

Self-Analysis of the Personal Problem

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This tape will be called “An Analysis of the Personal Problem of Franklin Merrell-Wolff Done by Himself.” This tape is not for general usage; it is intended for professionals and such others as may be interested.¹ If this problem were only a personal problem it would be of concern only to a hired personal analyst, but there are those who view the development or processes that are currently operating in the person—in this person—as having a collective importance. This becomes, then, a matter of more than personal concern. I am here developing the material from my own perspective.

The personal problem grows out of the occasion of three events: first, the death of my first feminine associate, Sarah A. Merrell-Wolff; second, the recent death of my second feminine associate, Gertrude A. Wolff; and apparently, at least in the view of the analyst, through the activation of a major archetypal dream.

First, consider the psychical effects of the death of Sherifa as precipitated within myself. Of the discernible effects, they are four in number: first, the arousal of a death wish; second, the forced passing through an enantiodromia; third, a state of desolation; and fourth, a sense of subtle bleeding. Considering these in order, the death wish was so evident that it became necessary to take precautions to avoid becoming accident prone when driving an automobile. The recommended practice, which I followed, was to have with me some feminine entity whenever I drove to any distance. Second, the enantiodromia: this was a shift that I observed taking place in myself from a thinking orientation to a feeling orientation, which I was able later to control and reestablish the primacy of thinking. Third, the desolation—it happened a few times, but hung over me in a tenuous way—and was a problem I could not myself resolve. Fourth, a sense of subtle bleeding, not physical bleeding of the blood, but apparently the bleeding of the life-force itself, carrying the implication of ultimate death.

In connection with the last feature, I found that when I was close to a very few feminine entities, the bleeding stopped. Why it so stopped, I do not know; and I have not heard any explanation of why this should so happen. Nonetheless, it was a fact which I experienced. My impression was that this bleeding implied death—that it was a flowing away of the life-force. Elsewhere I have discussed this at more length.² It led me to consider what my future course would be. I drew the conclusion that if I was to perform any more of my work, that I would be obliged to find an associate—a feminine associate—who had the power in herself to stop this bleeding. The stopping of the bleeding was not achieved by any conscious act of the feminine entities who affected the

¹ Editor’s Note: The title of this recording has been shortened, and the Fellowship assumes that it will be read only by “others as may be interested.”

² See the audio recordings, “Memorial Service for Gertrude” and “Running Commentary Following Gertrude’s Death,” part 8.

stoppage; [rather,] it seems to have been simply something that was in the constitution of the individual woman and that the process of stopping the bleeding was entirely unconscious and automatic. It resulted in my search for a companion who would go with me. And the conditions set: were that she would be available; that she was willing to go with me and preferably desired to go with me; and third, and most important, [that she] had the quality or whatever it was that would stop the bleeding. This led to Gertrude, ultimately, and resulted in a marriage with her. She was uncommitted, she was entirely willing to go with me, and had an effective action upon the bleeding. And furthermore, the tendency towards desolation was erased and so was the tendency towards death. The enantiodromia, I handled myself.

The association with Gertrude was a happy, frictionless, and productive life extending over approximately nineteen years. Then, when she departed this plane on the twenty-eighth of May 1978, a condition was precipitated in me consisting of the following three factors: first, a reactivation of the feeling of desolation—in stronger form than it was before; second, a stronger wish for death; and third, a stronger enantiodromia tending to shift me from orientation to thought to an orientation to feeling. [T]he activation of the death wish [was] in stronger form than in the case of Sherifa.

The bleeding did not recur and thus seems to have been cured. The reactivation of the enantiodromia was stronger and I have, so far, not been able to direct it successfully. I seem to have gone through a shift from a philosophic orientation to one that is more dramatic and storytelling in type. The reactivation of the death wish is definitely stronger and is a primary problem at this present time. From my analysis, the death wish is activated largely by the sense of desolation. The control of it would seem to lie in the control of, or the elimination of, the sense of desolation.

The third [event] was the activation of a major archetypal dream which had been dreamed about fifty years previously. It seemed that the locked-in condition between myself and Gertrude was preventing its activation, and it was suggested by the analyst that she was withdrawn for the very purpose of precipitating that activation. The dream indicated that I had so far focused upon intellectual activity that it had drained the anima principle in my psychological constitution to the point where she was virtually exhausted. Whether this dream has, in fact, been activated—the evidence is in the strong enantiodromia—so that feeling is clearly a stronger force in my psychological constitution than it had been, and I found myself over the months that have followed until recently, virtually unable to tap the resources that had been my own previously. The process was a rather severe one. In fact, I seem to face the psychological effects due to the two events of the withdrawal of Gertrude, with its depression, and the activation of dream process.

Around the twentieth of July, this seemed to produce a condition involving hyper-breathing, which I was unable to bring under effective control and led to the entering of the emergency room of a hospital where the condition was diagnosed as heart attack, and was ultimately identified as a major heart attack. The heart attack was accompanied by a reduction in the psychical stress in which I had been living, and thus suggests that it was

due to a precipitation of the psychical condition into a physical condition. The result is now, that I am under treatment as a heart case.

Meanwhile, to complicate the situation, my vision had become very poor. It was poor by reason of a cataract. A few years ago, an operation for cataract had been performed on the left eye with negative results; the eye being, today, in worse condition than if the operation had not been performed. The right eye, meanwhile, had become so covered with cataract that I had to have someone with me if I attempted to move on the sidewalks of town. Someone had to tell me when [it] would [be] necessary to step up on the curb and I could not safely cross a street unless someone was with me. As I'd look down the street, it was as though a kind of veil was drawn over space. I would see no car beyond a limited distance, and then suddenly out of that veiled space a car would appear—too near to be safe if I were crossing the street. This indicated that if I was to have any continuation of life, an operation on the right eye was indicated. This operation took place on the fifth of October last. It, at the present time, has resulted in sufficient sight so that I am able to see curbs and to see cars at a sufficient distance so that it would be possible to cross the street without anyone accompanying me. [The] indications are that the vision will be sufficiently strong so that reading of ordinary print will again become possible. I have attained a 20/60, after correction, at the present time. Whether there is more development to better sight remains to be determined and that is to be determined tomorrow.

The total effect with the eye problem, led to considerable accentuation of depression. The improved sight has alleviated, but not eliminated, that depression. I had been able, by effort of will, to draw back some of the resources that I formerly had. I've been able to reduce, to a degree, the tendency towards the loss of recent memory that is characteristic of old age; and I have reached to a point where now I can—with difficulty, even without the eye correction, but by the use of a magnifying glass—write out checks [and] make entries in books; and the probability is that after the eye correction I will be fully able to handle books again and the checkbook.

I have been most fortunate in having about me during this difficult time, competent help in handling the mundane problems. There have been here both Karen Bretz and Jim; but I must plan for the day when one or the other of these may not be able to be here, or perhaps even both may not. And what will be the result of complete solitude? I can manage to recover some of my capacities, but I doubt I'd be able to handle the problem of preparation of food. There has recently been a period when I was here all alone. The tendency under those conditions is for the feeling of desolation combined with the death wish [becoming] stronger.

The archetypal dream was interpreted by Robert Johnson (a trained Jungian analyst) and later, also, by Dr. Brugh Joy. In Dr. Johnson's interpretation, he stated that the situation produced by Gertrude's death and the activation of the dream, which was regarded as being activated at this time. The result was to place me in a crisis [where] there were three alternative courses of action which I could take and these were: first, to die, which if not accomplished by the cooperation of nature would imply suicide in some form; second, to find a third companion; and third, to achieve a very rare form of

enlightenment—rare, anywheres in the world, and doubly rare in the West. I have studied these three offered alternatives [and] have definitely rejected suicide, thus leaving but two alternatives. As to the finding of a third companion, the problem is difficult. As in the case after Sherifa's death, any such individual would have to meet certain conditions. She would have to be one that could effect a resolution of the desolation or depression and the tendency to suicide that seems to lie in me as derived from past lives. She would have to be available, and she would have to be entirely willing and such that a rapport would be possible, both on her part with respect to me and on my part with respect to her.

My study of this problem has led me to the conclusion that it is very unlikely that there ever would be found any one feminine entity who could meet all of the conditions—which, incidentally, would imperatively require orientation to the work in which I am engaged. As a man, I have less to offer than I did in 1959 when I was seventy-two, but I'm now ninety-one, [and] becoming less able through the action of age. Meeting of all of the conditions renders it very improbable that any one feminine entity would arise or that would meet all of these conditions. There are feminine entities that do have the power to effect a control or a wiping out of the tendency towards desolation and the death wish, but I've found no one so far that could meet all the conditions. When I was over in Phoenix, among those who were associated with my work, I found four individuals who, on a first contact seemed to have the power to wipe away the desolation and the tendency toward suicide, but none of them met the other conditions: either they were not willing or otherwise committed. One, in fact, was willing, but had [a] commitment to a large family which I am not financially able to support. The one who most nearly met the conditions was rather too young and incapable in the field of cooking, which would be a necessity of the life up here. Therefore, none would qualify in all respects.

During last July, one of the Brothers who heard the delineation of the dream—and Robert Johnson's interpretation—did enter the picture. He disregarded entirely the alternative of voluntary death and said, concerning the rare enlightenment, that it would cause my death in a short while. But somehow he set up a re-correlation with Gertrude and this is what I, by all means, prefer. But there was a difficulty. It seems she cannot go so deep in sleep as I do, with the result that with the first sleep that I had, the correlation was broken, or at least weakened. However, by working upon it, I have in a measure reestablished it. This correlation is something that I sense in the region of *anahata* and *manipura* and its effect upon me is something like a mini-*ananda*; and it leaves me in a sense of being in control of myself and considerably more contented. Prior to this, I showed the symptoms of anima problems. I tended involuntarily, almost, to reach out for feminine support. But since this relationship was established, that seems to be, in some sense, a part of the presence of Gertrude; I have not tended to reach out for that feminine support. And I have tended again to prefer the company of men as it used to be when I was associated with Gertrude and with Sherifa, implying, thereby, that it does produce effects, whatever the reality of the situation may be. This re-correlation with Gertrude is that which I most prefer. I do not wish or in any way desire that the correlation between us should ever be severed; and this is the best resolution so far as I can see. But there is a difficulty. It is tenuous, in a measure, and it takes work on my part to maintain it. I have

also heard that Gertrude is moving deeper within toward a *devachanic* state of consciousness and that she may even be in a *devachanic* state of consciousness, which imposes upon me the effort to achieve something of a *devachanic* state to maintain communication. So the problem becomes more difficult; however, this relationship, though it is not as complete or effective as the relationship during her life, does, nonetheless, seem to be a real help and may be sufficient to prevent some serious mistake on my part, due to a sense of desperation.

On the seventeenth, or yesterday, I saw the optometrist again. He took measurements for eye glasses. The reading was still 20/60 with possibly a very slight improvement, in that he said I would now be able to read—at a point—letters smaller than newspaper type, a slight improvement. But 20/60 is not sufficient to secure a driver's license. He said that a restricted license could be secured; I was not able to verify that later. This then leaves me in a questionable position—dependent upon help, which may not remain—and acts as an additional disappointment.

A question that has troubled me is: Is one justified in receiving vital supportive energy from a feminine entity that renders his work possible? The answer that came to me was this: that if it is freely offered by the feminine donor who also believes in that work, then it may be accepted without guilt. Then another question: Does this drain the feminine donor? And the answer that came to me was this: the feminine side is stronger in the vital energy than is the masculine side. This is a provision of nature in the general process whereby the feminine side has to supply the life of the child she bears and later feeds, and, for that end, is supplied with greater vital energy than the masculine side; and then, if she is also a virgin, this energy has not been tapped and may even be a burden for her and it can be an opportunity to fulfill herself. I don't know whether this is mere self-justification, but [these were] the answers that came to me.

During the period from November 9 to November 11 inclusive, I have had extended discussion on a number of topics with Dr. Brugh Joy. One of the topics raised was the function of the *anahata chakra*. This he affirms is the *chakra* of impersonal love, and a love which is unconditional, that it is an expression of the effective principle that disregards the merits of the object—[it] would be extended as truly to Hitler as to the Christ, and, I might add, Joseph Stalin as well as to the Buddha. In other words, it is an expression of the principle of love that is quite impersonal, and it operates independent of the merit of the object. This is so different from the human quality of love that I would suggest that it should have a different name to differentiate it. And for that, I would give the name *universal benevolence*. As described by Dr. Joy, it operates like a principle of radiation just as the sun radiates and shines upon the just and the unjust equally, or the force of gravity draws to the earth also the just and the unjust equally. The rain also falls upon those who receive it, without regard to their merit or desserts. Thus, it is like a force in nature and no doubt exists. I have evidence that it does: at the time of the Realization in 1936, I felt this force of great benevolence spreading everywhere. Thus, I'd say it is a force of nature which operates through human—and probably other than human—instruments. But what I would suggest is that it does not fill the same office as human love and does not replace the latter.

Human love is an affection between two individuals, or more than two, in which the particular individuals are an important factor in the relationship. The object, in this case, is especially valued. And this serves an office, I suggest, which the universal benevolence cannot serve—because it gives particular value to the individual who is the object of the affection, and it may be grounded in something that belongs to other lives or to the presence of complimentary qualities in two individuals. I affirm that the latter serves a valid office and is not necessarily incompatible with the coexistence of the universal benevolence. As evidence of this, I think we may say that of all the entities known to us, the one who most completely carries the quality of universal benevolence would be the Blessed One, or Gautama Buddha, but nonetheless he had a best beloved disciple, namely, Ananda—and revealed thereby that he was not a stranger to personal affection. The same was true of Shankara, whose best beloved disciple was Padmapada; and also was true of Christ, whose best beloved disciple was St. John. I insist that the orientation to the concrete particular in the office of affection serves a valid and continuing place.

I would say that the emphasis upon the collectivity can be carried too far. In connection with this subject, I'm reminded of something said by Sri Aurobindo. Speaking of the past history of man, he noted this fact: that the orientation in human society has oscillated between an emphasis on the collectivity and an emphasis upon the individual. He affirms that both of these emphases have a certain validity, but the neglect of the individual can be the most serious, for it is only through the individual that that which he calls the Divine speaks to humanity—not through the collectivity—and to suppress or repress the individual too far would be equivalent to cutting off the contact with that which he calls the Divine.

There is an interesting statistic that Dr. Joy brought up in the discussion, and that is that it has been found by statistical studies that the expectancy of widowers, or men who lost their wives, is only two years, while the expectancy of women who have lost their husbands seems to be little, if any, affected. This suggests a fundamental difference between the two sexes: that, in fact, women, in addition to being endowed with a greater vitality than men, also are, on average, more differentiated in the field of feeling, while the men are more differentiated in the field of thinking. This implies that in this respect women are stronger than men; and it also implies that the basic problem of a man who has lost his wife involves the continuation of life more deeply.

I woke up yesterday morning with the feeling that, in the absence of Gertrude, I was less guarded against the influence of determinants that operate beneath the belt of intellect. This implies that I have to guard against influences that might become determinants in decision that have not been truly evaluated. I seem to be strong and free from adverse invasion when in this close association; and, I also feel that now I must more completely guard myself against such invasion. In other words, I am more vulnerable.

I do not share Dr. Brugh Joy's pejorative attitude towards judgment. Judgment is an essential part of discrimination and for Shankara discrimination is the crest jewel; and I think as Shankara thought with respect to this subject matter.