

The background of the cover is a deep purple color. It features a complex, fractal-like pattern that resembles a topographical map or a stylized landscape. The pattern consists of concentric, wavy lines and intricate, branching structures that create a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is both serene and mysterious.

An Introduction to
MEANING and
PURPOSE in
ANAL

AN INTRODUCTION TO MEANING AND PURPOSE IN ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

The question of meaning is a central one in Analytical Psychology. Human suffering can result from meaning disorders both at an individual and a cultural level, and people often fail to find meaning through religion or philosophy. How can analytical psychology help us to find individual meaning and social purpose?

An Introduction to Meaning and Purpose in Analytical Psychology is a highly original take on the fundamentalist theories of psychoanalysis, and encompasses other disciplines such as cognitive psychology, developmental theory, ecology, linguistics, literature, politics and religion. Dale Mathers presents the basic insights of analytical psychology as a set of useful

AN INTRODUCTION
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PSYCHOLOGY

Dale Mathers



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TO CAROLA

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SPECIFICALLY HUMAN MEANING

A Foreword by Polly Young-Eisendrath, Ph.D.

Your worst enemy cannot harm you
As much as your own thoughts,
Unguarded.

(The D

FOREWORD

destruction, promote personal wealth and comfort beyond any pragmatic usefulness, divorce the means from the ends in our behavior, and forget that we depend on other people and organisms for our very sustenance on a moment-to-moment basis. In other words, we can epitomize a kind of evil power and imagine that we are wholly exempt from the effects of it. We can abstract ourselves out of the immediate context for both good and ill to ourselves and others.

FOREWORD

(without any understanding of the science that backs it) by the medical and pharmaceutical industry, but it is trivialized and demeaned by popular media and professionals. This is a loss, a forgetting, of knowledge that has clear scientific underpinnings, the kind of knowledge that allows us to remember who we are.

The contemporary mythology of ‘genes and environments’ is but another human narrative of powers that we do not understand

FOREWORD

be grounded in the natural sciences, especially biology, without being reductive to those sciences of less complex events and organisms.

Dale Mathers has given us a map for just such a path in *Meaning and Purpose in Analytical Psychology*. With his extraordinary wealth of knowledge, Dale integrates the most important and helpful insights from systems theory, linguistics, semantic theory, constructivism, developmental psychology, psychodynamic psychology, psychotherapy,

PREFACE

Sharing in a person's search for meaning brings intimacy, increases mutual respect, and deepens integrity. It may help us recognise and accept the causes of suffering and wish to seek the means of their cessation. Meaning is a central concept in analytical psychology, examined in depth by Jung's close colleague Aniela Jaffe in 1970 who said any search for meaning ultimately leads into an inner realm, and becomes a mystical experience.

PREFACE

open system. Like a quantum electron—the more we define one of its properties (mass, velocity or position) the less we can define any other. This clinical text re-presents analytical psychology from the vertex of meaning. I hope you will find ‘Meaning and purpose’ are useful concepts in ordinary down-to-earth therapeutic work, in assessment, and in forming diagnostic and prescriptive tools. I have tried to apply this theoretical re-framing to what goes

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C.G.Jung (1936) *Dream symbols of the*

1

BETWEEN

In between, there are Doors.

(William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, 1977)

MEANING AND PURPOSE IN ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

make it...what can I do with it? What is the purpose of meaning? What is it for?

I remember vividly a snail I met, aged three, peering at me with its eyes on stalks. I recall my awe at being studied so closely by another living being. All beings are systems within ecosystems, opening and closing repeatedly yet 'I have seen many people

134–5) the mightiest computer in the universe, Deep Thought, labours for millennia to answer the question, ‘What is the meaning of life?’ Eventually, it says ‘42’. No-one can answer questions of ultimate meaning. As Jung’s secretary Aniela Jaffe (1970) suggested in an earlier exploration of this field, ‘meaning’ may itself be a collective myth, intrinsic to language.

reality test, to obtain collective validation...' or, simply, 'to feel *more...*'. You may or may not agree, but you're playing with an idea. As philosopher Anthony Kenny points out, what 'better' (goodness) means can vary:

The criteria for the goodness of a thing depends on the nature of the thing in

grandiose, manic—projecting our own meaning everywhere, unable to see anyone else's.

Competing theories (analytical myth-systems) describe such events. But asking 'Is depression caused by maternal

Meaning disorder

I'll introduce a new term here, *meaning disorder*. If parts

To give meaning in the system (Self-ego) involves mirroring. We learn to give meaning to the system (individual-collective) depending on what we learnt in the system (mother-infant). Approaching meaning from the system (individual-collective) uses archetypal metaphor, myth, and culture to give theoretical explanations: using the system (ego

it is not a part of the repudiated world, the not-me, that which the individual has decided to recognise (with whatever difficulty and even pain) as truly external, which is outside magical control. To control

time', play goes on hold. Making and unmaking meaning, negotiating meaning with others is Self's purpose. The purpose of play (analysis) is to be able to play (to be able to play with concepts, to learn how to symbolise). Purpose, defined by Chambers dictionary, is 'an idea or aim

(development...). Aid is a simple, closed system response, with the form: 'problem—solution'. Development is a complex, open system, with the form: 'problem, solution; problem changes, new solution ...'. Like analysis, development concerns forming positive and negative feedback loops. Analysis is not aid, it

psychology, we need to sense the meaning of meaning for Jung and Post-Jungians. For depth psychology, the search for better meaning is fundamental. This tradition began with Jung, who, quoting his friend and colleague, the American philosopher and psychologist William James, said:

MEANING AND PURPOSE IN ANAL

