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Therapeutic Value of Logos in Edson's *W;T*

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Therapeutic Value of Logos in Edson’s *W;T*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Shristi Paudel, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

*Dr. Vivian Bearing, the protagonist of the play *W;T* (1996) by Margaret Edson suffers from the stage IV metastatic ovarian cancer. Throughout the play she recites metaphysical poetry written by John Donne. As she recites the lines in hospital, readers and audiences make some idea about the meaning of life, she has lived through. With the critical perspectives 'logotherapy' by Viktor E. Frankl and 'Truth and Method' by Hans-Georg Gadamer, this research comes to the conclusion that disbalance between sense and sensibility leads towards the path of dissatisfaction. For ultimate happiness, people should find meaning of their life and existence. Unless, human find their real value, they are living in false world of pride and arrogance.*

Keywords: Sensibility, Meaning, Arrogance, Struggle, Satisfaction

Human beings are always in search of meaning. Eager to find out meaning of human existence becomes more when they are struggling in death bed. In comfortable circumstances without any motive one can live easily. Unlike in comfortable situation, people struggling with serious diseases have to find strong motive to live or leave their life. Not only life, one's death is equally important for internal satisfaction. On the one hand, patients are trying hard to heal themselves from such diseases and on the other hand they are struggling to make their life meaningful. This paper is about struggle of protagonist in her last stage of life. Protagonist's struggle to find out meaning through her pain and suffering is shown in this play. Through which she kisses salvation despite of multiple ups and downs in her life.

Margaret Edson (born July 4, 1961) taught five years old kindergarten kids. She is recipient of the 1999 Pulitzer prize for drama for her play *W;T* which is one act

play. Before working in a kindergarten school, she had worked as a clerk for a research hospital in cancer and AIDS unit. This play in other words is her personal experience that she gained during her stay in hospital. That might be another reason we feel real pain in the protagonist.

Edson sent her to sixty theatres across 14 countries and *W;T* was first performed in Long Wharf Theater, New Haven, Connecticut on October 31st, 1997. This play revolves around the life of character Vivian Bearing in her deathbed. Vivian Bearing is "un lovely, un loved, un loving" (257) a middle aged professor of the seventeenth century poetry, specialized in holey sonnets of John Donne. She is suffering from stage four metastatic ovarian cancer and there is no stage five. Doctors are suggesting her to take eight dose of chemotherapeutic treatment in order to recover her disease. Her suffering begins, after she knows that she is a patient of cancer. Her struggle of 'suffering' begins right from this point. Regarding this mode of human suffering, critic Viktor Frankl argues:

A man's suffering is similar to behaviour of gas. If certain quantity of gas is pumped into empty chamber, it will fill the chamber completely and evenly, no matter how big the chamber. Thus suffering completely fills the human soul and conscious mind, no matter whether the suffering is great or little.

Therefore the "size" of human suffering is absolutely relative. (64)

Bearing's "suffering" begins in hospital. Later, the same thing becomes reason to find meaning of life. Has she remained unknown about her health status, there would have been lesser chance of seeking meaning in life. Individual's thinking plays vital role in human beings life. It is believed that thoughts guide human life. Professionally she is successful and satisfied. But she has hardly any time thinking about the deeper sides of human existence. She does not have much idea about who to look at human

satisfaction, sensibility and emotions. In order to be internally happy and satisfy, it seems as if one understands inner feeling of self and should drag towards the path of satisfaction.

Bearing wearing two hospital gowns and one red base ball cap (only colorful item) in her body; Iv pole, hospital bracelets on her hand, play begins with addressing of Vivian towards audience where she says, "Hi. How are you feeling today?" (11). Later she adds, "This is not my standard greeting, I assure you" (11). Renowned professor of English, who spent her life by studying and teaching Donne's definitely has some attitude and pride in her tone. As she is a professor of holy sonnets of Donne; it was matter of insult for her to use non standard language. 'As an intimidating and demanding teacher', she used to live sophisticated life with confidence. Her addressing style denotes that she will be able to handle these physical changes.

"I know for a fact that I am tough. A demanding professor. Un compromising. Never one turn from challenge" (16). Her level of promise to retain her previous life shows her confidence. During the course of the treatment, her views regarding life and death, body and soul, sense and sensibility go through the process of transformation. She makes a journey from an ignorant teacher to a human being aware of philosophical length and breadth of life.

It turns out that one should be a hero of his or her own life. For this, one should search meaning of his or her life. This is regarded as the essential journey of human being. As individual searches meaning, one starts undergoing through unbearable amount of suffering. Only living through such unbearable suffering helps one to see ones way: people will be able to find meaning of their existence, existence is more worthy than living meaningless existence. Regarding this, Viktor, Frankl

further argues:

I was struggling to find the reason for my sufferings, my slow dying. In a last violent protest against the hopelessness of imminent death, I sensed my spirit piercing through the enveloping gloom. I felt it transcend that hopeless, meaningless world, and from somewhere I heard a victorious "yes" in answer to my question of the existence of an ultimate purpose. (60)

Frankl, struggled very hard while living in concentration camp. He was one of the survivors of holocaust where many people could not survive. Despite of such critical situation, he became able to live. He was struggling to find out his existence and his suffering. It was because he had some unfinished work to accomplish and visit his beloved wife.

Critic Chad Wringlesworth, presents the play *W;T* from the prospective of theological humanism. She argues;

From a theological perspective, it is possible to encounter Vivian as something more than a ghostly presence, or an extinguished material flame. First, it is essential to acknowledge that the play ends with Vivian getting up as embodied flesh. There is no attempt to separate her materiality from a spiritual or mental essence. The union of mind-flesh-spirit constitutes her humanity. Edson does not present Vivian as a hologram freed from flesh, but something quite the opposite. The materialist alternative is even more problematic. (220)

These lines suggest that, spiritual self of human is very essential. As mind-flesh-spirit unitstogether, there is possibility of salvation. According to Chad, Vivian has unbalance with her spiritual and mental state, because of her lack of understanding on religion.

Another critic Elizabeth Klaver reviews this play as a reflection of modern

scientific society. Unlike, traditional society, human has value even of their body, as body can be used as "body text" for study. Given lines support this argument,

W;T poses the classic mind -body problem, which assumes the fleshy existence of the body whether one adheres to dualism or materialism. The play does not offer, for instance, an Idealist position. But the play also asks us to consider the mind-body problem from slightly (postmodern) angle: to what extent are body and flesh separable? As *Wit* makes clear, the body of western culture is discursive whether as a medical model or as surgical sculpting-in other words, the body is the intextuated flesh. But the flesh itself is also something quite distinct. (680)

Human is not mere bundle of flesh and bones which has no value, either its value for only experimentation with today's science. It is modern human; their eyes only see their benefit and success. As long as they see their success they even do not step back to pierce dead body, of their near and dear ones.

Similarly, human bodies are experimental objects for today's passionate, scientist as long as "subject" is worth using, they tried their best to use them. Emotional value of human is "zero". Similar to Elizabeth Klaver, Marc D.Guerra also finds scientific rationalism in *W;T*. As Guerra finds, professor Bearing was used only as research object and her body by her student and other doctors, these we can find in following lines:

The theme of scientific rationalism's methodological blindness to human beings and the things runs through *Wit*. Vivian's doctors apparently "never expected " their experimental treatment, even at full dose, to knock the stage IV ovarian cancer into remission. Rather, they saw Vivian as an opportunity to study the disease's reaction to new treatment. Giving full-throated voice to this

view, Jason jarringly and unapologetically shouts immediately upon Vivian's death that they cannot let her die: "She's Research". (112)

With multiple successes in medical science, doctors /scientists are now-a-days having more and more compassion towards invention of new methods of curing diseases. Doctors (Kelkein and Jason) during stay of Vivian Bearing in hospital, they make sure to use her body as much as they can. Even after Vivian's death, Jason is not ready to accept it as her death, for him it was failure of medical science and their hard work. Marc D. Guerra, makes us feel that *W;T* is about "scientific rationalism "in modern society.

Moreover, Jacqueline Vanhoutte states that, in *W;T* fate plays major role in human life through below lines:

Edson makes us feel that her heroine has deserved her cancer by combining tragic convention and psychological speculations regarding the origins of cancer. *W;T* reliance on the device of the soliloquy in itself constitutes on homage of Shakespeare; to ensure that we register the point, the first soliloquy ends with a quotation about mortality from *Pericles*. (395)

Edson in *W;T*, shows her protagonist's cause of cancer and her sufferings is consequences of her psychological speculation. That is because of her fate; here fate is shown as responsible cause of her condition.

Similarly, another critic Suzanne Gordon claims this play as a combination of "skill and knowledge ", which is proved in following lines,

W;T is about "different kinds of love and different kinds of skill and knowledge." The physicians obsession with fighting Vivian's cancer until her last gasp stands in contrast to the emotional intelligence the patient so desperately needs-and which the nurse embodies. (10)

Combination of "skill and knowledge" of doctors to achieve victory over metastatic ovarian cancer, similarly love of nurse towards her patient to make her happy is shown in *W;T*.

Vivian considers herself as a master of John Donne's holy sonnet's as she says "I know all about life and death. I am, after all, a scholar of Donne's Holy sonnet's, which explore morality in greater depth than any other body of work in English language"(16). Being a scholar of Donne enables her to see Donne's complex poetry lessons about life and eternity. Donne is known for his metaphysical poetry; emphasizes both on sense and sensibility. In this play we find that, protagonist misunderstands Donne and she is only fascinated with his intellect portion. Despite lacking full essence of her life: she is proud to be follower of Donne, that drags her towards dissatisfaction with life as physical trauma increases its acceleration.

Rosett C. Lamont argues that, "for a complex, highly intelligent human being there is more to living than creature comforts, there is superior joy savoring words and ideas, of reading in depth and cultivating the mind" (572). It is perfectly acceptable for Vivian, she always play with words in her entire life. Falling into bed puts her in position of inferiority, her pride of intellect, position, status falls down all of sudden. To heal herself more physically i.e; pain during chemotherapy, her emotional downfall heals from the way of logotherapy.

Vicktor Frankl in his book *Man's Search for Meaning* claims that, "logotherapy focuses rather on future, that is to say, on the meanings to be fulfilled by the patient in his future"(120). Vivian is worried about her future. Highly spirited, aggressive, bold, and ready to tackle her disease with same courage, energy she has learnt and taught her subject throughout her life. Later her boldness, courage, eager to get victory over her life gradually disappears with the increase of chemotheraphy doses.

Furthermore, Vivian starts to panic over her disease as Dr. Kelekian explains about her disease and treatment, "Miss Bearing, you have advanced metastatic ovarian cancer"(11). When he further adds, "it is an insidious adenocarcinoma, which has spread from the primary adnexal mass"(12). At the time she knows about her condition, her mental state does not remain the same. When she heard "The first week of each cycle you'll be hospitalized for chemotherapy; the next week you may feel a little tired; the next two weeks'll be fine, relatively. This cycle will repeat eight times, as I said before"(15).

As treatment starts, Vivian begins to share her journey to the audience, it seems that she is trying to avoid that pain and torture (mental), that she is acquiring because of multiple questions asked by multiple people in hospital. She tries to set new meaning of her life again, in order to overcome her problems, which she is going through. Viktor Frankl, in his book mentions that, "meaning is unique and specific in must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy his own will to meaning"(121). As she now, is not able to go out of hospital and shares her knowledge with everyone, with her students, colleagues, etc. Now she has been isolated into hospital bed and it is suffocating to her. Changing her perspective from one form to another, one circumstance to another is tough for her but she begins the journey to "satisfy her own will to meaning", that new meaning was only possible through revisiting her past life, whether it was meaningful or not.

Narrating her biography by Vivian is not actually for audience, to make them know, how wonderful life she lived? Rather it is a way to communicate with self, in order to give consolation, to find out what she has done throughout her life. She remembers her days in college, where she finds herself "Student of the great E.M. Ashford, to study Donne"(16). While writing paper on holy sonnet, her paper

turns out to be a melodrama. That is the reason, which makes E.M.Ashford angry on Vivian, "Please sit down. Your Holy sonnet six, Miss Bearing, is a Melodrama, with a veneer of scholarship unworthy of you- to say nothing of Donne. Do it again"(16-17). E.M. Ashford tries here to correct her student, so she can understand real meaning of Donne's sonnets. As Hans-Georg Gadamer in book *Truth and Method* claims,

Experience stands in an ineluctable opposition to knowledge and to the kind of instruction that follows from general theoretical or technical knowledge.

The truth of experience always implies an orientation toward new experience.

That is why a person who is called experienced has become so not only through experiences but is also open to new experiences. (350)

That is similar to feeling of professor, which might soften heart of Vivian although it is tough out side. Her inner soul is in need of emotional support but Vivian has covered her heart and soul with the false shield of knowledge. Bearing did not realize, her professor's words, so E.M. Ashford further adds,

You take this too lightly, Miss Bearing. This is Metaphysical poetry, not the Modern Novel. The standards of scholarship and critical reading which one would apply to any other text are simply insufficient. The effort must be total for the results to be meaningful. Do you think the punctuation of the last line of this sonnet is merely an insignificant detail? . . . The sonnet begins with a valiant struggle with death, calling on all the forces of intellect and drama to vanquish the enemy. But it is ultimately about overcoming the seemingly insuperable barriers separating life, death, and eternal life. (17)

E.M.Ashford tries her best to make Vivian understand real meaning of Donne's sonnets. But, we see, even at the climax of her life she still has same sorts of arrogance which is in her during collage days. Her professor tells her to understand

actual meaning of Donne, instead she begins to make it more and more intellectual. E.M.Ashford suggests her, "Vivian, you are a bright young woman. Use your intelligence. Don't go back to the library. Go out. Enjoy yourself with your friends.Hmm?"(18). Being professor she has completely understood, what Metaphysical poetry intends us to teach, but she is disable to teach the same thing to her student Vivian.

"Go out. Enjoy with your friends", decades ago her professor had told her. Keeping in mind that this makes her realize thatrelations with human and their emotions could give you more pleasure than any book or article. She did not realize the thing, when she was told. As Susie enters into her life indirectly, she is quite interested to share her memories with her. Her behaviour fascinates Vivian; it is lovely to get attention from others. When Vivian gets attention from Susie, she is little happy, which probably she is ever. Susie helps her not in terms of nurse, but sheshowers all humanity and emotions that Vivian has never got in her entire life. People can remain away from emotional aspect when they are physically, mentally and socially strong. When oneis suffering from serious diseases, than you need some kind of emotional support. That emotional support can help you to fight with your disease and current situation.

Moreover, we can say that Vivian is trying to follow the path, which was once shown by her professor. Professor had told Vivian to gain experiences rather scholarship, because at the end of life, while living a retired life or laying in death bed one will not recall all your scholarships, rather one will recall all your beautiful experiences, which may be one of the possibilities to find out meaning of life. That is major flaw of Vivian's life, she keeps scholarship over experiences. When she is asked to internalize inner meaning of Donne's poetry to analyze about life, death and

eternity. She only pursues sense(intellect) part of metaphysical poetry. She leaves other half of poetry. As she forgets to internalize major aspects of the Donne and only thought she knows Donne very closely, later as she realizes, she is struggling with death in her death bed; she seeks sensibility in her life.

Susie is symbol of love and emotion in this play. This is counter version of professor Bearing and Jason, Dr. Jason Posner is clinical fellow in the medical oncology branch, working with Dr. Kelekian and he is an undergraduate at the U.I studying seventeenth-poetry, as they are symbol of sense. Although Susie is less intelligent (educated)than that of doctors but she is kind hearted fellow who does care of her patient and understands their feelings. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, in his article "Margaret Edson's WIT and Art of Analogy", writes "Susie keeps Vivian company in moments of loneliness, comforts her in moment of anxiety, and brings her a popsicle to help, this manifestation of human touch is not presented uncritically. It has a sentimental side, to which Vivian reacts in revulsion" (349). This clearly shows relationship of Vivian with her nurse.

Susie: You're not having a lot of visitors, are you?

Vivian: (correcting) None, to be precise.

Susie: Yeah, I didn't think so. Is there somebody you want me to call for you?

Vivian: That won't be necessary. (30)

This above conversation between Susie and Vivian shows howalone is Vivian in her personal life. When she remembers any event of her life, she can only remember her phase when she is a student. At that time, she is learning Donne or at the time when she is a teacher. There are no such moments, that she shares with audience about emotional part. Where, she has enjoyed with her family or friends. Professor E.M. Ashford 80 years old lady, is only visitor, throughout her treatment.

Meaning can be interpreted through different ways; one of the ways to find of meaning is through our experiences. We can learn and get new meaning of our life through experiences. As per claim of Hans-Georg Gadamer, "the truly experienced person is one who has taken this heart, who knows that he is master of neither of time nor the future. The experienced man knows that all foresight is limited and all plans uncertain. In him is realized the truth of value of experience"(351). This meaning of experience is completely abandoned by protagonist, as she feels herself master even in future, where she claims that, "After twenty years, I can say with confidence, no one is quite good as I"(31). There is no certainty of today, either we will remain same or not, but she is claiming to be good even after twenty years. Vivian only got professional excellence, she fails to gain emotional experiences. It is because, "Experiences teaches us to acknowledge the real. The genuine result of experience, then- as of all desire to know"(351), as stated by Hans -Georg Gadamer. She refuses to open the door of experiences and that leads protagonist backward from learning her real experiences. Experiences she acquires are only from books, yes, it gives us knowledge about different things but can not full fill our life completely.

"Learning through suffering" is reflected in the life of protagonist Vivian Bearing. As she starts to see her life in flash back, she finds herself alone. Although being professor of Donne's Metaphysical poetry, she achieves great success in her sector, is not satisfying to her. She is searching meaning of her life. Is that life, she is living since her birth till now is meaningful? If it is meaningful, then why she is not feeling happy, as she looks back to her life. That clearly indicates she is unable to find out meaning of her existence and her being. During her time in hospital, moment when she under goes through pain, she realizes that, that life is not meaningful and now its time to find out true existence of herself. Vivian's suffering is not physical,

because if it is, she would not have discussed her feeling in hospital to find out meaning of her life. This way to find out her meaning of her life is healing her in some extent.

Carlo Jago in "Death be not Proud" points out, "Poetry probably never saved a single life. What Vivian learned, and then teaches us, is that literature can only ever teach us how to live"(22). In contrast with Carlo Jago, in the play we can not find out that Vivian gets "way of living" through understanding poetry throughout her life, if so, then she must be satisfied with her life. Getting excellence over something does not mean that one gets inspiration from same thing, but sometimes one may be in false track.

Unlike Carlo Jago, Martha Greene Eads in "Unwitting Redemption in Margaret Edson's Wit", claims that:

Vivian's sensitivity to language serves as a focus for her changing understanding of her herself and others as her condition worsens. In explaining her initial drive to learn the medical terms that describe the process she faces, Vivian thinks back to childhood, when words first became meaningful for her. (245)

This illustrates clearly that, it is not her knowledge about poetry. That teaches her to think life from new perspectives; rather it is use of language which gives a reason to find meaning of life. Viktor Frankl claims that, "man is responsible and must actualize the potential meaning of his life, I wish to stress that true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his psyche, as though it were a closed system"(133). Viktor's claim is valid in case of Vivian. Vivian, at initial stage of her treatment, her views regarding her life is different. Then she tries to understand the situation, her view started to change accordingly.

Vivian initially did not realize her potential, way that could give her eternal satisfaction. As eighty years old her professor E.M.Ashford enters into hospital, to visit Vivian, one and only visitor during her stay at hospital gives her some sorts of happiness. When Ashford takes out her nursery rhymes book that she has bought it for her grand child, she recites the rhyme *The Runaway Bunny*, Vivian get that satisfaction, which by reciting Donne's metaphysical poetry does not give her.

Once there was a little bunny who wanted to run away.

So he said to his mother," I am running away ".

" If you run away", said his mother, "I will run after you. For you are my little bunny."

"If you run after me," said little bunny, "I will become a fish in a trout stream and I will swim away from you".

"If you become a fish in a trout stream," said his mother "I will be a fisherman and I will fish for you".

"If you be a fisherman" said little bunny, "I will be a bird and fly away from you".

"If you become a bird and fly away from me". Said his mother, "I will be a tree that you come home to "(62).

Vivian finds this nursery rhyme more meaningful and worthy than that of Donne's "Death be not Proud". It gives her satisfaction and peace of mind. In the entire play only after hearing this rhyme, she sleeps peacefully, without any worries in her mind that what is happening with her. Realizing her position is great thing in life of Vivian, and this realization became possible because of the rhyme *The Runaway Bunny*.

According to Frankl:

The meaning of life always changes, but that it never ceases to be. According

to logotherapy, we can discover this meaning in life in three different ways: (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering...When we are no longer able to change situation -just think of an incurable disease such as inoperable cancer. We are challenged to change ourselves. (133-35)

Similar, is case with Vivian, she is clearly unable to change her situation. Now, when she has been isolated into hospital bed, there are no other options than changing her attitude. Probably she has never paid such attention to hear nursery rhyme, but now, silently peacefully she is listening to her professor. Probably she never listens to her mentor, who actually wants to show her right track during her collage days. But, she has built a shield to see, what other people actually want her to show. "Go enjoy with your friends ", if at that time, she had understood the meaning that her professor wanted to teach, then situation of the present days would be different. An eighty years old lady is enjoying with her grand children and Vivian is isolated in her single bed. No one is there even to take care except hospital staff.

As she loses her professional status, after being in more pain and in trouble, Vivian diversifies her way to find meaning of her life from a new prospective. She travels to her childhood, where she is studying with her father, she is reading *The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies* by Beatrix Potter. And she is searching meaning of "soporific", and her father tells her that it means "makes you sleepy". And he asked her to make a sentence on it. She makes one sentence on it. As, she understands meaning of "soporific" even in her childhood, then feels now how "I" couldn't understand meaning of my life and those words of my father. Her father's words give sense of magic at her present condition, "the illustration bore out the meaning of the word, just

as he had explained it, at the time it seemed like magic"(37). Now, as her situation has changed accordingly her perception has also changed, " so imagine that the words of John Donne first had on me: ratiocination, concatenation, coruscation, tergiversation"(37). She clearly sees difference between Donne and her father's words and now her father's words become more powerful and influencing than Donne's. Now she is affected by words like digestion, excretion, pain, fever etc.

"We must never forget that we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed"(135). Like that of Vivian, at the situation of pain and suffering, she tries her best to tackle with that situation and heads towards her mission for finding meaning of her existence. Strong, bold, tough lady now has started to think herself, "when we have come to think of as me is, in fact, just the specimen jar, just the dust jacket, just the white piece of paper that bears the little black marks"(44). Incurable disease now has given her some opportunity to change herself, to make a different person than she was previously. As a tough person she begins to think herself as a research object, we should know that her prospective is changing with the changing time. As Vivian becomes a 'body-text' for research medical science: pain and suffering gives her new vision for search of meaning of life.

This play is counter to the modern world where people turns into machine and those machines are operated again by machines. People have no time to talk with other people irony is that they are researching over those people. "How are you feeling today? I am waiting for the moment when someone asks me this question and I am dead. I'm little sorry I'll miss that"(11). This is condition of today's human, human lacks humanity in them. When Vivian is getting treatment in hospital, she is almost daily asked by doctors "how are you today?", not because they wanted to see,

how she is feeling? But it is their intension to know, how is their medicine working? It is mere question, just for completing formality. And they always get answer or we can say, Vivian's fake answer "fine".

Medical personal are using human as a research object, for experimental treatment of fatal disease like cancer. Madeleine Harmsworth states:

In the interests of accumulating data for their research, Kelekin and his eager young research, Kelekin and his eager young research assistant Jason Posner coldly and calculatedly subject Vivian to "the impossible" - eight cycles at full dose of "hex and vin"(hexamethosphacial and vinplatin) – giving her hope while knowing she is doomed. They do not even dispense their "death drugs" with grace. (257)

A person is struggling with life and death and other person are utilizing them for personal benefit as "research object". No one cares her and her feelings in the hospital except nurse Susie. Susie is one and only person, concerned about Vivian regarding her health conditions and emotions. That might be the reasons; Vivian is emotionally attached with her. Vivian likes her, she frequently calls Susie in her room for various purposes, which is a trick to bring Susie in her room and spends time with her. Other than Susie, Jason being student of Vivian, he never shows his love and affection towards her. This shows that, today's human are far away from love, emotion, humanity. Their only concern is upto "success", only success matters in their life. It is really hard in today's world to find people with love and affection. Vivian only runs after intellectual excellence throughout her life. If she has taken some time to make friends and family, then she wouldn't have been that much alone, she is now.

Despite knowing the fact that her cancer will never heal, neither she will be same again in her life but doctors are convincing her to take medicine. Susie, kind

hearted lady informs about her condition, "Well, they thought the drugs would make the tumor get smaller, and it has gotten a lot smaller. But the problem is that it started in new places too. They have learned a lot for their research"(53). According to Susie Dr. Jason and Dr. Kelkein are treating her as "research object" for their research. They cannot see the pain that she is going through. "That certainly was a maudlin display . Popsicles? "Sweetheart"? I can't believe that my life has become so...corny"(55). Vivian is actually dying because of pain and that pain can't be seen through the heart of today's human.

Result that Vivian gets in hospital is her preparation, which she has made throughout her life. As we know that, same fruit or plant will human being get which they had planted for germination? When Vivian has never planted seeds of emotions, love and humanity, than there is no chance of getting such result. Jason is as curious as her regarding academic excellence. Vivian is mentor of Jason, of literature and she can not teach her students about emotional values, than it becomes fault of her not Jason. Vivian said that, "I want to tell you how it feels. I want to explain it, to use my words. Its as it...I can't ...There aren't ...I am like a student and this is the final exam and I don't know what to put because I don't understand the question and I'm running out of time"(55).

Throughout the play Vivian re-cites Donne's metaphysical poetry, begins from "Death be no proud", from this sonnet she tries to show us that, Death is such a powerful factor, that she is not afraid of, later it becomes most frightening thing to her. Usually she challenges death and thinks, she can beat death, rather after re-citing the sonnet in her last phase in hospital, comes to realize death is differently important in human's existence. Her power to restrain against strong chemical reaction between her body and medicine makes her realize, to understand sonnet "Death be not Proud"

with new direction. Viktor Frankl mentions that, "I was struggling to find reason for my sufferings, my slow dying. In a last violent protest against the hopelessness of imminent death, I sensed my spirit piercing through enveloping gloom"(60). Similar of Frankl's experience in concentration camp, Vivian finds true meaning of Donne in "Death be not Proud". It is not human superiority to challenge death. Showing human's pride in front of death is insane of human. Initially, she thinks, she can beat death. Cancer can be healed by consuming strong dose of medicine. But, later she realizes it is her foolishness to challenge death by accepting pain.

In other word, we can say that, Vivian's struggle during course of her treatment makes her realize life and death. It is her great mistake that she does not realize meaning of existence. As situation changes, her arrogance slowly converted into realization and softness. This is possible due to experience of life, that she revisits later, her realization and analysis is because "man is capable of changing the world for the better if possible, and of changing himself for the better if necessary"(154). Vivian too tries to change world according to her, full of knowledge and everyone celebrate their sense. Later she realizes, world will not be change according to her wish, it becomes better to change herself according to world.

Realization becomes great achievement in Vivian's life. Realization comes as bi-product of her experience as, "experience teaches us to acknowledge the real"(351). Experience of Vivian's life teaches her to accept reality, rather than living in fantasy; that will provide you greater satisfaction. Her realization through experience, gives her knowledge to see the truth; sensibility is essential part in our life, we should always be ready to enjoy every moments of life in every possible way. Vivian says, "I wish I had given him an A" (27). After Jason leaves examining her, this sentence is incomplete, we cannot find what exactly, she is trying to say, but as audiences we

have to feel her feelings, it was "love", "emotion", that Jason could not transfer to everyone he treats. She realizes it was her fault, that she only provides knowledge, bookish knowledge to her students. Jason says to Susie regarding his professor, "Listen, if there is one thing we learned in Seventeenth-Century Poetry, it's that you can forget about that sentimental stuff. *Enzyme Kinetics* was more poetic than Bearing's class. Besides, you can't think about *meaning-of-life* garbage all the time or you'd go nuts"(60). These shows, her students never get poetic essence in her classes. Neither, she keeps emotions with her, nor spread among other. Now, she is feeling guilty towards her understanding of life, death and poetry. "genuine experience is experience of one's historicity"(351). Vivian's experiences that reveal her hatredness towards sensibility and love in her life. Today she is seeking same thing that she hates in entire her life and desperate to gain it from others.

Moreover, with gradual increase of pain, Vivian tries technique to relief her suffering, by re-citing Donne's sonnets and talking with Susie. As Donne's sonnets throughout her life do not give, real meaning and pleasure of her being. Therefore, it is time to choose something new from different than earlier. For that, she remembers her experience with her family i.e. father, studying tale with him. This makes her realize, sensibility is very much important in human's life. Unless, human beings will remain far from sensibility, never realize human's importance. Until, human are not connected with human how will they connect with this world. As Frank claims, "everything can be taken away from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way"(86). Vivian's everything is snatched by medical science and scientists. Her hope, courage, pride, honors everything, but one thing that they could not snatch from her was her "freedom" to see life from her own prospective.

Vivian is completely broken at one point, she says, "In isolation, I am isolated. For once I can use a term literally. This chemotherapeutic agents eradicating my cancer have also eradicated my immune system. In my present condition, every living thing is a health hazard to me..."(39). Her internal strength slowly and gradually is lowering; then she again tries to understand her situation

I am not in isolation because I have cancer, because I have a tumor the size of a grape fruit. I am in isolation because I am being treated for my cancer. My treatment imperils my health. Here lies the paradox. John Donne would revel in it. I would revel in it, he wrote a pome about it. My students would flounder in it, because paradox is too difficult to understand. Think of it as puzzle, I would tell them, an intellectual game. (40)

Vivian's paradox with her life is, she understands meaning of Donne's sonnets. It is too late for her to implement this poetry. Her arrogance does not allow her to realize it, "As logotherapy regards its assignment as that of assisting the patient to find meaning in life. In as much as logotherapy makes him aware of the hidden logos of his existence, it is an analytical process"(125). Vivian also tries to analyze her position and condition, finds out actual stand, that she should take after realization.

Circumstances are great teacher that teach human about meaning of life. Sometimes, circumstances teach human beings those things which human could never learn from any book or teacher. Vivien's disease and her stay in hospital also become such circumstance to convert her suffering into strength. "Does man have no choice of action in the face of such circumstance?"(86). When one is unable to change circumstance, then there is no choice of changing self, it is obvious that one cannot change circumstance in such critical situation. Dr. Kelkein informs Vivian, "You will be hospitalized as an in-patient for treatment each cycle. You will be on complete

intake-and-output measurement for three days after each treatment to monitor kidney function. After the initial eight cycle, you will have another battery of test"(13).

Vivian, here does not have other option except, accepting she is going to struggle with her mind and body in short with self. Now this circumstance makes her to re-visit her life and find meaning in present condition.

Subsequently, Vivian realizes her situation, therefore agrees to follow her heart, abandoning it for several years has made her cruel and rude. She clearly mentions that now she is not going to tolerate such pain anymore. When Susie asks her for more test, she says, "It should not be now. I am in the middle of – this. I have this planned for now, not ultrasound. No more tests. We've covered that"(42). She does not want her treatment to continue. Rather, it is her time to spend with self and realize, who she is and what she wants. "I do not want to go now"(42). Refusing medical treatment is one step ahead towards the path to find out meaning in her life. "Each man is questioned by life; to life he can only respond by being responsible"(131). It seems that Vivian becomes responsible towards her existence, losing intellectual pride gives her some sense that leads her towards finding out meaning.

Similarly, "The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity -even under the most difficult circumstances-to add a deeper meaning to his life"(88).

Vivian's circumstance teaches her real meaning of human life. Her entire life is full of sorrow; as she neglects sensibility. These circumstances teach her, how emotionally she is vacant. No one comes to visit her in hospital, even nurse Susie asks, whether she wants to call someone to visit her. She now wants to visit many people, but she never makes such relation with human, she can demand to visit her. Emotionally despair woman now realizes, humans are equally important as books. She finds her

existence bearing terrible pain is to make her known about emotions.

Moreover, Vivian has her family, husband, children's at home. They will wait her to see again. She would struggle hard to fight against her disease. However, there is no one waiting for her. She is not desperate to see anyone. Viktor Frankl, mentions his experience of camp, love for his wife, gives him strength to struggle with difficult circumstances. Here, he says to one of his friends, Otto while being deported to another camp as message to his wife, in case he could not survive,

Listen, Otto, if I don't get back home to my wife, and if you could see her again, then tell her that I talked of her daily, hourly. You remember, secondly, I have loved her more than anyone. Thirdly, the short time I have been married to her out weighs everything, even all we have gone through here. (76)

Frankl had such passionate love for his wife, on the contrary Vivian does not have any such relations. Her house is vacant, no one is waiting there for her. Now, this lack (love, family) becomes missing portion in her life. Here, coming at this phase of life, she cannot make such any relations that can provide her reason to live and bear unbearable pain of therapy.

Now, one chapter is completely closed in Vivian's life can possibly provide her happiness. Then, what can be another reason for gaining happiness. She can analyze Donne's poetry and understand meaning. That possibly she does not understand previously. "We must never forget that we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed "(135). Vivian too grasps her situation of suffering as an opportunity to change her hopeless situation to hopeful. Making one's situation worse, it is better to compromise with situation and move ahead. Vivian, too knows, now her health will not be normal, than she decides to surrender herself on the lap of divine power.

She recites again Donne's sonnet VI "This is my Plays Last Scene", which is actually considered as poem of "death bed". Unlike this sonnet, Vivian never considers her life is controlled by some supreme power and she is a pilgrimage towards the path of temple (possible place to find God). Rather, she always considers herself as controller of her own life. Now, when lying in death bed, feels she is completely wrong. She regrets and says, "I have always particularly liked that poem. In abstract. Now I find the image of "my minutes last point" a little too, shall we say, pointed"(43). These lines make us clear that she has followed wrong track. Now she catches right track, now she is only mile away from her destination. That destination which she never wants to be. Now she is going to same track. Vivian here accepts that, she has never understood true meaning of Donne's sonnets. She regrets if she has maintain perfect balance of sense and sensibility of sonnets, now she would have living life, full of emotional memories, people surrounding her. In hospital that she is desiring for it now.

Ultimately realizing her condition, she now wants to be far away from this pain and suffering. She realizes that there is nothing left in her life, proud scholar of Donne's sonnets also vanishes she knows that, she never internalizes Donne honestly. Neither, there are anyone waiting for her nor she wants to be with someone. It becomes her life, mere bundle of flesh and bones. Here, she does not find any reasons for bearing such terrible pain and suffering. As she clears boundaries, she finds peace and answer of many questions that was troubling her. "Knowledge is dialectical from the ground up. Only a person who has questions can have knowledge, but questions include the antithesis of yes and no, of being like this and being like that"(359). After solving several questions aroused in her mind, she realizes that, she should feel for self now. She is knowledge loaded women, her knowledge gives her knowledge about

sensibility, that she must generate at least for herself. Keeping away from such terrible pain might give some sort of love towards self.

Similarly, Vivian again recites, "And Death -Capital D-shall be no more-semicolon. Death -capital D-thou shalt die-ex-clamationpoint!"(57). Here, life and sooner her death become surprising factor to herself. Her dream was to transfer herself eternally into another world, world of peace and satisfaction. Unlike her desire, surprise happens to her that changed her destination unintentionally. "suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such meaning of a sacrifice"(135). Vivian's suffering eradicate all those mental confusions and gives clear vision, that death is not all about semicolon, rather sometimes it comes with exclamation, full of surprises.

At the end of the play Vivian is known with her condition, and expresses to her nurse, she wants to reject life supporting devices to live longer life, it has already become worthless to live in such circumstances;

Susie: You can be "full code", which means that if your heart stops, they'll call a code Blue and the code team will come and resuscitate you and take to Intensive Care Unit until you stabilize again.Or you can be "Do not Resuscitate", so if your heart stops we'll ...well, we'll just let it. You'll be "DNR" you can think about it, but I want to present both choices before Kelekianand Jason talk to you. (53-54)

After getting information, either to live by using life supporting devices or just to accept death, without any dilemma she replies to Susie, "Just let it stop"(54). Ultimately, her courage to stop, wrong with self, showers lots of emotions towards self. She knows, she is great project for doctors, but knowing importance of doctors project, refuse to be object for study, this rejection towards sense shows that, she

realizes importance of sensibility.

Similarly, her potential attitude to change critical situation to pleasant as, "avenue to meaning in life; even helpless victim of a hopeless situation, facing a fate he cannot change, may rise above himself, may grow beyond himself, and by doing so change himself. He may turn a personal tragedy into a triumph"(170). Vivian here shows her boldness to change "tragedy into triumph" by abandoning artificial life supporting devices and devoting her life on lap of nature. Human beings when think themselves above nature and keep arrogance on them, they can not find satisfaction. As they leave their pride and arrogance, ultimately satisfaction is in their heart.

However, after visit of A.M.Ashford at the end of play, provides Vivian some sorts of emotional support. She falls asleep after hearing nursery rhyme from Ashford. "Vivian is now fast asleep. E.M. slowly gets down and gather her things. She leans over and kisses her. It's time to go. And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest"(62). This kiss and rhyme is only thing that comfort Vivian. Vivian never makes beautiful memories in her life, that she can remember while lying on bed. Likewise, scholarship and articles published in reputed books and journal, becomes unable to give satisfaction. To fall asleep, she need help of her mentor and nursery rhyme, probably that gives her soul satisfaction. It is not mentioned in the play, how she feels after hearing rhyme from her professor, but we can clearly understand her feelings. She might have felt, living with her mother and listening to her laying her head on mothers lap. Similarly, her childhood has come in front of her, full of love, affection, innocence and kindness. This ultimate visualization of her childhood finally gives her meaning of life is, making beautiful memories full of emotions and spread those lovely memories to all. And people will love you, as well as your deed and respect you. Otherwise, you will even be hated by your own people, whom you are proud of. Here,

she gets true meaning of metaphysical poetry too. "In view of the possibility of finding meaning in suffering, life's meaning is an unconditional one, at least potentially. That unconditional meaning however, is parallel by the unconditional value of each and every person"(176).

Vivian by re-citing Donne's poetry, sense and sensibility are equally important in this modern world. Today's human are running after sense, people gather knowledge from every possible place. Later excessive knowledge, lack of emotional aspects, gives them dissatisfaction. From *W;T*, Edson tries to show us, humans are running after knowledge, education throughout their life, forget to live, that actually, humans should do. Always there is hustle and bustle in our life to get degree and scholarship. We never want to spend some quality time with our friends and family, if we want at that condition also, we can not manage time. So, Edson is requesting today's people to live with full of fun and pleasure.

Moreover, today's human behaviour is presented in *W;T* by Margaret Edson. Human psyche, their attitude towards other human can be easily seen through this play. As human are blaming others for their dissatisfaction and unhappiness that is completely wrong. From portrayal of professor Vivian Bearing, Edson shows human that they themselves are responsible for their unhappiness and dissatisfaction. This is result of human behaviour that they are not being able to maintain balance between sense and sensibility. Edson through this play, wants to remind people that in this modern world there is equal importance of sensibility as that of sense for ultimate satisfaction and happiness.

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