



Would-Be Wife Killer: A Clinical Study of Primitive Mental Functions, Actualised Unconscious Fantasies, Satellite States, and Developmental Steps

Vamik D. Volkan

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The author believes that studying a therapeutic process closely from its beginning to its termination is one of the best ways to observe, learn, and teach psychoanalytic concepts. This book is unusual since it describes a man's drastic internal psychological changes over forty years. He was thirty-nine years old when he wanted to cut off his wife's head with an axe and he was hospitalized; previous to this incident he had delusions and hallucinations. He died at age eighty-two as a beloved community leader. The author provides clinical illustrations of primitive transference and countertransference manifestations. He defines "satellite states" in which an individual finds a balance between experiencing individuation and remaining dependent on the Other and "crucial juncture" experiences that are necessary to learn how to integrate self and object images and move up the developmental steps. Various concepts such as the replacement child, actualized unconscious phantasy, emotional flooding, and linking interpretation and therapeutic play are explored. This book also pays attention to cultural and religious differences in the backgrounds of two persons, the patient and the therapist, intimately working together for a long time. Therapeutic concepts described in this book and their clinical illustrations will encourage mental health professionals not to lose sight of the importance of the psychodynamic approach to individuals with psychotic personality organisation.

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