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Fine Art:studio, site and context BA

Independent project

Dissertation title:**The power of belief to deal with life's trauma**

Student number :

Word count:

Introduction

This dissertation explores the system of belief which has been around for decades and is universal. Everyone who believes in religion shares things in common such as believing that there is something out there that will help them get through a tough time in their life. This is seen through history and art. This can be seen in christianity where Jesus's resurrection has been painted thought centuries as a beacon of hope and seen as a healer who has “gifts of the holy spirit”[sarah harvey] a other beacon of hope in christianity can also be seen in paintings of Jesus's mother [the virgin mother]. Christianity's key belief is the “ ascension into heaven”[Sarah Harvey] this is seen as a second life where there is peace and love. This essay also explores the people that used their faith as a way to destress and help them look forward such as Anne Frank,Joan of Arc and Vlctor Frankl who created therapy. However also explored is the opposite point of view of having no faith and what helps them to get through traumatic experiences.

Why now in this decade is it important in the world that we live in today we need a system of belief? And does society today use hopefulness in the same way we did centuries ago. In my opinion I think that everyone should have some type of faith, religious or not, just so they have something to help them when dealing with tough times. Perhaps this could be artwork that brings joy or being creative. This essay will include two different views on religion. This essay will discuss two very different women's journeys to their religious identity and suffering that they both go through and how the power of belief is important to them and their lives and how they gained hope through it.

Every individual has a different personal process when dealing with trauma and many look to their faith to process it, which is what this thesis will be exploring.

In this dissertation I will be searching for why people utilise belief to get them through life's wounds and how they heal from it.

This dissertation will look at religion and belief, therapy, trauma, expression and art. The dissertation will also explore how the power of belief is important to me and how I used it to help me through my trauma in my past and present, and how past events develop the behaviour that we use as adults and shape human identity.

People who used spirituality thought traumatic events

Anne Frank

The Diary of a Young Girl, a book written by Anne Frank is a very influential book that shows a look into the holocaust and how Anne Frank felt emotionally during that moment in her life. This book is a "testament to the indestructible nature of the human spirit," p1 and human spirit she sure had a look of even when she was discovered and then captured, she still wrote in her diary which i think she used to escape and to document what she was going through which has now become one of the most important books about seeing real life trauma. Anne always believed in heavenly things, she also believed that "you don't necessarily even have to be afraid of punishment after death"(goodreads.com2025) i believe that even knowing that she might not make it out alive she believed that she would be ok because she would not be punished in the afterlife. She is showing that she has a system of belief just like her ancestors centuries before. I also think she kept her hope when living through the war and holocaust because there were so many people that risked their lives to help her which probably helped her to keep her faith in humanity, these people were "Miep Gies, Johannes Kleiman, Victor Kugler, Johan Vosuijl and Elizabet" Bep" Voskuijl" she called them her helpers.

Anne Frank's diary is a big reflection on how she sees god. People also view her writing as a "book of beautiful sentences"(anne frank website,2023) this is because of her writings about her religion and god but also the poetry that she wrote, in a way Anne Frank's Belief was her identity which you can see throughout her diary, even if she did not do things within her religious practice medium, she still was a huge part of her religion and it was a huge part of

her life it was the reason why she was being hunted. However at one point in her diary she was to have more trust in good than she actually had at the time. It's as if her belief in God was growing due to the events that happened to her before "12 March 1944" ([research.annefrank.org](https://www.research.annefrank.org)) it's as if she was trying to find her purpose in the world and all the negative things she's been through, this can also be seen by Victor Frankl who also looked for his purpose after also being in a camp, he then went on to make logotherapy to help others who went through the same thing. Frank and Frankl were both trying to find meaning to their suffering. They both shared an un-normal experience that they could not prepare themselves for, they also both looked to religion to look for the meaning to their suffering.

I also think her faith began to grow more because she was with her family where they would practice their religion together and was instead separated from them. I think it probably made her feel like she had to have more hope for their safety. Just like Joan of Arc she was misunderstood and was fighting with the meaning and understanding of her identity.

Joan of arc

Joan of Arc is an "example of how to trust in God when all seems hopeless" (Barbara Beckwith, 2020) Joan still stuck to her beliefs and never lost hope her belief was a very personal thing to her. Furthermore she is seen as a holy figure but this actually took the church "over 450 years" (Barbara Beckwith, 2020) to recognize her as one.

She experienced visions at the age of 12 which led her "to identify the voices as those of Saint Michael the archangel, Catherine and Margaret" (Barbara Beckwith, 2020) this made her have a deeper connection to her religion and also led her to go on a mission to save France that she believed she was sent on by the three, this gave her a sense of purpose in her life. The prophecies that she saw became true which led her to be believed by many including "Robert de Baudricourt, the French commander" (Barbara Beckwith, 2020), her prophecies gave her the "unity of heaven and earth" (Barbara Beckwith 2020).

This system of belief led Joan to lead forces to victory however the faith and support that she got soon turned bitter as she was accused of witchcraft and being told by the devil instead of the three holy figures, this did not stop her from believing in her religion even when she was condemned to die in prison where she asked to hold a cross and died crying out the name of Jesus" (Barbara Beckwith, 2020), like Anne Frank even when dying she still held on to her faith and had hope that it would help her and give her a sense of peace. Like Anne Frank she kept her faith until the last moments of her life, they may both believe in a different religion but they believed that all would be well after the storm and that they both were optimistic in times of crisis that their God would protect them, in my opinion I think that this shows that belief can help through traumatic experiences. And now Joan of Arc is seen as "a shooting star across the landscape of the French and English history" (Barbara Beckwith 2020), she is now seen as a powerful influential person when in her time she was seen as a witch for being a woman who had visions to save France. It's sad to think what could have been if her life wasn't cut short, maybe she would have made more of a difference in that century.

Society was not ready for a woman to save them that's why she was accused in her century, but now in the present day she is seen as a feminist icon and a big influence to others, both Joan of Arc and Frank are a huge influence to life's history of women, Joan is now a muse for art down below is a painting by Sir John Everett Millais in 1865 titled "Joan of Arc" she is so influential that artists are drawn to her and have created "imagery, poetry, books and even songs"(Gray 2017) she is seen as a fascination and artists are drawn to her because she is not just a young girl but a soldier and a religious figure, she is a symbol of religion and war.



. In Joan's century "women were silent, she spoke up"(Babra Beckwith 2020) they hate this and the fact that in the eyes of men why would she have been chosen for this gift by God, that's why they believed she was in cahoots with the devil.

People who do not believe in spirituality

Sigmund Freud

Freud had a very different view on religion compared to Anne Frank and Joan of Arc and that was that he did not believe at all, Sigmund Freud was an atheist however his background was Jewish this led him to write many books on his "complicated relationship with religion and spirituality" (cherry,2023), although he grew up in a very religious place and was also raised with religion he believed that "religion was something to overcome" (cherry,2023), but he will always acknowledge his heritage. In my opinion he seems to look at the world and religion as an empty feeling, but Freud is still aware of the power and influence it has on people in society. Freud believes that religion is just "an attempt to gain control over the external world" (cherry,2023) he is saying that people who believe in religion are just trying to control what they can not, which in my opinion as someone who has both been really religious and then been atheist I can see what he is inferring to, and that in all of religions they believe that their religion is the best one and that only they are going to have control over the world's views or even be the only ones who have life after death, it is as if they are all in competition to be the best and have the most control but in my opinion that is not the key part of religion I believe that it should be seen as a community and a system that helps people who are struggling. Sigmund Freud also said "providing structure in social groups" (cherry,2023) this connects to his last quote that was recently discussed and actually connects to my opinion of him and what I have experienced in my life however his world seems to have more of a negative connotation, however he is not wrong all across the world different religions are used as structures in society this can be both be positive and negative. For instance take a look at what is going on in the world in our present day (2025) and how in my opinion religion in some social groups is very negative and has led to war however religion was not the only thing that was the cause but it is something that is connected to how people also create a political view, which is now seen as a bigger structure for social groups. Back when Freud formed his opinion on religion I think religion was a bit more stronger in building a social construct in society but now in present day I believe that with atheism being more of a popular thing society is built more differently by politics, greed for power and wanting control but in a different form. It's as if Freud believed that spirituality was an illusion in people's minds, and that is our mind's way of "attempting to gain control" (cherry 2023) and that it was our mind being in distress over not being in control. Further proof that he believed that religion is a psychological illusion "religion is an illusion and it derives its strength from its readiness to fit in with our instinctual wishful impulses" (cherry 2023). Freud is very different to Victor Frankl and they are both on very different ends of psychology where Freud thinks religion is an illusion Frankl believes

that religion is a very positive thing when dealing with suffering. Freud only believed in science and his own studies and that religion was too materialistic, he saw stuff in a negative light.

So instead of believing in religion he believes in the instinct and ego and how they control how you live your life such as the wanting of things and wanting them now in that moment, he also thinks that it is all our subconscious and that we do everything on a thought “unconscious thoughts, dreams and memories continue to influence behavior”(cherry 2024) So any thought or feeling can influence someone's identity, even saying something out loud shapes who you are as a person and the bigger the ego the bigger the identity, even any childhood memories shapes you so for instance if you had a traumatic experience as a child that could influence your behaviour to either seem older and more adult or have more of a childlike personality due to your childhood being taken this is due to how you mind and ego deals with trauma as a response. So if you have adult problems you have adult behaviour which is something that a lot of people have lived due to the fact that it is psychology i have first hand gone through this in my childhood and i do think that you have to grow up so fast just to keep up with adult problems that should not be experienced by a child's brain that is not developed for that type of lifestyle yet and i believe that it does develop how we live and how our identity is seen through others eyes, and as humans past experiences shape our behaviour. He altered the way we view ourselves and how we create. In Rude's life he had involvement with art “he wrote extensively about the lives and personalities of artists”(lasso 2020) he was really interested in the artists that were part of the renaissance era, he believed that artists were important to the world and he believed that they were deeper individuals and that art could cause a “powerful exchange of energy between the viewer and the work of art” (lesso 2020) he also believed that art is needed as it is an important role in society.

. He also really liked to collect antiques which you could say is a form of visual support by being surrounded by things that make you feel a connection to. Over his lifetime he collected “over 2,500 antiquities” (lasso 2020). I understand that as a person Freud thinks with a scientific mind and needs to have a logical answer instead of believing in religion which has not got a proven study, he believes in facts and not faith. Even though Sigmund Freud is not a religious man he still has a belief system in psychology and logic.

Visual spiritual support

There are other ways to provide hope such as artists and their work and how when looking at a piece of work it can give you a sense of calm.

One of my favourite artists that I look at for a sense of clarity is Alfred Siseley, my favourite painting to look at is the painting "the Cliff at Penarth, Evening, low tide." This painting is a depiction of the south wales coast. Sisely is an impressionist painter and one of the only ones to come to Wales to paint. He spent the summer in Wales on a honeymoon and that is where the painting below and the others part of the collection were made.



This is one of my favourite paintings that i always look at when i go to cardiff museum,since i was little i would always go to the museum on the weekend and i would always look in the galliries the more i went thought out the years the more attached i would get to this painting to me is a senses of peace a memory of happiness and i like to imagine i am right there at penarth cliff just like Alfred Sisely was in 1839. I think that art can bring a sense of peace and can be used as a form of therapy, if it is looking at the work itself or creating the art work. Just like the emotions and sense of hope we attach to religion we also attach ourselves to art and the memory of the emotions that were felt when experiencing it. Furthermore I think that you can have a spiritual connection to a piece of art work like i am with the painting above because to me there is something about the painting that makes me want to see it again and i think that everyone has this type of connection like this, however it does not have to just be a painting it could be a landscape, sound or a place, the experience of that one thing helps you to feel that spark inside that you always want to feel and pulls you out of the darkness you were in.

Visual support also links to religion such as religions are that gives you an overwhelming sense of emotion lots of religious art is a depiction of the events that happened in the bible,quran, torah, the book of mormon and the new testament all have religious art made about the events which happened in them, these paintings can give a feeling of belief to the people who are looking at their god or religious idols in a painting, people even go to places just to see the art work to have a deeper connection to there faith such as visitation the

vatican in italy i went there to see the religious paintings done by one of the most infamous artist michelangelo who painted the sistine chapel ceiling "the last judgement Pieta" this is a place where you can enjoy the art without a camera in the way, in the sistine chapel they do not allow cameras to respect the religious place of worship but also so you are fully emerged in the work it is like an out of body experience.

Does visual spiritual support help us to develop identity if you look through the eyes of sigmond freud every thought memory and dream develops our behavior even events in the past develop who we are so people so if we look at a painting and that is something that we see young it forms how we see through our eyes in adulthood and the stuff that we decide to look at visually to feel emotion, but due to the visuals that we saw at development age we crave those same visuals in adulthood to experience what we once felt.

The visuals are part of our "unconscious memories"(cherry 2024) even when we do not realise our brain chooses to seek connection to certain paintings and sculptures, even the music we listen to. When writing about freud and how he believes that art is key in society he said that when looking and experiencing art there is a "powerful exchange of energy between the viewer and the work of art" (lesso 2020) this shows that even if you do not see art as spherical it is still something that open a connection in your brain when observing.

Sound therapy

Why sound therapy? I think that sound therapy is also good for spiritual support and is all used in many religions and spiritual practices. Sound can contact the brain through sound waves they travel in the form of frequencies and vibrations in hopes that they provoke and awaken and inner peace and a wave of calm which then helps to lift and enhance a positive side of well being, this has captivated human beings for centuries"(anon 2023) in my opinion this has the same feeling or perhaps even more of a deeper connecting feeling as looking at a painting that brings joy because it is a science that connects even more to the brain with the frequencies.

Sound therapy mainly comes from the indigenous people who used “rhythmic beats of indigenous drums” (anon 2023) this is because sound therapy is not a modern thing it dates back decades and uncovers rich histories of the first people that ever used it.

As well as being indigenous it is also from ancient Egypt this is where there “priests used chanting”(anon 2023) this was to influence their emotions just like looking at a painting which Egypt had many of and are very influential for. Sound is not just heard but it is felt and it has always been that way. When hearing a song your emotions and body will feel different depending on the genre and the type of beats and references are in it, some people believe that it connects to your mind, spirit and body. Sound can also be connected with memory just like a painting or a place

Sound therapy can also work in a church setting for instance going to a sunday service and hearing hymns and the organ playing can give you some peace of mind, memory can also be connected to this due to the fact people grow up with religion and can prove the memories of being in church with family and singing your first hymn, for me listening to people sing in a church makes me think back to when i used to sing on a church stage as a child a christmas in a choir to celebrate Jesus's birthday, it brings back all the positive memories of being excited to see my mother in the crowd watching. However sound can also connect you to negative memories which is not what anyone wants when on a healing journey, such as a song that resonates with a funeral or a break up.

Sound therapy can be used when chanting a prayer as well when saying it out loud and having belief in it.

You can also compare Sigmond Freud's theory that the subconscious is drawn to certain things due to the brain developing and that he also believes that talk therapy works to help people deal with trauma because it speaks to the ego and subconscious, so in theory you could use sound therapy in the way that the Egyptians did and use the chanting method to tap into the subconscious to change the behavior for better wellbeing.

The therapy is full of meditation and is meant to provoke your body to be calm and enter a state of relaxation, some times the therapy also uses visuals which connects it to visual spiritual therapy, however i think that with the sound and meditation your body would have a stronger sense of peace so you can then find your inner peace and meaning.

logotherapy

Logotherapy is something “that helps people find personal meaning to life” (cuncic,2023) this is a psychotherapy that was created by Viktor E. Frankl, it was created to focus on the future and to learn how to “endure hardship and suffering through a search for purpose”(cuncic,2023), Frankl did have to endure both hardship and suffering when living through the holocaust in a “ concentration camp at age 37”(cuncic 2023) which he later survived and then created a type of therapy to get through all that he had seen and survived which ended up being what we now know as logotherapy. He was searching for human motivation and how it is not a power it is a desire to find ourselves to find meaning and not just feel good but truly live with our own unique purpose. Even when going through hell and feeling miserable Frankl still found purpose, the only way he believed he would stay alive in the camps was to look fit enough to work “if you wanted to stay alive,there is only one way : look fit to work”(Frankl,1946) this is a quote from his book Man's search for meaning which is all about his experiences that he went through and how he created logotherapy, in my opinion i think him sharing the events that happened to him when also talking about the therapy he created gives a deeper look into how it works and how it does not completely share the same ideology and beliefs like religion but instead is built off of an experience instead, i also believe that if i had came across this when i was in a really tough place i think it would have really helped and would have pushed me to find my purpose instead of letting it slip away.

Victor frankl uses deflection to shift your mind away from being self obsessed with being negative to yourself and shifting that feeling to a life goal, “allowing you to become “whole” and to spend less time feeling preoccupied with a problem or worry”(cuncic 2023), frankl wants people to stop fighting the anxiety and fear and leave it behind so that they can control their own self and end up with a sense of freedom. He wants people to have a new perspective on life and feel that they can live it again and not live in the past but in the future.

Unlike Freud, Frankl believed that religion should be taken seriously in psychology because it has helped people find meaning in their life and that to believe in religion is “human nature”(Garcia Alansete 2023), victor franklin is one of the rare few in psychology that believe religion is a part of psychology and that he thinks it is a positive and not a negative, he believes that the body psychology and spirit are connected

Conclusion

This dissertation explored the power of belief and how it helps to deal with life's traumas. The dissertation analysed artists who use the power of belief through their art, however this dissertation also researched Victor Frankl and how he created existential therapy by using his trauma and use of belief to help others that have experienced the same in the holocaust. It also shows that no matter if you are religious or not a society we still look for hope when in a bad place, however i do think that having a belief system helps when trying to figure out how to get through a traumatic experience and having that support of faith and the community that surrounds it. Maybe it's the people in that belief that help you get through your tough time and find the spark that you once had that had slightly dimmed. I also think that having a belief in therapy should be something that everyone should try, i was always someone who believed that they could sort out their own problems when in reality i did need community and something the push me out of my own negativity and self pity.

Also I believed from being some one that has both been a person that has experienced being a christian and then an atheist I believe that everyone should have a form of belief that does not have to be religious but can be as a support system and also just as something to be hopeful about as motivation, especially as the world we live in today is built in negativity and trauma. For centuries as humans we have created art for ourselves and others and have followed religion and depicted it. We as a society have always brought each other hope and we always look for hope. This essay also showed very different women's stories and identities with religion and themselves, even when they were both on a journey of discovery. Both women also had to have such a powerful courage to survive and be strong when suffering the way that they did. In conclusion every one deserves peace and hope in their life, and without a system of belief either religious or from a psychology perspective we would not find a meaning to life and have something to keep us going.

Religion will always be important to me because it is something that helped me develop and find meaning in my life. It is also something that gave me hope instead of me just giving up on life and myself having that faith got me to push myself and find my meaning in life.

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Summary

This is a book by an frank that describes everything she went through when living through the holocaust and how she discovered a deeper connection with her faith

The book also includes poems that were written by frank and it was also edited by anne franks farther. It is a book from the perspective of a young girl going through turama.

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