

# Running Commentary Following Gertrude's Death

## Part 26 of 53

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The thought has come to me that it might be well to make an inventory of how things now stand within me with respect to the passing of Gertrude. But before doing so, I shall report two incidents that seem to have particular significance.

First, on the night preceding the 5th of August, or the Sunday before Convention, I woke up with a sense of an itching sensation. This began to spread and to grow in intensity. It spread from the top of the head on down through the body and caused me to scratch vigorously. By the time it had reached the knees, I recognized it as similar to an experience I had had in 1919 when I had been stung by a bee and had the experience of formic acid poisoning—intense itching reaching over all the body and the rising of hives. The treatment at that time consisted of lying in as warm water as I could stand for a protracted time. This worked and later I found that this is a recommended treatment in the books upon bee culture. Recognizing the similarity, it dawned upon me that it was probably another case of formic acid poisoning, and I proceeded to employ the same treatment. I immersed the body in the bathtub of water as warm as I could stand and lay there. It quieted the itching sensation. When it had been reduced to reasonable proportions, I got out of the bathtub. But this was a difficult thing for me to do. I managed, however, to get out. Then the next thing I remember was waking up lying upon the bathroom floor with my head resting against the side of the tub. My first impression was that I had fallen asleep, but later reflection indicated that I had indeed fainted. The quality of feeling when coming out of the faint was one of a better and nicer sort. I returned to bed wet and managed to get up in the morning, but I found myself very weak. As it was the day of meeting, namely, Sunday, I wondered if I would be able to carry through, for after breakfast I had to lie down.

Karen had arrived during the night and John went down and brought her up. She took over in a competent way and ordered me back to bed—something that I found quite relieving, as I felt too weak to carry the burden of decision. I recovered reasonably well within the next two days, but a little later, I had a repetition of the experience, an itching starting on the end of the third finger of the right hand. In that case, I got up immediately, held the hand in hot water within the bowl; that handled that problem.

What was this? There do exist in this area an insect known as a kissing bug which is said to inject formic acid. I found none in the bed, but some years previously Gertrude and I had found one in the bed, and as the symptoms followed the line of formic acid poisoning, the assumption is that I was bitten by a kissing bug, and was so bitten twice. Now, this might be merely an accidental circumstance, but it happened at a time that could have rendered it impossible for me to function at the Convention which was due the next Sunday, August the 12th. No doubt, the tapes being prepared could have been given, but I would not have been in a condition to lead the meeting and the discussion

which was fairly extensive during the two days of Convention. Actually, three hours of such discussion was recorded.

Was this simply an accident or was it an attack from the hostile side? It so happened that Karen had a deck of Tarot cards and had some instruction in the interpretation of them. We took the cards and I shuffled them seven times and cut them, putting the question, was this purely an accident or was it an action from a hostile entity? The first card up was the card of the devil, indicating that it was an action of an entity hostile to the activity in which I was engaged. The Convention came through beautifully. I had excellent support throughout that period.

Now, the second incident happened on the night of the 17th, between the 17th and 18th of August. During the night, I had the experience reported earlier in which I saw the anima. Now, more recently, on the night following the 18th of September when John and I were on the brief trip which was a duplication of a trip requested by Gertrude in 1977—we were at Meadowcliff Motel, north of Walker, a place where Gertrude and I had stopped several times and were very fond of this motel—I had a sense of her being with us at that time with more than usual strength. I had drunk two cups of coffee at the evening meal, a practice that is rather unwise; as a result, I slept very little that night and while awake, I had an experience which I called an “inverse wink.” The meaning is: ordinarily when one blinks or winks the eyes, he has a moment of non-vision; this was called inverse because the wink was a moment of vision. Remember, I was awake in the ordinary sense, but in some other sense of consciousness, I saw Gertrude in her present appearance, apparently, and she looked very well and the experience was a boon to me. This may have been very well a glimpse in terms of clairvoyant vision.

In the interpretation of the Mephisto dreams that were given by Robert Johnson and by Dr. Brugh Joy, there are certain implications which I find questionable. These implications were not brought out explicitly by either of these interpreters, but logic forces me to conclude that they are involved. This is the implication I have in mind: that the attempt to achieve pure and clear thought undistorted by the action of feeling in the ordinary sense, or in the extreme sense of affect, is essentially evil. I do not find that it is valid to affect the conclusion derived from adding 2 and 2 and deriving 4 and only 4, is in any sense wrong because it in some way affects feeling value. Therefore, I shall make something of a review of the problem presented here.

It was held by both interpreters that Gertrude was deliberately removed from the scene in order to effect the activation of the “great dream.” My own impression had been, from way back in 1936, that the breakthrough in 1936 could not have happened if the problem presented by the dreams had not then been essentially handled; that the fact of this Realization meant that the ground had been essentially cleared from the Mephisto element. This was disputed by both interpreters who viewed the action of the dream as being essentially current, namely, from the period of the end of May 1978 to the present time. I shall, therefore, review the picture from a different angle.

The death of Gertrude may have been purely an accident, an unfortunate accident, or it may have been something engineered by a hidden power. If engineered by a hidden power, then it could have been so done by a power that was essentially benevolent in its attitude in seeking that a correction of something wrong should be

established; and this was the view taken by the interpreters. But again, it could have been the action of a hostile power that was definitely an enemy of the work in which I was engaged. If it was the first case, then it is simply an unfortunate and unhappy accident that was not related to the work. But in as much as the removal of Gertrude affected my own work very greatly and essentially adversely, I think that it is highly probable that the removal was indeed intentional, as suggested by both interpreters. Therefore the question is: was the removal done in the spirit of something favorable to a larger and better outcome or was it simply destructive as the action of a power hostile to the work in which I and Gertrude had been engaged?

I have not found it entirely satisfactory to think that the effort to achieve clarity and purity in thought is essentially evil, and that is an implication in this line of interpretation. I, therefore, have studied the remaining alternative: that Gertrude was withdrawn by a power hostile to the work in which we had been engaged because for some reason it was easier to cause her withdrawal than to cause my own. I was unable to produce in the terms that I had formerly produced after her withdrawal until the event of March 9th and 10th 1979. It therefore had an effect that was negative with respect to my production, or rather our production, since without the support of Gertrude I could not have reestablished the capacity to produce that I did after the death of Sherifa. In this case, it would be a tribute to the work that we were doing in that it attracted the attention of the hostile power.

I one time said to Senior that the attention of the hostile power is really a kind of compliment, though done in a painful way, for it implies that the work is of sufficient importance to be opposed. He said that is true, but it is a kind of compliment that all of us would gladly forego; and that is no doubt the case. Now, the action of what seemed to be formic acid poisoning tended to be destructive to the work, and the action in the withdrawal of Gertrude has also tended to be destructive with respect to the work, and it leads me to entertain very seriously the idea that the withdrawal was not benevolent, but actually engineered by a hostile power.