

Running Commentary Following Gertrude's Death

Part 40 of 53

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I thought I might say something about the difference between my experience of the relationship with Gertrude as contrasted with the present experience with her absent from outer association with me. It was an experience of what I have reason to believe was a rare harmony. I cannot remember even the slightest feeling of irritation in what was a close relationship. Yet in the history of relationships, irritation at times in the meeting of two personalities is the rule. But I cannot recall ever experiencing even the slightest irritation. Nor did I have evidence that she felt things otherwise. Of course, she herself would have to speak upon this matter to be certain; but if she felt irritated at any time, I would be likely to pick it up, and I found nothing of that sort. It was an interrelationship apparently of exceptional harmony.

Now, during this period I produced on tape a good deal—perhaps something like half a million words. The setting was that of a happy expansiveness, a certain feeling of richness on the side of the feeling nature. Since then, since her departure, I have felt myself move into a feeling state that might be called contractive. In this state there is a great deal of depression in terms of the feeling side; yet, nonetheless, I have done some creative production. When I do create, I am not aware of the general depressed condition of the feelings that occur most of the time, but at such times I am out of that state. You might call one state expansive and happy and the other contractive and more or less stern. In the one case I created with a sense of happiness and richness in the feeling nature; in the second case I produce with a background of feeling as contractive and depressing. There is, then, the question: is the mental process—the intellective, judgmental process by which one works out a statement—affected by these different feeling states? Someone other than myself will ultimately have to answer this question, but so far as I can determine, the thinking seems to be independent of the quality of feeling in which I generally am functioning. When I create intellectually, I am apparently above the feeling state and lifted out of it, and it may be that I have succeeded in keeping the quality of the thought unaffected. I hope so. But it is not for me, ultimately, to determine that. That will have to be determined by someone else.

¹ Wolff evidently meant to say September 25, 1981.