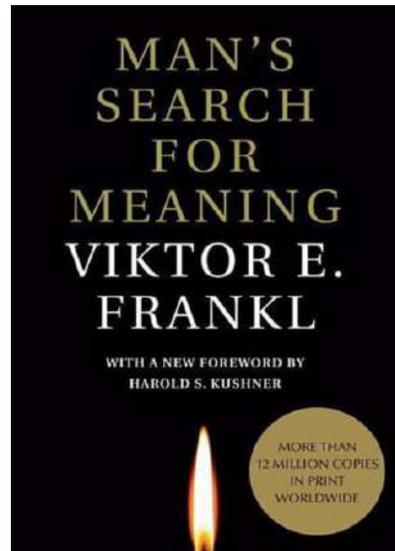
Finding Meaning Amidst A Pandemic

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As yet another day goes by in the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us find ourselves in uncharted territory with disruptions to our day-to-day life. This may entail staying home from school, working from home for the first time, delaying vacations, or even postponing major life events such as weddings or honeymoons. Regardless of our specific circumstances, this period of

uncertainty has led to many shared emotions. We are anxious, isolated, scared, restless, bored, and lonely. Time that we used to spend eating at a restaurant with family, grabbing a drink at a bar with friends, going to a party with a significant other, or going to the mall with our kids, is now a void in our lives that has been filled with these emotions.

In *A Man's Search for Meaning*, Victor Frankl, a well-known psychiatrist and concentration camp survivor, discusses the concept of finding meaning in suffering through his experiences in concentration camps. He coined the term "Sunday neurosis," which refers to the "void" people feel at the end of a busy work week when they finally have time to reflect on the emptiness and meaninglessness of their lives. This existential vacuum manifests as a state of boredom, where people have extra leisure time that they do not know how to manage. When this time gets filled with anxiety and avoidance, it interferes with the



potential to find meaning in life. He discusses how depression can be avoided when free time is filled with meaningful activity. "What matters is not the meaning of life in general, but rather the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment," says Frankl, as he highlights the importance of one's attitude towards any situation. Using the example of how his desire to write his manuscript and give future lectures about the psychological experiences of prisoners helped him survive the concentration camps, he emphasizes that "he who has a why to live for can bear almost any how."

While our current situation cannot compare to the darkness of concentration camps, there is no denying that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed life as we knew it. Many of us have experienced a sense of despair and hopelessness, being faced with a situation in which we have no control. However, even under such circumstances, Frankl reminds us that we are presented with an opportunity to find meaning in our lives. Instead of spending hours every day scrolling through the various social media platforms or reading the latest COVID-19 coverage on the

news, we have the chance to utilize this time for self-growth. Frankl believed that having a strong “why” at any moment in life helps us overcome challenges. Reading Frankl’s work has encouraged me to try to live in the moment, instead of spending the days waiting for the pandemic to pass. Frankl noted that the survivors of the concentration camps focused on the small things they could control, such as helping others, or staying healthy themselves. Amidst a pandemic that has left us feeling out of control, small changes in our day to day activities can help us maintain a sense of control and counter the negative emotions we are all experiencing. For some of us, this is a unique opportunity to spend quality time with family at home. For others, technology and mutual concern have kept us better in touch with, friends and family across the country and overseas. And for many others including myself, hearing of the deaths around us has given us the opportunity to acknowledge human vulnerability to illness, and reflect on how we spend our time on this planet. Whether it is through exercise at home, meditation/ mindfulness, picking up old hobbies like playing an instrument, or developing new hobbies such as puzzles, art, painting, or scrapbooking, we have an opportunity to fill the “Sunday neurosis” void and build skills that we can take with us into the post-COVID era. Acts of service, such as donating to local organizations, checking in with elderly neighbors, or picking up groceries for someone at higher risk, can help us find meaning and positively impact those around us. Although we cannot deny the emotional, physical, and financial consequences we are all facing, we can remember Frankl’s words that it is possible to find meaning in adversity.

Finding Meaning In Uncertain Times

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Viktor Frankl, a Viennese psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, influenced by Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler, developed a new school of psychotherapy in the 1940s which he coined *logotherapy*. In contrast to the philosophies of his predecessors, who posited that the *will to pleasure* and the *will to power*, respectively, were the most powerful driving forces of humanity, Frankl contends that the principal motivation of humankind is the *will to meaning*. Viktor Frankl's 1946 novel, *Man's Search for Meaning*, details the firsthand atrocities that he endured as a prisoner in several Nazi concentration camps. Through humor, love, spirituality, and appreciation of nature's beauty, Frankl is able to find meaning amidst the horrors of concentration camp life, allowing him to endure, and spiritually transcend, the immense suffering. While we cannot control external circumstances, Frankl reminds us that we can control our attitude and how we respond to adversity.

Logotherapy, philosophically rooted in Kierkegaard's 19th century existentialist beliefs, challenges individuals to discover their unique purpose in life, and to take on the responsibility to fulfill that purpose. Life's external circumstances may thwart the elaborate, seemingly impervious plans we have set for our lives, a lesson germane to the experiences of many during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The challenge is how we choose to weather the abrupt changes set before us, as Frankl contends, "it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life- daily and hourly...Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual."

The coronavirus pandemic has shifted much of society into a period of social, spiritual and financial recession, struggling to find meaning amidst loss of loved ones, unemployment, salary reductions, canceled weddings, graduations, or trips, all whilst socially isolated from family and friends. A common coping mechanism is avoidance – failing to accept our new reality, immersed in nostalgia for life pre-COVID-19. On the other extreme, people anticipate what is to come, with fears that our economy will take years to recover and social isolation will become the new normal. The danger in either of these mindsets is that we lose the valuable opportunity to find meaning in our present reality. For many people, the current situation has engendered anxiety, panic, sadness, anger, emotions that are often exploited by sensationalist media and contribute to a collective hysteria. We have the choice to fall victim to our panic and anxiety or seize the opportunity for personal and spiritual growth.

We are inherently social beings, and as the people, places, and things that make up our social environment have been forced into hibernation, we are left with ourselves, exposed, vulnerable, raw. Gone are the superficial threads that anchored our existence; gone are the external vanities that gave us a frivolous sense of meaning. Looking in the mirror, the “Sunday neurosis” has become an omnipresent phenomenon: What gives our lives meaning in this unprecedented time of forced social isolation? Frankl illustrates the concept of the *existential vacuum* as a modern manifestation of boredom, and as millions of people find themselves alone, confined to spaces of no more than a few hundred square feet, many find this void exponentially magnified. If we fail to find meaning to fill this vacuum, it makes us more vulnerable to depression, anxiety, and addiction.

There is no algorithm on how to find meaning, but the willingness to adapt, the courage to take opportunities as they come, the leadership to bolster those around you, and the ability to appreciate life’s detours, offer a solid beginning.

These are some of my favorite highlights of people finding meaning and purpose during the pandemic:

My patient whose son passed away from COVID-19 complications, cried tears of immense pain, followed by tears of joy that her once estranged family had united in the face of this tragedy.

My friend who works in the oil industry, taking a large pay cut, now relishing the extra time spent at home with his two young children.

My friend who personally sewed hundreds of masks for frontline workers.

Local business owners preparing and donating meals for thousands of CPS students and their families

Neighbors who stood on their balconies, collectively singing Bon Jovi's 'Livin' on a Prayer.'

Nurses and doctors traveling across state lines to help those in most need

My friend who took a leap of faith and quit her job to pursue her long-time goal of being a self-employed entrepreneur

My behavioral Health colleagues creating a COVID-19 Physician Wellness Task Force

My patient who died from coronavirus, serving as a reminder of the beauty and fragility of life.

No one can deny the profound psychological, social, and economic toll that the pandemic has had on our society. Yet amidst the turmoil, have emerged beautiful examples of love, humility, strength, and courage that give us hope for a better future.

Mental Peace Amidst A War Of Nerves

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Every so often, societies undergo a metamorphosis of culture set off by wars, natural disasters, and other large-scale events. Such external forces can apply fragmenting or solidifying pressures on the internal world, or psyche, of the individual. Amidst the current war of nerves that has ensued from the global Coronavirus pandemic, the principles of Logotherapy described by Viktor E. Frankl in *A Man's Search For Meaning* provide a most fitting attitudinal guide to mental peace.

When all parameters of his familiar external world were replaced by those of a World War II concentration camp, Frankl observed destructive psychological reactions, as well as, the ability of man to transcend any external circumstance to find meaning and happiness. In the camps, men were stripped of their occupations and their “life’s work” by which many framed their purpose and meaning. Physically confined and with these external tethers removed for an indefinite period, men lost the ability to plan for the future or strive toward a fixed goal. Under these conditions, man drifts from “real” life and finds himself in a timeless, purposeless state, or a “provincial existence.” Far too many in the current pandemic have so similarly found themselves in this distressing psychological limbo with the loss of structure and an uncertain end date.

From this provincial existence, Frankl describes a certain boredom that develops. He references Schopenhauer who stated “mankind was apparently doomed to vacillate eternally

between the two extremes of distress and boredom.” This oscillating inner torment often leads to depression, aggression, and addiction – all similarly seen emerging in the quarantine-induced boredom of the Coronavirus. In this psychological mire, man can lose his “inner hold” and is left with an “existential vacuum.” In this vacuum, man is confronted with thoughts of his own meaning in life. Is man “no more than a product of many conditional and environmental factors—be they of a biological, psychological or sociological nature? What about human liberty? Is there no spiritual freedom in regard to behavior and reaction to any given surroundings?”

Society is routinely confronted with such thoughts, but only for brief moments and thus we are able to avoid resolving the internal conflicts that they incite. Frankl poses “Sunday neurosis” as a familiar culprit of such existential thoughts. He explains how on Sundays, individuals become aware of the lack of content or meaning in their lives when the rush of the workweek is over; from this stems a sense of unhappiness. The scale and duration of the Coronavirus pandemic has intensified such thoughts, demanding their contemplation.

Through this contemplation, the core of Logotherapy, we have the opportunity to find meaning in suffering and thereby alleviate the unhappiness that otherwise pervades. To do so, we must alter our internal goals and perspective despite unchanged external circumstances. Frankl purports that modern Americans are fixated on the goal of constant happiness. Culturally we deem suffering degrading rather than ennobling; we often are unhappy or ashamed that we feel unhappy. Frankl suggests there is a certain amount of unavoidable unhappiness as there is unavoidable suffering. We should not aim for a “life in perfect equilibrium or a tensionless experience,” but rather accept both the happiness and unhappiness that occur when aiming for a goal. Obtaining meaning in life, knowing suffering will inevitably arise in any such pursuit, ought to be our goal. In this quest, suffering should not only be accepted but also be valued as an opportunity in itself to realize meaning. Once meaning is realized, happiness will ensue as a by-product. The suffering of the Coronavirus has provided us with an opportunity to contemplate our misguided goal of happiness and seek fulfillment by realizing the meaning in our unavoidable suffering.

Frankl explains this seemingly abstract realization of meaning with concrete examples from camp and professional experiences. He recounts a camp prisoner who in the existential vacuum found despair and stated, "I have nothing more to expect from life." Frankl proposes that those who changed their perspective to "what does life expect from me rather than what do I expect of it" felt a sense of responsibility, purpose, and thereby meaning in their life and suffering. To be clear, Frankl points out that we should attempt to escape any avoidable suffering, as it would be masochistic not to, however, for the unavoidable suffering we should alter our perspective to achieve meaning and happiness through it. Frankl goes on to describe a man who came to him after his wife had died. He stated he had nothing to live for. Frankl asked, if he had died first would his wife have suffered. And if so is it not better that he live to bear the responsibility of suffering for her loss rather than she his. With this tale, Frankl highlights how a man found meaning in his life though his suffering simply by changing his perspective. Frankl recounts numerous examples including how a woman on her deathbed found meaning and happiness through her suffering rather than the alternative of despair. She stated, "I am grateful fate hit me so hard. I was spoiled and did not take spiritual accomplishments seriously." Another prisoner once told him that it was his greatest dread not to be "worthy of his suffering." Frankl also recounts the ability to find meaning by suffering for others rather than seeking happiness for oneself. He recounts the immediate alleviation of his own internal distress when he decided to stay in the camp to revive the most sickly prisoners as a physician rather than escape the camp with a friend. He also observed that some prisoners would give their last piece of bread to others despite their own desperate need. They had discovered this supplied them with internal strength despite their external weakness. Having realized the meaning and ensuing happiness found in such acts despite the potential suffering, Frankl lamented that he had "missed so many opportunities" to gain fulfillment by suffering for others.

The Coronavirus has given us a rare opportunity to restructure our perspectives and societal goals. Despite having limited control over external forces or unavoidable suffering, man is self-determining and retains "the last of the human freedoms - to choose his attitude in a given

set of circumstances.” Rather than succumbing to the despair of the existential vacuum, we should “will to” find meaning through our suffering. Whether in hospitals directly caring for others or indirectly by staying in our home, we all have the opportunity to embrace the tenants of Logotherapy and realize meaning through attitudinal heroism.

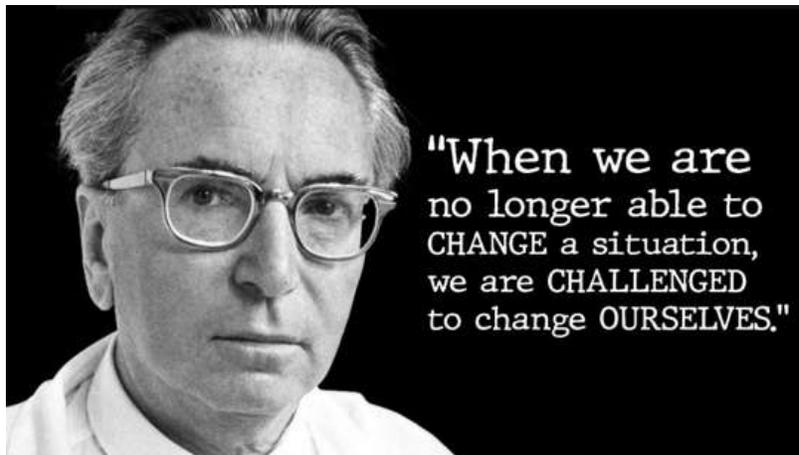
Discovering Opportunity Amidst Social Isolation

Hannah Statz, M.D, Department of Psychiatry, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago

“Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation” - Viktor Frankl, MD, Holocaust camp survivor

[All quotes in article are taken from Viktor Frankl’s book, Man’s Search for Meaning]

Suffering occurs when we are exposed to unpleasant life events and persists for as long as we allow our perspective to be clouded with despondence. Similarly, the experience of change can result in suffering. This tends to occur when we interpret change as a threat to our



<https://www.motivatepassion.com/viktor-frankl-life-changing-quotes-mans-search-for-meaning/>

security. However, change can also result in happiness. And change in life is inevitable. The question that persists is, how can we practice the art of living in the midst of suffering and change? In his book, Man's Search For Meaning, Viktor Frankl, a physician specializing in neurology and psychiatry, suffers horrendous atrocities inflicted on mankind in a concentration camp. Yet he persists with the perspective of suffering as an ineradicable part of life, similar to death, and describes suffering and change as opportunities for growth. For Frankl, thinking about his wife and surviving to write about his experience literally saved his life. He states, "nothing could touch the strength of my love." Furthermore, he finds meaning in the most trifling or even devastating experiences. He once told a fellow physician who was struggling with depression after the loss of his wife in the camps that maybe his purpose had been to spare his wife the pain of losing him first. In the most dire of circumstances Frankl chose to remain positive, unselfish, brave and dignified and to search for meaning and purpose.

My definition of resilience is when someone experiences something harmful, perseveres and then prospers. The key is to recognize the element of choice hidden within this definition. This concept is demonstrated via many parallels between Frankl's experience and that of the current COVID-19 pandemic. As of May 10, 2020, over 280,000 people around the world have died from COVID-19. Though human nature is intrinsically social, in the midst of tragedy we have been ordered to stay at home and isolate from others. Suffering is manifested by the confiscation of basic freedoms such as going to work, church, the gym or shopping centers. Hugs and handshakes have been replaced by elbow bumps and 'footshakes'. Millions of people have filed for unemployment. I have evaluated multiple patients in the emergency room with new onset depression and anxiety directly related to the pandemic. Devastatingly, people are committing suicide. In Frankl's time this was called 'barbed wire sickness' where men would run into barbed wire as a death sentence rather than confront the atrocities of war. Life has changed drastically. However, like Frankl, people have also found joy in the smallest of mercies and experiences. Technology, which in the 21st century has been purported to distance us, is now bringing us together with an abundance of video chats and virtual meetings. Simplicity has been rediscovered. Many have decided to learn a new hobby or skill. Rampant are people

giving in the most basic way, such as placing groceries on the doorstep of an elderly neighbor's home. Ultimately, the current situation is inescapable. Frankl emphasizes the importance of discovering meaning in our lives, even in a seemingly hopeless situation, and learning how to turn tragedy into triumph by aligning decisions with our values. We are challenged to change ourselves, and suffering, indeed, can be turned into human achievement and accomplishment. He never said it would be easy. It sure was not for him. But the choice is ours.

While reading this book, I was struck by its similarity to a type of psychotherapy called, "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy," or ACT. As previously described, we always have the freedom to choose how we respond to a situation. We cannot control COVID-19 or the economy. However, we can choose to focus on what is in our control. Anxiety is hardly avoidable. We can choose to fight our anxiety or other emotions, or acknowledge and accept our thoughts, feelings and situation and then bravely and positively respond. Like a beach ball in water, no matter how hard you try to force it down, it will inevitably resurface. Similarly, fighting our feelings is often far more challenging and destructive than basic recognition, acceptance and introspection of emotions. It is also important to take action and make decisions guided by our core values, similar to Frankl's teachings, which is also a central concept of ACT. Frankl states, "he who has a why to live can bear almost any how." Even in the midst of horrors, he continues to speak of opportunities to make something positive of camp life all while keeping his values and goals in mind. Frankl chooses to redirect his attention, such as to deepening his spirituality, when worldly distractions are eliminated. This is similar to our current state of affairs where virtually everything we consider normal has been removed or altered in some way. Maybe it is time we learn to redirect our attention too.

Even in the midst of chaos, it is true that opportunities really exist. I challenge you to define your values, your goals and what brings true meaning to your life. Resilience is yours to develop and choice is yours to determine. Accept the situation at hand, choose wisely and look back at this time as an experience filled with opportunity even in the midst of isolation, suffering and change.

Social Connection In A Physically Distanced World: The Psychology Of “Raving From A Distance”

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The social distancing measures enacted in response to the 2020 coronavirus pandemic have caused some experts to worry about an accompanying epidemic of loneliness, and that an extended period of social isolation will exacerbate the mental health burden (Sani et al. 2020, Singh & Singh 2020, Hoy & Harris 2020). In response to these measures, digital raves have emerged as a way to help members of the raving subculture maintain a sense of identity and self through enduring involvement. They are an important way for members to stay involved and find social connection during an era of physical distancing.

A Brief History of Raving Subcultures

Rave subcultures have ebbed and flowed in popularity since the 1950s, with the most recent, contemporary iteration emerging from the acid house and techno parties of the 1980s (St John 2009). Raves were spaces where marginalized groups, particularly gay and queer ethnic minorities could celebrate (St John 2009). The persistence of raves as an element of youth culture, particularly for marginalized youth, as well as the widespread use of recreational drugs

at rave events, lead to a moral panic through the 90s and early 2000s -- including the passage of several laws in the United Kingdom and United States restricting clubs and targeting popular rave drugs such as ecstasy (St John 2009). However, this legislation did not spell a death knell for rave culture. According to Graham St. John, the rave subculture instead “subsisted, multiplied, and evolved... [into] a transnational network” (St John 2009).

The persistence of raving subcultures despite institutional and legal pressure to hasten their demise is worth examining. Many of the theoretical frameworks used to understand raving draw from Victor Turner’s concept of liminality -- more specifically, the “moment when compatible people... obtain a flash of lucid understanding on the existential level,” when they feel that all the problems in the world can be solved through the power of this interpersonal connection (Turner 1982). This powerful feeling of connection, sometimes aided by recreational drug use, is encapsulated by the “vibe” (St John 2008).

The Enduring Appeal of Raving and the “Vibe”

According to Maria Pini, the vibe is the “sense of connectedness between mind, body and spirit, between individual and crowd,” creating a “synchronicity of individual components within” a wider, complex network (Pini 1997). More poetically, Sally Sommer describes the vibe as a feeling of liberation brought about by “an active communal force, a feeling, a rhythm that is created by the mix of dancers, the balance of loud music, the effects of darkness and light, the energy... an active, exhilarating feeling of ‘now-ness’ that everything is coming together -- that a good party is in the making.” The vibe is “constructive,” distinctive, and carries the party “psychically and physically” (2001). Phil Jackson elevates and echoes this sentiment, describing how the vibe transforms the room from one of strangers to “party folk all satisfying their need to *be*... the sweat, which pours from your skin, cleanses you, draining out the toxic residue of frustrated plans, niggling worries, stupid arguments, and petty insecurities. Nothing matters, but the beat, the crowd, the dance. Glorious” (Jackson 2004). The vibe is about feelings of transcending and belonging.

Additionally, some scholars see raves as a site of “dissolution of differences based on class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and age” (St. John 2008). Others, however, acknowledge that the structures of racism, classism, sexism, and queerphobia inevitably embed themselves into the subculture, resulting in the “reproduction of striated relations” that exist outside the spaces (St. John 2008). In response to these reproduced dynamics, some organizers -- such as the creators of Brooklyn’s Papi Juice -- design their nights with an eye towards dismantling them.

The desire for transcendence and belonging through raves and other leisure activities is particularly salient in light of the corporate globalization of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. As institutional religion has shrunk, and an increasingly globalized society moves away from entrenched cultural traditions, the stakes surrounding activities of play have become more intense (St. John 2008). According to Graham St. John, “emergent performance genres” like electronic dance music enable a “freedom from institutional obligation,” including work and family pressures, that may have previously been provided through traditional means (St. John 2008). Rave subcultures emerged to provide a sense of belonging, transcendence, and purpose that was absent from a globalizing, “detraditionalizing” world (St. John 2008).

This is not to say that rave subcultures are utopias. They carry their own forms of discipline, and they do absorb and reflect the market-based ethos of the society that surrounds them. They are often “bound by intricate codes of style and genre, increased knowledge of which enables a *hardcore* sensibility and a concomitant accumulation of ‘subcultural capital’ (St. John 2008). Additionally, the feelings of “elitism, exclusivity, and coolness” that accompany subcultural capital may drive some of rave culture’s enduring appeal among its members (St. John 2008). At the same time, the sense of cultural belonging that buoys raving subcultures is sometimes bound up with brand loyalty, so that “transgression is... rendered ‘deviant’ or ‘cool’” in a way that is profitable (St. John 2008). These conversations, however, are beyond the scope of this paper.

Enduring Involvement Among Aging Ravers

Researchers describe continued participation in youth subcultures despite the additional demands that accompany adulthood -- including employment, marriage, and parenthood -- as “enduring involvement.” In their overview of the concept, Higie and Feick theorise that enduring involvement is motivated by the connection between the activity and an individual’s “self-image” (Higie & Feick 1989). This concept maps easily on to raving subcultures. In his study of the raving scene in Philadelphia, Bennett found that aging ravers had maintained a modified participation in their scene while balancing the demands of their jobs, spouses, and children (Bennett 2013). Additionally, a recent survey of 276 aging ravers in the United Kingdom found that ravers continued to partake in rave culture as they grew older. Survey respondents ranged from the ages of 35-61, and found that two-thirds continued to participate in clubbing activities (Peter and Williams 2019).

Social Distancing Necessitating Enduring Involvement

While not the same as employment or parenthood, the social distancing measures implemented globally in response to the 2020 coronavirus pandemic are unequivocally a pressure that prevents participation in the very physically-oriented raving subculture. Members are left with a choice -- to not engage with it during physical distancing, or to negotiate their involvement with the realities of their new social lives. If they wish to stay involved, they need to find ways to be involved that go beyond their physical presence at a rave.

In the wake of these social distancing measures, several organizers -- including Seltzer of Brooklyn, NY and the remotely organized, geographically dispersed Club Quarantine (*see Fig. 1 and 2*) -- have partnered with artists and creators around the globe to put on events through Google Hangout, the video conferencing app Zoom, and other web-based applications. At these “digital raves,” which can hold upwards of 1000 individuals, attendees dress up and dance as they would at physical raves. Users can toggle between viewing groups of attendees through a large grid or through a primary camera rotating through attendees.

The aim of these events is to replicate the “vibe” digitally, to provide members of the subculture with the feelings of belonging and transcendence that they seek on the dancefloor. In these spaces, the “wider, complex network” Pini describes can be seen with a semblance of a bird’s eye view. Sommer’s “active communal force” is visible through a screen, and the “feeling of ‘now-ness’” that she exalted, which now must be carried only psychically, feels more urgent and necessary than ever. The participants need to *be* . Digital raves have created a way for members of this subculture to maintain an enduring involvement despite the limitations of social distancing. This facilitates feelings of social connection associated with the “vibe” despite physical distance, and allows them to maintain their identities and senses of self during a socially uncertain time. As concerns about an epidemic of loneliness grow, these digital connections may be a welcome mitigating factor.

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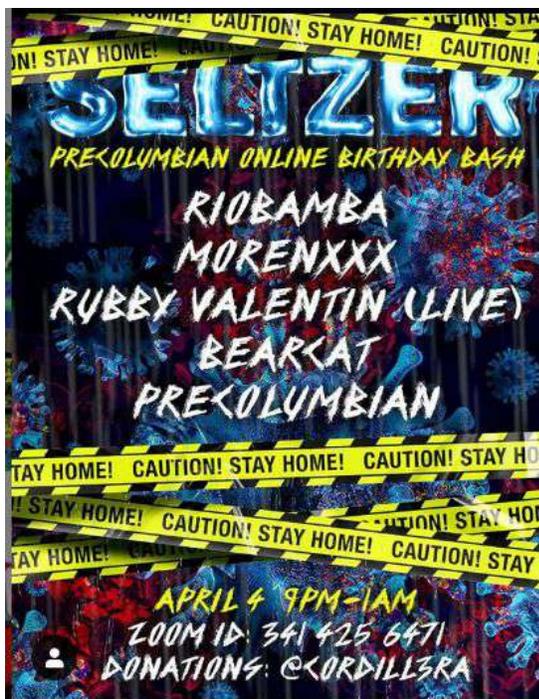
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Figures 1 and 2: Flyers for the Digital Raves Seltzer and Club Quarantine conducted through the video conferencing app Zoom, reproduced with permission



Music and Psychiatry

Grief And A Beautiful Paradox

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Growing up in a metropolis, I have always been searching for something to hold on to, in times of immense grief. Grief, this five-letter word, is more profound than it simply sounds. From failing in an exam, to the death of someone beloved, grief is keen mental suffering or distress over a loss or affliction—a sharp sorrow—a painful regret. Over the years, my personal perspective about grief has transformed exceedingly, reaching to a temporary conclusion that your grief is as unique as you are. It is highly individual and, a non-linear process.

Throughout my firsthand odyssey of finding a fix, a cure, or a vessel to contain myself out of such times of grief, melancholic music has succored me in mysterious ways. Music that is sad, melancholic, depressing, is in a kind of perverse way more uplifting. I find happy music extremely superficial, which makes it very depressing and discouraging. In my opinion, happy music has no spirituality behind it - If it is just sort of mindless party music, it would be quite disenchanting. Nevertheless, largely speaking, I am the kind of person who responds more to melancholia, and it makes me feel good. In addition, I think the reason for this is if you respond strongly to that kind of art, it is that in a way it makes you feel like you are not alone. So when we hear a very sad song, it makes us realize that we do share this kind of common human experience, and we are all kind of bonded in sadness and melancholia and depression.

Among dozens of my all-time favorite Progressive Rock musicians, Steven Wilson is the master of melancholic ambient music. From those genius chord progressions, to the use of synthesizers and proficiency over every instrument played by the band, Mr. Wilson is truly a

virtuoso of weeping art. Through many years, it was like; I have been searching for the ‘most depressing song’ ever written. Just as a drug addict is always on a voyage to achieve a greater high, I had a yen for uncovering pensive yet heavyhearted music.

I was particularly awe-struck, and moved by an album by Steven Wilson, released back in 2015. The ‘**Hand. Cannot. Erase.**’ album is a concept, which Steven Wilson developed after seeing a news story about Joyce Carol Vincent, a British woman who was dead for two years before anyone noticed. This album fits the theme of a person living on the periphery. One particular song from that album, ‘Routine’, stuck with me since, and it truly is the paragon of sorrowful art. Running 8:58, this song tells the heart-rending story of a woman who has lost her family. With the house now empty, she finds solace in the routine chores that keep her occupied - she even cooks meals for the people who are no longer there. In an interview with Steven Wilson, he explained: "We don't all suffer that kind of loss in our lives, but I think we all have to an extent where we use routine - the daily grind, the *Groundhog Day* thing, if you'd like - to sometimes ignore the bigger questions. 'What am I doing in my life? Am I happy? Am I happy at my job? Am I happy in my relationship? Is my life going where I want it to go?'"

I found this musical narrative seemingly beautiful, as it briefly explains grief and a distinctive way to face the reality. This story of this very tragic figure - this homemaker using her routine to ignore something that was almost too difficult for her to confront and to bear. This makes routine a coping mechanism, an escape, seeming as if you do not want to get over something that is no longer present. However, it still keeps you going instead of deeming you non-functional. In our psychiatry practices, we mostly follow this rule of making the patient ‘get over the misery’ as the fastest and the most efficient way to cure their grief. The idea of this song, ‘Routine’, teaches us that grief might not just have a single cure. Maybe we should inculcate a more individualized therapy approach, when sometimes ‘not getting over something right away’ might be an unreal, yet the correct motion too.

This particular individuality of grief should make us value therapy and doctor-patient relationship to a much higher extent, than it currently is. This whole thought once again teaches us how ‘Drive by Psychiatry’ can be menacing and unfruitful, not just for an individual

Psychiatrist, but for the whole community and the trail that we leave on for the future of Psychiatry too.

Cinema and Psychiatry

Cabin Fever In The Shining

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Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980) is perhaps my favorite horror film. Normally our favorite films and books change overtime as we evolve but this film has been at the top of my list for more than a decade now. The first time I saw the film I was about seven or eight years old. That night, my parents had left my brother and I under the care with my grandmother. The film was being released for first time in Spanish TV. My father had instructed my grandmother to not let us see the film. We had no idea about the film opening and did not even know about its existence. However my grandmother felt asleep and since at that time there were only two channels on



TV, we saw the entire film in tve1 (Spanish TV). I still remember being shocked when I saw the ghost of the older lady in room 237, or the scene in which Danny meets the twins. After this experience I probably became eroticized with horror and turned into a die hard horror film fan.

Horror films are one of the few aspects in my life in which I can become a real fanatic. I generally love all horror films. I have lost my sense of criticism in regards to the horror genre.

The Shining is an example in which social isolation and confinement can go terribly wrong. It narrates the story of the Torrance Family. Jack gets a new job at the Overlook Hotel in the mountains. He sees here an opportunity to finish his novel. He has a history of alcohol use disorder and was abusive to his son Danny in the past. In isolation a person can experience the so called cabin fever and become insane. In addition to his relapse on alcohol, Jack seems to be influenced by a negative paranormal energy that turns him into a maniac who attempts to kill his own family. The film, is a masterpiece. The photography, and the editing has influenced multiple films following. *Hereditary* and *Midsommar* are recent examples of *The Shining*'s legacy in the horror genre. Similarly to Bosch's paintings, *The Shining* is charged with magic symbolism. Multiple writers and authors have attempted to interpret this symbolism but Kubrick never mentioned about the meaning of it in his films. He probably left it up to each viewer to decide what did they wanted to make of them.



Cabin fever in the house?

Book Review

The Delirium Culmination: The Moustache by Emmanuel Carrère

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Emmanuel Carrère is one of the most known French writers, journalists and film makers alive. In his novels, he shows a particular interest in psychiatry and the knowledge of the self through the meticulous examination of peculiar characters such as Eduard Limonov, Russian politician (*Limonov, 2011*) or Jean-Claude Romand, known for the murder of his wife and children (*L'adversaire, 2000*). Carrère suffered himself a depressive episode and even underwent a psychoanalytical treatment. The likely coming release from prison of Mr. Romand and the death of Eduard Limonov last March, have provoked that his novels have gained relevance again. We will discuss his novel *The Moustache* published in 1986.

The Moustache
Emmanuel Carrère



In this fiction book, the main character starts the tale with the trivial gesture of shaving his moustache. From this moment on, a series of unstoppable events will occur, nobody of his closest relatives remember that he had a moustache the day before. Are his relatives playing a

practical joke? Can we trust the people that surround us? Is he becoming mentally ill? Does it even matter if he had a moustache?

Thanks to this relatively simple proposal, the author delves into the gestation of the delirium and the associated anxiety that goes with it. The progressive disarranging of the mind and the perpetual doubt regarding the truth based on unspecific signs and subjective interpretations of quotidian gestures. The horrible sensation of not being able to rely on the beloved ones and to be alone in this world. His movements are free, but his mind remains confined with the obsessive thinking of the moustache. He is unrestricted to touch, feel and even sleep with his partner but he cannot take pleasure of these acts because a cognitive distance separates them. The distance of the truth upon the moustache and the distinct experiences of reality. Even in these convulsive times that we are living, and contrary to the experience stated in the narrative, we should keep in mind that we all are sharing similar experiences that will undoubtedly reinforce us.

The book ends with a brilliant climax and the unavoidable destiny of a delirious that unravels the truth comparable to the magnificent lockdowns of “God’s Crooked Lines” (Torcuato Luca di Tena, 1979) or “Shutter Island” (Martin Scorsese, 2010). In sum, an intense and must-reading novel for all professionals interested in the field of the study of mind.

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