

**Chapter 1 : Meaning-Seeking, Self-Transcendence, and Well-Being**

*Frankl, on the other hand, started with a theoretical framework about the anthropology of human nature and attributed self-transcendence to the spiritual nature of human beings. This theoretical framework has profound implications for how we understand ourselves, and the human phenomena of religion and spirituality.*

It is not my favorite essay in this series, personally â€” I am not personally invested in either of these films very much, as they both belong to the tradition of French films that ask the viewer to sympathize with ethically repulsive characters for reasons that do not entirely add up â€” but it was an interesting exercise in writing about films I felt ambivalent towards, and it makes for a potentially intriguing read. For each, this suffering is reciprocal, stemming not only from the anguish of their own singular situations, but from the misery they inflict on to others. Zampano, when first we meet him, clearly leads a difficult and unfulfilling life. He is not a happy man, nor one who appears satisfied with his lot in life. He is often depicted scowling, or acting standoffishly, avoiding human contact and never betraying any hint of joy or excitement. But for Zampano, suffering arises most painfully in his relationship with Gelsomina, the young, good-natured woman whom he purchases to be his assistant. In modern psychological terms, Zampano projects his own pain on to Gelsomina, treating her poorly and sometimes abusing her, typically when he feels low or depressed about his own personal failings. Zampano does not intend to do this, but just as he deflects his own day-to-day melancholy to Gelsomina throughout the film, he deflects his grief away rather than accepting, reflecting, and ultimately coming to terms with it. Cinematically, Fellini illustrates this by gradually changing the nature of the scenery over the course of the film. By the time Zampano abandons Gelsomina on the side of the road, unable to cope with the emotional wreck she has become, the two are far from civilization, situated at the foothills of a wide mountain range as winter begins to descend. While there is a certain sense of natural beauty, the atmosphere created suggests an inescapable atmosphere of emptiness. The sparse, plain, unrefined desolation of the wintry landscape is a visual representation of what Gelsomina has become because of this, a figure of beauty and innocence inverted and ravaged by external forces. When Zampano â€” who spends the intervening time wandering emptily, a reflection of the ways in which he has purged himself of the things he should be feeling â€” learns of this, he begins to re-assimilate the suffering he passed on to Gelsomina. Now that she is dead, having reached the absolute apex of what emotional turmoil a human can endure, there is nowhere else for that displaced suffering to go but back to its owner. Zampano returns to the beach, and next to the ocean â€” constantly used throughout the film as a symbol for Gelsomina â€” this suffering returns to him in full, hitting his empty spirit like a powerful physical force. He is a broken man, beaten down to the sand by the very same suffering he gave unto others, and as he weeps in anguish, one senses he is now fully aware of his own moral transgressions. While calling this a moment of true transcendence is probably taking a step too far â€” he has not risen above anything, even if we think he may now have the capacity to do so â€” it is, at least, an awakening, a sensation of realization the likes of which Zampano has never before experienced. It can be said that once Zampano breaks down on the beach, his displaced pain re-internalized as part of his inner being, he is no longer capable of running from his pain, or of deflecting it on to others. By allowing himself to feel the full weight of his grief and guilt â€” to cry, to break down, to allow emotion to overcome him, rather than driving that emotion away â€” the course of his life is altered, and the search for absolution begins. The viewer does not know if or how this redemption will come, or if he can achieve real transcendence in the future, but he is set on a very different path than the one he walked before, and that is only possible because he has accepted his own suffering. Like Zampano, Bruno as introduced already living in a state of suffering. How could he not be? This path is defined by selfishness and a profound lack of awareness for those around him, for just as Zampano deflected his suffering on to Gelsomina, Bruno runs from his own problems by deflecting his torment away in every possible direction. He hurts those he steals from, of course, but he is also a terrible influence on the children with whom he pilfers, and in the central plot of the film, he very nearly destroys the life of his girlfriend and newborn son. This storyline is, perhaps, the clearest instance of reciprocal suffering in either of these two films. Retrieving Jimmy thrusts him into a great deal of debt, and his

criminal conspirators viciously beat him when he fails to come up with the money to repay them. Sonia repeatedly denies Bruno sanctuary at her apartment, he is forced to sleep in a cardboard box by the riverbank, and a theoretically simple heist with another young thief turns into a brutal struggle for life. For all the suffering Bruno causes others, he is tormented to even greater degrees as the film moves along, a victim of his own sins and character flaws. By the end, after Sonia denies him her apartment one final time, Bruno can sink no lower, and more importantly, can no longer lie to himself. The only way to cease his suffering is to turn himself into the police, to actively seek out absolution in the hopes that his situation may improve. This stands in contrast to Zampano, who is rather unwittingly made aware of the suffering he displaced. She visits him in prison, and seeing her once again seems to trigger something in Bruno, a profound sense of grief, guilt, and anguish, not just for what he has gone through, but for the trials he inflicted on this good and innocent person. Once it has returned, there is nothing Bruno can do but break down, and while we are once again unaware whether or not this moment of realization will lead Bruno to redemption, it is still clear his path through life has shifted. More than simply becoming aware of the larger truths one has shied away from, Zampano, Bruno, and characters like them transcend themselves through a sudden and excruciating influx of emotions, feelings that stem from their own splintered spirits. Though such suffering is incredibly difficult to internalize or process, re-accepting them is critical, for only by acknowledging the entirety of who we are – rather than deflecting the pieces we would prefer to ignore – can we be whole, and only by being whole do we have a shot at transcendence.

**Chapter 2 : Transcendence through Suffering. A Eulogy to Martyrdom**

*Suffering is inherent to human experience, 42 and some types of suffering are beyond the purview of medicine. 44 Still, suffering can be transcended by accepting the necessity to suffer 42 and by finding meaning in the threatening events. 44 "Suffering ceases to be suffering in some way," Frankl observed, "at the moment it finds a meaning.*

You can help by adding to it. Hinduism[ edit ] Transcendence is described and viewed from a number of diverse perspectives in Hinduism. Some traditions, such as Advaita Vedanta , view transcendence in the form of God as the Nirguna Brahman God without attributes , transcendence being absolute. Other traditions, such as Bhakti yoga , view transcendence as God with attributes Saguna Brahman , the Absolute being a personal deity Ishvara , such as Vishnu or Shiva. In the Bhagavad Gita transcendence is described as a level of spiritual attainment, or state of being which is open to all spiritual aspirants the goal of yoga practice , the state at which one is no longer under the control of animalistic, base desires and is aware of a higher spiritual reality. Tawhid and Tanzih Tawhid is the act of believing and affirming that God Arabic: Aside from the supreme name "Allah" and the neologism al-Rahman referring to the divine beneficence that constantly re creates, maintains and destroys the universe , other names may be shared by both God and human beings. Tawhid or Oneness of God constitutes the foremost article of the Muslim profession. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. August Learn how and when to remove this template message Jewish theologians, especially since the Middle Ages , have described the transcendence of God in terms of divine simplicity , explaining the traditional characteristics of God as omniscient and omnipotent. Interventions of divine transcendence occur in the form of events outside the realm of natural occurrence such as miracles and the revelation of the Ten Commandments to Moses at Mt. The emanation of creation from the Ein Sof is explained through a process of filtering. In the Kabbalistic creation myth referred to as the "breaking of the vessels," filtering was necessary because otherwise this intense, simple essence would have overwhelmed and made impossible the emergence of any distinct creations. This process ultimately continued until the "light" of Godliness was sufficiently reduced to allow the world we inhabit to be sustained without breaking. The creation of this world, however, comes with the consequence that Godly transcendence is hidden, or "exiled" from the immanent world. Only through the revelation of sparks hidden within the shards embedded in our material world can this transcendence be recognized again. In Hasidic thought, divine sparks are revealed through the performance of commandments or " mitzvot ," literally, the obligations and prohibitions described in the Torah. A Kabbalistic explanation for the existence of malevolence in the world is that such terrible things are possible with the divine sparks being hidden. Thus there is some urgency to performing mitzvot in order to liberate the hidden sparks and perform a " tikkun olam " literally, healing of the world. Until then, the world is presided over by the immanent aspect of God, often referred to as the Shekhinah or divine spirit, and in feminine terms. Sikhism[ edit ] Waheguru Punjabi: It means "Wonderful Teacher" in the Punjabi language, but in this case is used to refer to the Sikh God. Wahi means "wonderful" a Middle Persian borrowing and " Guru " Sanskrit: Waheguru is also described by some[ according to whom? Cumulatively, the name implies wonder at the Divine Light eliminating spiritual darkness. It might also imply, "Hail the Lord whose name eliminates spiritual darkness. Sikhs do not identify a gender for Ek Onkar, nor do they believe it takes a human form. In the Sikh tradition, all human beings are considered equal regardless of their religion, sex, or race. All are sons and daughters of Waheguru, the Almighty. Vahanian argued that modern secular culture had lost all sense of the sacred, lacking any sacramental meaning, no transcendental purpose or sense of providence. He concluded that for the modern secular mind "God is dead", but he did not mean that God did not exist. Paul Van Buren and William Hamilton both agreed that the concept of transcendence had lost any meaningful place in modern secular thought. According to the norms of contemporary modern secular thought, God is dead. In responding to this denial of transcendence Van Buren and Hamilton offered secular people the option of Jesus as the model human who acted in love. The encounter with the Christ of faith would be open in a church-community. Altizer offered a radical theology of the death of God that drew upon William Blake , Hegelian thought and

Nietzschean ideas. He conceived of theology as a form of poetry in which the immanence presence of God could be encountered in faith communities. However, he no longer accepted the possibility of affirming his belief in a transcendent God. Altizer concluded that God had incarnated in Christ and imparted his immanent spirit which remained in the world even though Jesus was dead. It is important that such ideas are understood as socio-cultural developments and not as ontological realities. As Vahanian expressed it in his book, the issue of the denial of God lies in the mind of secular man, not in reality. The school of the theology of the "Requiem of God," not even implementing a "Requiem for Satan," will constitute only a footnote to the history of theology.

**Chapter 3 : Self-Transcendence Theory | Nurse Key**

*Self-Transcendence according to Frankl [Self-transcendence] denotes the fact that being human always points, and is directed, to something or someone, other than oneselfâ€”be it a meaning to.*

Transcendence by Dr Norman E. Rosenthal October 8, Just a few decades ago it seemed humorous to the scientific community that shorter winter days could make a person feel blue. Nowadays anyone working in the field of mental health knows about Seasonal Affective Disorder SAD , and patients who would otherwise suffer from mysterious debilitating depression each winter find relief in light therapy. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Dr. Rosenthal is today a world-renowned psychiatrist working at Gerogetown University over scholarly articles , and author of eight popular books. Dr Rosenthal, a compassionate pioneer We own this shift in knowledge to Dr. D, a researcher at the National Institute of Mental Health for twenty years. With his book, Transcendence published in its first edition in , Dr. Rosenthal continues to undertake pioneering work in his field in order to alleviate human suffering. Healing and Transformation through Transcendental Meditation is, essentially, Dr. Transcending the confused mind His discussion includes not only conditions familiar to every one of us â€” stress, anxiety â€” but also more serious problems affecting millions like bipolar disorder, depression, anger, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder ADHD and drug-, alcohol-, sex-, and nicotine addiction. One of the striking features of the book is the empowering empathy with which Dr. Rosenthal talks about the people with given health issues. It cannot but make the reader become more understanding of other humans and their anguish. In addition, of course, there is all the neat science â€” explained simply yet not watered down to the degree of becoming trivial. Rosenthal writes about the benefits of Transcendental Meditation in different environments ranging from maximum security prisons to inner-city schools, from Wall Street to Hollywood. Essentially, this is book about human condition in the modern world. But unlike the existentialists, Dr. Norman Rosenthal sees light at the end of the tunnel. Dr Norman Rosenthal talks about research on the benefits of meditating:

**Chapter 4 : BOOK REVIEW: "Transcendence" by Dr Norman Rosenthal**

*Desires, Suffering, Achievements and Transcendence By Giovanni 8 spirituality Most spiritual traditions, especially the Eastern ones, tells us that personal desires are doors to suffering.*

Definitions of Healing and Codes Wholeness Three definitions emphasized the concept of wholeness but differed in the stress on physician or patient experience or in the suggestion that wholeness is discovered as the illness experience unfolds. So defined, healing involves achieving or acquiring wholeness as a person. Subthemes of transformation, loss and isolation, and suffering were associated with the theme of wholeness. The nature of the human experience is not solitary. Not being the persons they have known themselves to be, they suffer. The study respondents did not associate wholeness with physical health or cure of disease. You can be complete about it. Narrative Two definitions reflected the theme of healing as a narrative. Narrative subthemes involved a personal connection within the context of continuity of care. Healing is related to wholeness, and wholeness is experienced in connection with others. Illness can facilitate connection. Continuity of care supports connection. Spirituality Two definitions emphasized the theme of spirituality. Subthemes illuminating the theme of spirituality involved meaning, reconciliation, and transcendence. Patients experiencing healing were described as seeking or discovering meaning in their afflictions. How you come to it is at least as important as to whatever it is that comes to you. The more we suffer, the earlier the spiritual quadrant opens and matures. In summary, healing was defined in terms of developing a sense of personal wholeness that involves physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of human experience. Illness threatens the integrity of personhood, isolating the patient and engendering suffering. Suffering is relieved by removal of the threat and restatement of the previous sense of personhood. Suffering is transcended when invested with meaning congruent with a new sense of personal wholeness. Wholeness of personhood is facilitated through personal relationships that are marked by continuity. Healing is the personal experience of the transcendence of suffering. Medicine has no model of what it means to be whole as a person, 32 values objective more than subjective data, 33 and gives negligible consideration to spirituality. The operational definition that is the central story line of this study resolves some of this dilemma. Ill persons undergo transformations in which they are unable to be the persons they once were. This threat to wholeness generates suffering 35 and involves the physical, social, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of personhood described in this study. Although suffering may be resolved if the threat to wholeness is removed, distress is relieved, and integrity is reinstated, the ability of medicine to resolve suffering is limited. Suffering is inherent to human experience, 42 and some types of suffering are beyond the purview of medicine. The role of the physician-healer is to establish connexional relationships with his or her patients and guide them in reworking of their life narratives to create meaning in and transcend their suffering.

**Chapter 5 : Viktor E. Frankl Quotes (Author of Man's Search for Meaning)**

*In religion, transcendence refers to the aspect of a deity's nature and power that is wholly independent of the material universe, beyond all known physical laws. This is contrasted with immanence, where a god is said to be fully present in the physical world and thus accessible to creatures in various ways.*

Shwetha Shankar Abstract The purpose of this keynote address is to present the thesis that meaning-seeking and self-transcendence express our spiritual nature and are essential for our healing and well-being. Will to meaning is both a primary human motivation and a human capacity to strive for something that transcends self-interests and serve the greater good. I then discuss three levels of meaning-seeking that result in self-transcendence: To attain self-transcendence is to become fully human. Paradoxically, healing and well-being, to a large extent, require a shift away from attachment to materialistic pursuits to the spiritual realm of self-detachment and self-transcendence. Empirical evidence will be presented to support the hypothesis that the pursuit of meaning is healthier than the pursuit of personal happiness. Evidence will also be presented to demonstrate that logotherapy or meaning therapy is uniquely designed to contribute to positive mental health, especially for the chronically ill and patients in hospice and palliative care. Finally, I propose that meaning-seeking and self-transcendence provide a useful conceptual framework for Life and Death Education because such a framework is supported by not only scientific research but also by the most influential spiritual traditions in East and West.

Introduction By declaring that man is responsible and must actualize the potential meaning of his life, I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. The more one forgets himselfâ€”by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to loveâ€”the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself. What is called self-actualization is not an attainable aim at all, for the simple reason that the more one would strive for it, the more he would miss it. In other words, self-actualization is possible only as a side-effect of self-transcendence. There are two ways of lookingâ€”if he looks in the right direction, he recognizes the true nature of sickness, old age, and death, and then he searches for meaning in that which transcends all human suffering. In my life of pleasures, I seem to be looking in the wrong way. What is the best way to equip people to realize their potentials and live a fulfilling and worthy life? The answer to both questions is meaning-seeking and self-transcendence, as illustrated by the above two quotes from two very different sourcesâ€”one from Western psychology, another from Eastern religion. Such a conceptual framework may contribute to a meaning-centered curriculum for Life and Death Education that emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility to develop the spiritual values of will to meaning and serving the greater good. I also want to emphasize that this meaning framework is particularly relevant for people working in hospital and hospice settings. In such situations, the health workers not only have to wrestle with their own suffering and death anxiety, they also have to confront on a daily basis the suffering of their patients. Sometimes they may feel overwhelmed by the huge demand for relief of suffering, but there is no effective medical treatment to cure human suffering and fear of death. Interestingly, there is almost a consensus among research psychologists that meaning is experienced when people serve something greater than themselves Baumeister et al. These psychologists simply presented this as an empirical fact, without offering a compelling and comprehensive theoretical explanation. Frankl, on the other hand, started with a theoretical framework about the anthropology of human nature and attributed self-transcendence to the spiritual nature of human beings. This theoretical framework has profound implications for how we understand ourselves, and the human phenomena of religion and spirituality. Frankl is almost unique in elevating self-transcendence as the hallmark of spirituality and as the end state of becoming fully human. Frankl emphasized that spirituality is the part of human nature that separates us from other animals. Humans are by nature meaning-seeking and meaning-making creatures. We are motivated by both the need to understand the world in which we live, and the yearning to search for something of value and significance that makes life worth living in the midst of suffering. His book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, continues to impact psychology. In philosophy, interest in spirituality can be traced back even earlier e. It is through

recognition of the basic human need for meaning and transcendence that we are able to fully appreciate what is right and noble about human beings. It is through pursuance of the path of self-transcendence that we become fully human. In other words, only by fully developing our spiritual nature can we become optimally functioning human beings. The construct of self-transcendence as developed by Viktor Frankl serves as a useful conceptual framework for both theistic and non-theistic spirituality. More importantly, it provides a spiritual vision for the future of humanity based on awakening and harnessing of our spiritual values of sacrificial love and serving others.

### Three Levels of Self-Transcendence

But how do we practice self-transcendence? How do we translate it into daily living? How does self-transcendence contribute to meaningful living and well-being? Based on my research on Viktor Frankl, I propose that there are three levels of self-transcendence, which can be summarized as following:

#### Seeking ultimate meaning

“To reach beyond our physical limitations within the confines of time and space and gain a glimpse of the invisible glory of the transcendental realm. For non-theistic seekers, seeking ultimate meaning means seeking the ultimate ideals of goodness, truth, and beauty.

#### Seeking situational meaning

“To reach beyond our mental and situational constraints and connect with our spiritual values. This involves being mindful of the present moment with an attitude of openness, curiosity, and compassion. This involves engagement and striving to achieve a concrete meaning in life, a life goal of contributing something of value to others. At all three levels, we are motivated by the intrinsic need for spiritual values. If we can cultivate all three levels of transcendence, we will develop a spiritual lifestyle that is good and healthy for individuals and society. We will explain how we can practice these three kinds of self-transcendence.

#### Seeking Ultimate Meaning

Frankl differentiates between ultimate meaning and situational meaning. He refers to ultimate meaning as *Supra-meaning* or God; it is something that we can vaguely understand but never truly comprehend. Ultimate meaning reflects our intuitive knowledge and presuppositions, which are beyond rational analysis. We typically seek ultimate meaning through self-reflection and philosophical or spiritual inquiries. It may also include myths and metanarratives about the spiritual, transcendental world. At this level, meaning-seeking is a continuous process because ultimate meaning is by definition unreachable. The global belief in ultimate meaning has many functional values. For example, it reassures victims of crime of ultimate justice, even if the perpetrators were able to get away within the human justice system. Faith in ultimate meaning also gives hope and consolation that physical death is not the end of everything and there is some form of immortality. The belief in ultimate meaning also provides a conceptual framework to make sense of the chaotic, unpredictable nature of life. It affirms that everything happens for a purpose, even when people feel confused and overwhelmed. To a scientist, such beliefs might seem primitive, but their prevalence and enduring popularity indicate that they serve some adaptive functions and that religious beliefs and practices will always remain a human phenomenon. An important derivative from belief in ultimate meaning is the affirmation of the intrinsic meaning and value of every individual life. Frankl, often appealed for the intrinsic value of life in order to rescue patients from their suicidal ideation. Often when patients learn about their prognosis of being a terminal case or the verdict that they are paralyzed for life, the typical reaction is to declare that there is no more meaning in their lives and that there is no point in living an undignified existence without hope for recovery. Frankl had to convince them that their suffering actually gave them a rare opportunity for human achievement. Frankl argued that, in spite of their physical limitations and their need to depend on others to take care of them, they can still live with dignity as long as they take a heroic stance and maintain an attitude of freedom and responsibility for their own happiness.

#### Seeking Situational Meaning

Frankl puts more emphasis on situational meaning than on ultimate meaning, because we can never fully understand the ultimate meaning, but we can discover the meaning potential of each situation. His phenomenological approach is very similar to the Buddhist practice of mindful awareness. Frankl suggests that we not only pay deliberate attention to all the details of our inner experience and external circumstances from moment to moment, but that we also need to relate to our immediate experience in an open, curious, and responsible way. Self-detachment or self-distancing not only enables us to have a more accurate observation of our experiences, but also allows us the spaciousness to access our spiritual values such as conscience, compassion, will to meaning, and responsibility. It is more like perspective-taking and detaching oneself from all kinds of anxieties related to self-interest. This capacity to step away from ourselves

allows some space and time to choose to respond with the right attitude in accordance with our spiritual values. A sense of calling straddles between ultimate meaning and situational meaning. If you believe that the world is organized according to some higher purpose and grand design, it is easier for you to believe that you have a special calling to fill a unique niche in the larger scheme of things. For example, a person may have the desire to serve the poor and disadvantaged. When he learns about the opportunity to serve in a leper colony, he may accept this mission as his calling. At the third level, one attains self-transcendence by pursuing an achievable life goal that is greater than oneself. It is about not what I can get from life, but what life wants from me. Calling comes to those who are not only aware of their strengths, the need of the hour, and the opportunities available, but also who have a sense of responsibility to serve the common good. Dik and Duffy define calling as: A transcendent summon, originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary motivation. Calling necessarily needs to entail some sense of societal contribution above and beyond personal happiness and success. There is near-consensus that calling is linked to meaning and purpose, as well as the betterment of society Dik et al. I want to discuss some of the empirical findings relating self-transcendence to well-being. Regarding ultimate meaning, there is a huge literature on the adaptive benefits of religious beliefs and spiritual practices e. This is a new scale with important implications. Situational Meaning and Mindfulness Research on mindful meditation or mindful awareness has clearly demonstrated the health benefits of such practices e. There are also research findings suggesting that mindfulness is related to meaning in life and well-being Brown et al. Another line of relevant research is the flow experience Csikszentmihalyi, When one is engaged in work or play, one can reach the flow state when the perceived challenge stretches personal skill and when there are clear proximal goals. The third line of research has to do with discovering and remembering meaningful moments. In instrumental reminiscence, the seniors remembered an incident or a moment when they were able to overcome a difficulty or resolve a problem. In integrative reminiscence, they remembered cases in which they were able to achieve reconciliation with an alienated loved one or gain a spiritual insight about an unresolved issue. Recalling such memories at the end of each day may also have the same adaptive function. Recently, I encouraged people to write down meaningful moments at the end of every day, rather than toward the end of their lives. Meaningful moments are defined as moments that are full of emotional significance, both negative and positive, and have considerable impact on their lives. There is also a vast literature on the benefits of goal striving Emmons, and personal projects Little, , providing further support to the importance of pursuing a worthy life goal. The present self-transcendence hypothesis states that all purposes are not equal. Misguided life purposes, such as pursuing pleasure and power with total disregard for ethical and legal issues, eventually will result in self-destruction. However, when we strive to serve a higher purpose and greater good, then each step of the journey is rewarding and inspiring, even when we do not receive recognition or reward Wong, a. Self-Transcendence, Aging and Well-Being Logotherapy or meaning therapy is uniquely designed to meet the spiritual and existential needs of the aging population.

**Chapter 6 : The Meaning Of Healing: Transcending Suffering**

*Description. Fr. Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D., is the former President of Gonzaga www.nxgvision.com is a philosopher, educator, author and founder and President of the Magis Center, an organization dedicated to education on the relationship among physics, philosophy, reason, and faith.*

Mar 23 Transcendence through Suffering. Not only can we, quite negatively, suffer from, but we also can suffer through, which, while indicating hardship, implies an achievement, or at least some gain. While the latter is usually part of the result, i. A friend once told me about how her mother slapped her a few times when she was a child, and she considered this to be formative, an experience of value; not only was it a positive experience despite it, but because of it. Has not our first heartbreak taught us an important lesson about love? Seen in such light, a certain economy pertains to suffering. A great amount of suffering amounts to a great amount of experience, adding to our worth. But who suffers the most in a society? Someone who that takes pride in the corporeal punishment that was afflicted upon them as a child, will possibly continue this practice. A lie, evidently, and a pathetic one. Is upbringing not always linked to discipline, denial, cultivation? Would it diminish the skill of driving a car if we were born with the ability to do so? Suffering through a difficult experience might make us become more modest, or appreciate things more, but are there no better ways? We might gain experience, but is memory truly, as Nietzsche said, a wound? We might say that suffering is an unfortunate component of agency, a necessary price to pay, but necessary by outward circumstances. Understanding a difficult topic requires a lot of effort, and potentially sleepless nights, but discipline and a good time management can make it easier for us without diminishing the result. We cannot forget that this would potentially amount to a total affirmation of the status quo, as it would legitimize poverty, war, famine, and other forms of suffering, that we force onto others. Yet, if we remind ourselves that the condition of suffering is never something to remain in, but, quite the contrary, something inherently to be overcome, the perpetuity of it becomes problematic. It is only afterwards that we take pride in it. To affirm suffering could therefore only mean to affirm it as something of the past, which has been overcome in the present; as a retrospective affirmation. We could speak of a horizontal, temporal axis of legitimation from future to present. Guaranteeing the value of experience is a fundamental way of how we pass on experience. The question is, to what degree the suffering itself can be a source of value, instead of just a variable hurdle that needs to be overcome. Things change with more stable and long-term conditions of suffering, like poverty. Even at a time of apparent social mobility, the eradication of poverty is but a lip service and does not reflect the experience of the poor, who consider themselves just as they are considered by others as essentially poor, as a worldly condition. This changes the whole dynamic, as the source of validation, coming from the future, ceases to exist, leading us to the choice of either negating the validity of suffering it is never legitimate, or of finding another source of validation, so that we could affirm the condition after all. A simple, but very effective way to do the latter would be to prolong the temporal axis into the afterlife, which would once again, retrospectively affirm the condition suffering: The economic gain that we could profit from in the first case, was inherently worldly, while in this case, it is the worldly condition itself that is imbued with loss. The horizontal, temporal axis is therefore now complemented by a vertical, transcendent axis, in which the sufferer affirms suffering within the condition of suffering. This is what is often described as the aura of dignity of the poor, their heroism of self-denial, and what not. This is because they are apparently privileged to bear witness to the transcendence, which all the others, in their worldliness, are cut off from. In short, the sufferers become martyrs martyr means witness in Greek. But how are they able to witness this transcendence? It is still a refusal of the present condition, but it seeks the solution in the otherworldly, leaving the worldly behind. Transcendence, in this case, is simply the refugee route that leads out of this world. It is borne out of a need. Reaching transcendence was the only way for her to legitimize the torture inflicted upon her, and it was no surprise that she found exactly that. What guarantees the authenticity of transcendence as a source of value, is therefore not an authenticity of experience, to which the poor have access, but their very wish to escape the condition. The suffering of the poor does not break through the walls of immanence, it is rather a strategy to

legitimize the perpetuation of the despicable condition, despicable even more so, as it claims that the sufferers themselves guarantee its validity, hiding the evident truth that it is inflicted upon them from the outside. Suffering cannot be a source of value, and if we take pride in our past suffering, we are committing an act of cognitive dissonance; borne out of the wish to legitimize something that can never be legitimized. The early Christian martyrs suffered corporally, out of the need to escape spiritual suffering – the suffering of not being able to be Christian. This martyr suffers, as long as Christianity is not in this world, as the religion that witnesses the arrival of the messiah. This changed as soon as Christianity prevailed in the Western world ; changing the nature of martyrdom. It is part of their apparent dignity. If the concept of martyrdom is to be of any use for us, then it is in the original sense – as the foresight to a condition, where suffering is not. But we need to go further. It is time to break this bond between suffering and transcendence, to deny it as a source of value. Whereas the latter perpetuates the status quo, by that being evidently a means of suppression, it is the former that opens us up to change – in view of a transcendence, but a worldly one – I want to thank Daniel Rhodes for our fruitful discussion about this topic. He is also a co-editor of this magazine.

### Chapter 7 : Human Transcendence by Jessica Newman on Prezi

*The model of retrospective affirmation works, as long as there's a potential for us, as the ones suffering through an experience, to reach that point eventually, where we can look back at the experience and affirm that it was indeed 'worth it'.*

### Chapter 8 : Transcendence (religion) - Wikipedia

*The greatest human beings, forgetting personal needs, pains, and desires, devote their lives to alleviating the suffering and bondage of others and to bringing joy and wisdom to them.*