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Carl Jung

Memories, Dreams, Reflections

sidered unethical for a medical man. But I knew that for the patient's sake I had had to take this step.

His further development? Separated from his mother, his own personality was able to unfold. He made a brilliant career—in spite of, or rather just because of the strong horse pill I had given him. His wife was grateful to me, for her husband had not only overcome his alcoholism, but had also struck out on his own individual path with the greatest success.

Nevertheless, for years I had a guilty conscience about this patient because I had made out that certificate behind his back, though I was certain that only such an act could free him. And indeed, once his liberation was accomplished, the neurosis disappeared.

In my practice I was constantly impressed by the way the human psyche reacts to a crime committed unconsciously. After all, that young woman was initially not aware that she had killed her child. And yet she had fallen into a condition that appeared to be the expression of extreme consciousness of guilt.

I once had a similar case which I have never forgotten. A lady came to my office. She refused to give her name, said it did not matter, since she wished to have only the one consultation. It was apparent that she belonged to the upper levels of society. She had been a doctor, she said. What she had to communicate to me was a confession; some twenty years ago she had committed a murder out of jealousy. She had poisoned her best friend because she wanted to marry the friend's husband. She had thought that if the murder was not discovered, it would not disturb her. She wanted to marry the husband, and the simplest way was to eliminate her friend. Moral considerations were of no importance to her, she thought.

The consequences? She had in fact married the man, but he died soon afterward, relatively young. During the following years a number of strange things happened. The daughter of this marriage endeavored to get away from her as soon as she was grown up. She married young and vanished from view, drew farther and farther away, and ultimately the mother lost all contact with her.

Hi Catherine,
I finally found what you asked about.
Happy New Year. Love,
PE

Psychiatric Activities

This lady was a passionate horsewoman and owned several riding horses of which she was extremely fond. One day she discovered that the horses were beginning to grow nervous under her. Even her favorite shied and threw her. Finally she had to give up riding. Thereafter she clung to her dogs. She owned an unusually beautiful wolfhound to which she was greatly attached. As chance would have it, this very dog was stricken with paralysis. With that, her cup was full; she felt that she was morally done for. She had to confess, and for this purpose she came to me. She was a murderess, but on top of that she had also murdered herself. For one who commits such a crime destroys his own soul. The murderer has already passed sentence on himself. If someone has committed a crime and is caught, he suffers judicial punishment. If he has done it secretly, without moral consciousness of it, and remains undiscovered, the punishment can nevertheless be visited upon him, as our case shows. It comes out in the end. Sometimes it seems as if even animals and plants "know" it.

As a result of the murder, the woman was plunged into unbearable loneliness. She had even become alienated from animals. And in order to shake off this loneliness, she had made me share her knowledge. She had to have someone who was not a murderer to share the secret. She wanted to find a person who could accept her confession without prejudice, for by so doing she would achieve once more something resembling a relationship to humanity. And the person would have to be a doctor rather than a professional confessor. She would have suspected a priest of listening to her because of his office, and of not accepting the facts for their own sake but for the purpose of moral judgment. She had seen people and animals turn away from her, and had been so struck by this silent verdict that she could not have endured any further condemnation.

I never found out who she was, nor do I have any proof that her story was true. Sometimes I have asked myself what might have become of her. For that was by no means the end of her journey. Perhaps she was driven ultimately to suicide. I cannot imagine how she could have gone on living in that utter loneliness.

Carl Jung