

Senior English  
Mr. Rigler

### Examining philosophical assertions

Today we'll look at the next 10 or so pages of the "Experiences in a Concentration Camp" section of Man's Search For Meaning. Our goal is to reach a deeper understanding of the ideas Frankl is raising and to look at them philosophically. This will involve examining the language he uses to express his ideas and the potential meanings behind them.

Working individually, you will read through this section to find two different points Frankl is making. These may be stated explicitly or implicitly.

For each one, please copy out the quotation and then answer the following questions about it, pushing your thinking both deep into the text and beyond it. For the first 5, do your best to stay exclusive to Frankl's words and ideas. Save your personal opinions and beliefs for the final question.

1. What are its assumptions and premises?
  - a. What is it assuming to be true?
  - b. What conditions is it assuming to exist?
  - c. What is it suggesting about the different people involved?
2. What are its implications?
  - a. If this is true then what else is true? Why?
3. What different types or contexts exist?
  - a. When does / doesn't it work?
4. What do the specific terms mean?
5. Who else shares this belief or perspective, and why?
  - a. Are there other people in the book who this does / doesn't apply to? Why?
6. Where do you stand in terms of this idea?
  - a. Do you agree / disagree with it?
  - b. Does it apply only in certain circumstances?
  - c. Do you only accept parts of the idea?

Example:

“Is there such a thing [as art] in a concentration camp? ... They came to have a few laughs or perhaps to cry a little; anyway, to forget. There were songs, poems, jokes, some with underlying satire regarding the camp.”

1.
  - a. It is assuming art is something that is shared. It is assuming art can help people to forget.
  - b. That people are able to share art.
  - c. Some people create it, other just listen to / receive it.
2. If art can help people forget things, it suggests we have the ability to forget or not think about the situation we are in. This means we have control over what we want to remember / think about, and how.
3. Art seems to only exist at a specific time and place in the concentration camp. This seems to be a private time – when guards or Capos are not present.
4. Art here seems to be a way to reflect on a particular situation – to step back and see life in the concentration camp from a different perspective. Art is something that affects the way we think about something.
5. It seems that the prisoners shared this because they shared the same situation. It seems that the guards / Capos would not be entertained or affected in the same way.
6.
  - a. It makes me think about the power of art and the ability to see things from a different perspective. For me it is not about forgetting, but going deeper. I like that art, which in this case seems to be focused on humor and satire, helps me to connect with others who are in the same situation – to laugh about how ridiculous something is, to think about why things happen in the way they do, to help me to expand my own thinking about it.
  - b. Satire is only one kind of art – there are so many different types of expression. For me I think it is essential to think about things through an artistic lens, and not just a critical one. I think too often we fall into that trap.
  - c. Art also helps me to remember – a song or painting or book can take me back to a time / place / person in my life and help me revisit it as well as understand something new about it. Art reminds me there is always another way of thinking about things, even in the most difficult situations. Maybe one of the most powerful uses of art is just that.