

You are encouraged to read the whole book, and please make a proper citation if needed.

May, R. (1969). *Love and will*. W.W. Norton.

Eros created life on the earth, the early Greek mythology tells us. (p. 72)

Eros enters as the opposite to Thanatos, the death instinct. Eros fights for life against the death tendencies. Eros is the “uniting and binding, the building and blending, the increase of tension within us.” Eros is given a character not only greater than, but in significant ways different from, libido. (p. 86)

The daimonic is any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person. Sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power are examples. The daimonic is obviously not an entity but refers to a fundamental archetypal function of human experience – an existential reality in modern man, and, so far as we know, in all men. (p. 123)

The daimonic is not conscience; for conscience is largely a social product, related to the cultural mores and, in psychoanalysis terms, to the power of the superego. The daimonic refers to the power of nature rather than the superego, and is beyond good and evil. Nor is it man’s recall to himself, as Heidegger and, later, Fromm have argued, for its source lies in those realms where the self is rooted in natural forces which go beyond the self and are felt as the grasp of fate upon us. The daimonic arises from the ground of being, rather than the self as such.

The daimonic needs to be directed and channeled. Here is where human consciousness becomes so important. We initially experience the daimonic as a blind push. It is impersonal in the sense that it makes us nature’s tool. It pushes us toward the blind assertion of ourselves, as in rage, or toward the triumph of the species by impregnating the female, as in sex. When I am in a rage, it couldn’t matter to me less who I am or who you are; I want only to strike out and destroy you. But consciousness can integrate the daimonic, make it personal. This is the purpose of psychotherapy. (p. 126)

In its right proportion, the daimonic is the urge to reach out toward others, to increase life by way of sex, to create, to civilize; it is the joy and rapture, or the simple security of knowing that we matter, that we can affect others, can form them, can exert power which is demonstrably significant. It is a way of making certain that we are valued. (p. 146)

By intentionality, I mean the structure which gives meaning to experience. It is not to be identified with intentions, but is the dimension which underlies them; it is man’s capacity to have intentions. (p. 224)

Meaning has no meaning apart from intention. Each act of consciousness tends toward something, is a turning of the person toward something, and has within it, no matter how latent, some push toward a direction for action.

My task, so far, has been to define the concept of intentionality. I have emphasized that it contains both our knowing and our forming reality, and that these are inseparable from each other. (p. 230)