

Autobiographical Material: The Feminine Side of My Experience (Part 2)

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May 21, 1982¹

This tape will be a continuation with respect to the material contained in the second part of the last tape.

I, now, was alone, so far as my wife was concerned. Mary Miller, from Chicago, who had been with us to help in this hour, was still with us. I had the practical nurse remain over for a couple of days. Now I found myself at last alone, and as I said before, I only wished that I also could withdraw. But such was not to be, and there was work to be done.

In order to handle the costs of the final illness, I had acquired, first, one apartment house which paid substantially; but it was not enough, and so I had acquired a second one, and it required a good deal of attention, repairs and the like, so that at this time it was not yet of much help, though it became so later. We had our private residence located a short distance from the sea in a young avocado orchard. We had lawn and flowers about the place. It had been a satisfactory home, but I now felt alone. Nonetheless, there were problems. There was work that had to be done, and I dealt with this work. It kept my attention on outer affairs, and that was a blessing.

Now, the student who was with us, the one that came from Chicago, removed all the clothing of Sherifa. Apparently, this is a practice recommended by psychologists. But I found it increased the bleakness of my experience. There were times when I could scarcely endure it. I question very much this policy. I have done otherwise in the case of Gertrude. Her closet is as she last left it with only her robe withdrawn, which went with her body to final cremation. I find that there is health in looking now and then in the arrangement she had made. It makes her seem not quite so far away. But the experience when they withdrew the items especially connected with Sherifa was one of monumental bleakness. How I handled those early days, I do not fully remember. There was work which had to be done. I took care of the orchard. I took care of the apartment houses and handled the necessary problems. They diverted attention, and to that extent were a help.

But there was a problem. Sometime before, the one I spoke of as Herman Graves who had become a friend of the family and who had some degree of clairvoyance and particularly a capacity for astral travel, on one occasion he had seen me supporting Sherifa, and he spoke to me later concerning it. He told me I was keeping her alive when she wanted to pass in. I put the matter up to her and I asked her if she wanted to stay here longer, and she said yes she did. And so I felt that I could only follow her wishes and do what I could to sustain her. Ultimately, with the threat of gangrene and the weakening of a heart that had been overloaded, she had finally passed away. And then something happened which I have not yet had adequately explained. I began to feel as though I was bleeding. There was no bleeding of blood. It was just a

¹ Wolff clearly meant to say "May 21, 1982."

feeling of subtle bleeding, as though life-force were flowing away from me. Herman Graves had said that I had reinforced Sherifa and was maintaining her life. It may be so. I did not know that there was the possibility of something like a direct transfusion of life itself, of that which the Orientals call *prana*, but it did seem that such might indeed be the case. With the death of Sherifa, I found myself enduring the sensation of bleeding in a subtle way. I also found that when I was near to certain women, only a minority of those whom I contacted, that the bleeding stopped. I do not understand this. I have not yet found any individual who has given me an adequate explanation, and I very much wish to find that adequate explanation.

Time went on. I handled the problems of a material sort. I had good relations at my bank, for the manager of it had been born in San Fernando many years before when I was still a resident there, and he was a real help to me in this hour of special need. I am grateful to him. But the sense of bleeding remained.

As time went on, I cleaned up the problems. I felt that my wish for death would make me accident prone in driving the car. I spoke to our doctor and he confirmed that. Herman Graves recommended that whenever I drove any distance that I should take with me some woman, the idea being that my protective sense toward her would annul the tendency to become accident prone. On one occasion I took my sister, who at that time lived in the vicinity of Santa Barbara, up to Carmel where she wanted to visit a friend. I came back alone. At one time I found myself speeding, which was not normal to me at all. I also saw in the rearview mirror a police car far back. So I came to my senses and slowly reduced my speed, and was quite legal when he caught up with me. So thereafter when I needed to go to a distance, as sometimes I had to go, for instance, to Lone Pine, for we had property up there, I always took some woman with me and there was no tendency to take improper chances. It was the correct formula.

But the bleeding continued. No one seemed to understand it. No one has yet explained it to me. What it seems to have been was a direct flow of life-force or *prana* away from me, that it had been sent to Sherifa and may indeed have maintained her alive beyond the point which she otherwise would have lived to be, for our physician had said that there were many impossibilities in this case. Apparently, according to the experience of the medicine community, she should not have lived as long as she did.

Sherifa passed in on February 23 at the age of eighty-three. I became seventy-one that year, or rather seventy-two. I noted the fact that if this bleeding continued it probably meant death for me, for it seemed to be the bleeding away of life itself. So I put to myself the question, shall I let myself pass in and do nothing more about this circumstance or shall I try to produce further work? It seemed that I should try to do more. If, then, I was to do more, it seemed that I must find another feminine companion who had the power to stop the bleeding. I even talked to this matter with our friend Herman Graves. He actually brought out a candidate who happened to belong to a very peculiar religious group. I gave her a ride in our car to become acquainted with her, and let her drive it. It was a peculiar group that required all the members to go barefooted. I went over to become acquainted with them, but I found them pretty strange. I had my own orientation, which was based upon the work of those who produced *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*. I found that these two lines of interest were incompatible, and though this young woman, when close to me, stopped the bleeding, there was too much of a religious difference for us to seek a combination. No one else appeared while

I still remained here in the west. There were, however, some unattached feminine students connected with our work in Chicago, so I finally decided to make a trip to Chicago to see if I could possibly find some companion there who had the power to stop the bleeding, and who would thereby render it possible for me to continue with the work.

As I recall it, it was in July that Mary Miller and I left Santa Barbara on the way to Chicago. We took a route which led through the southern portion of Wyoming and from there on eastward. Mary Miller's home had been well north on the North Side of Chicago. We went to her house and I was invited to stay there as a guest while remaining in Chicago. That evening Eugene Sedwick, one of our most faithful members from the very founding of the group, brought to Mary Miller's home three young women—young from my point of view, for they were in the forties. One was married; she therefore was not available. But when I received the impact of the three, the action on the bleeding was very strong indeed. I knew that here there were three who had the capacity which was required. I spoke to the other two. The first one I spoke to had a commitment which rendered her unavailable, and then I went over to the dwelling place of Gertrude. She lived in an old McCormick mansion on the Near North Side in Chicago. She was on the second floor and had the front apartment. These were noble buildings of an earlier day that had been turned over to apartment use. The materials in them were definitely of a superior sort. I went over in a taxicab, having arranged for a call upon Gertrude. I presented to her the problem. Her instant answer was yes. But I said to her, I want you to know that you have not made a mistake in choosing to dwell with me. So I suggest come out with me for a month to live where I live and find out how you feel at the end of the month. She agreed, though she didn't seem to think it was necessary.

And so in due course, with Mary Miller, and Gertrude, and I started west from Chicago. We took a northern route—the only time I have ever done so—that led us through South Dakota where we saw the magnificent mountain-large monuments that had been carved there. We crossed over northern Wyoming, and we spent a night in the southern portion of Montana. Then we entered Yellowstone Park by the northeast entrance which carries one up to 11,000 feet before he descends to the floor of the park. It was a delightful experience. We saw the bears that were posing for pictures, and Gertrude was delighted. She had with her a Bell and Howell camera and a limited amount of film, but she took these pictures. And then we went south and crossed over to the west; and there we went to a place where there was an early teacher of hers who had taught her on the piano when she was a very little girl. From there we took in the Crater Lake and had enjoyment of that place—one of the three most delightful parks in the whole federal park system. From then we went on home by routes which I no longer remember, for it is more or less a way often traveled by us in later days, and she dwelt with us at Santa Barbara.

She and Mary Miller and I remained there. I sought to make her acquainted with me, and I with her. Very quickly, I had no doubts in my own mind about her qualifications. She'd stopped the bleeding completely. She was devoted to the work. She had superior musical talent, and indeed was professional in the field. The month was finished. She decided she wanted to stay with me and had not hesitated during that whole time in her decision. So then I arranged for a marriage service: first, a spiritual one which I composed myself to be given before the students and only before them; and then we

went to Ajo where Sherifa's son and his wife and children were living. He was functioning as general superintendent at the time, and we were guests in a general superintendent's house. We arranged for the legal marriage here. We had this done by a Justice of the Peace. The religious part, I had provided while still back in Santa Barbara. This was the portion that served the demands of Caesar. I remembered the old saying, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but render unto to God the things that are God's."² And we were duly married both ways.

Gertrude and I, now duly married, left the residence of Jim and Helen in Ajo the next day. As it was a late start, we drove only as far as Yuma, Arizona, that day and there we acquired a motel as man and wife for the first time, and I shall never forget this night. Gertrude once cried out and said she had seen me falling from some high structure, but that was all that was involved. We continued north and, as I remember, stopped once more on the way to Santa Barbara, ultimately arriving on the third day, and then began our life together.

Now seems to be an appropriate time to deal with the nature, explain the nature of my relationship both with Sherifa and with Gertrude. It was not a relationship in either case that was oriented to the usual biological objectives. They were both relationships connected with the work. While with Sherifa, I had produced many lectures, perhaps a thousand or so, given in various towns such as Chicago, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Louisville, Des Moines, Denver, Los Angeles, and in other places. Perhaps in all, I have given a thousand lectures, have stood a thousand times upon the platform. And also during this time, I wrote certain material—two brief brochures, to begin with: one on re-embodiment³ and one on yoga.⁴ And so it was until the breakthrough on August 7, 1936. But this supreme event I am not going to delineate at this time. It was the most important event in all my life and probably in many lives in addition. But that we will handle at another time.

The purpose of the relationship in this case between man and woman was not the raising of biological children. It was a combination for the work. And I have a thought that came to me some months ago that may have valid bearing upon this. In general, the right side of a man is called the masculine side and the left side feminine, but the nerves cross in the neck so that the right side of the body is controlled by the left side of the brain and vice versa. So the left side of the brain is masculine while the right is feminine. Now, this suggested a thought to me that it seems may have substantial validity, and that is that the essential relationship between man and woman is reversed on the level of the head. On the level of the body, the male is the impregnator and the woman bears the child. On the level of the head, the woman becomes the impregnator and the children born are idea children—thoughts, formulations of a mental sort. It may be in many fields, but it would imply, for instance, that the relationship between Napoleon and Josephine was actually of major importance in European history. I throw this out as a thought. I do not insist upon its acceptance, but it seems to me to explain a good deal.

² Luke 20:24-25.

³ Yogagnani, *Re-Embodiment, or Human Incarnations* (Los Angeles: Merrell-Wolff Publishing Co., 1930).

⁴ Yogagnani, *Yoga: Its Problems, Its Purpose, Its Technique* (Los Angeles: Merrell-Wolff Publishing Co., 1930).

May 26, 1982

This is Wednesday, the 26th of May 1982. It's only four days until we have the anniversary of Gertrude's birthday, which was the 30th of May. It also is the date on which the medical people tabulated her departure, though I lost contact with her on the 28th of May, 1978. The last word I heard uttered by her was as she lay on a hospital bed suffering from apparently bleeding that day—deadly serious for me.

But, when we arrived at Santa Barbara after our marriage at Ajo and our first marriage sometime before, but also at Santa Barbara, when we arrived there, we took up our married life. Gertrude and I occupied the room which had been occupied by Sherifa and myself. We had two individual beds, and so for a time we slept apart; though later we slept together, and that had a great deal to do with the reinforcement that made the work possible. I was now seventy-two and she was forty-eight. Strangely, I married Gertrude at about the age that I married Sherifa. Sherifa was forty-four, but in those days I was thirty-three. Now I got married to Gertrude when she was forty-eight and I was seventy-two—two totally different experiences. And I can say concerning this relationship with Gertrude that it was utterly frictionless. There was not to my knowledge one moment of difficulty in the relationship. Gertrude would have to speak for herself in this, but I would not have believed that any human relationship could have been so frictionless before I had this experience. There was no difference of essential temperament. In fact, so far as racial background is concerned, we seemed to have had a very similar racial mixture. She was a Gemini and I was a Cancer. In the case of Sherifa, she was about 180 degrees from me. She was a Capricorn. And this was something that was intended. Sherifa and I were co-gurus with respect to the work and the students that we had. Gertrude was not a co-guru. She was the *chela* closest to me and the one most loved by me. It changes the relationship. Dr. Brugh Joy, who has considerable clairvoyant capacity, in his evaluation of Gertrude in her relationship to me, said that she gave me total devotion. That could well have been the case, for the relationship, as I knew it, was utterly without any friction. I had fully expected to make accommodation to adjust myself to another personality. There was no such accommodation required. Everything moved smoothly, frictionlessly, and with growing happiness. To begin with I simply liked her. I knew her to be one of our students, a faithful one, and a serious one. I knew that she was a person of musical ability and she had contributed to the work of her talent. The result is that if I would ever speak of a relationship between man and woman that was superb, frictionless all the way, such was the relationship that grew up between Gertrude and myself. In the beginning I merely liked her. In the end, I profoundly loved her.

In our working together, it was never a matter of collaboration in the production of a lecture. I was adequately qualified to handle the intellectual problem, and I always did so; but she gave me the energetic backup that enabled me to produce up to recent days, when she departed from me. I did not produce typewritten material during the period with Gertrude. At this time the machines that record the voice had been developed to an effective degree and I employed that medium. I did not anymore lecture wholly before an audience. I produced in my study upon the recording machine. And in the time that I worked with Gertrude, I estimate that I put forth something like half a million words on tape in the form of various lectures. These are most frequently single hour discussions; in some cases a series of discussions on certain subjects. This work was not a systematic development like my published philosophy. It was more like a production of a

series of essays, some of which were a single tape, others two or more developing the same subject. If it is found that they are of value to be retained, then they will have to be transcribed before publishing. Gertrude did a great deal of transcribing herself, and there is another one in the Phoenix area who has had her students to transcribe several others. This work no doubt, if it is ever completed, will be rendered available after my departure, for in just a few days I'll be 95, and my resources are fading away.

. . . and there was where I hoped to continue with the work.⁵ So I laid my plans accordingly. The personal problem was resolved with the marriage to Gertrude. Now we had the further step to take. Ultimately, we succeeded in liquidating both apartment houses and the residence, and later some land that I had acquired in the Pacho Hills in San Luis Obispo County when Sherifa and I dwelt up there, and also some land acquired at a tax sale. Ultimately, we cleaned up all these holdings. Sales were generally on time, but at the present hour, all that was owned down there has been liquidated and all that Gertrude and I had was here in Inyo County and a certain 180 acres we had acquired in Humboldt County for meeting the economic developments that were inflationary. That, however, is a later story. I own now only this land in Inyo County on the shoulder of the great Sierra Nevada. I have sold the land acquired at the coast, and it is in process of liquidation now. I do not remember the day when Gertrude and I finally left Santa Barbara to go to Lone Pine. We had been up here at various times. We had our furniture and we acquired some additional items. This we had transferred in due course and established ourselves in the ranch house that was a part of the 400 acres that had been acquired in Inyo County. We transferred in 1960, but I do not now remember the day. I purchased a bulldozer before leaving the Santa Barbara area and it became a very useful tool for our constructions which later we developed.

There is an incident that happened soon after I brought Gertrude out from Chicago to the west to be with me that I have forgotten to speak about that is significant. I wanted her to meet Herman Graves, who had been a real help to me in my travails after the parting with Sherifa. Somehow, which I do not now remember, we met Herman Graves at the residence of the DeConos, who at that time were living in the southwestern portion of San Fernando Valley. He and Gertrude got into conversation; and as he was engaging in manufacturing at the time and dealing with technical formal problems, they got to talking about it. And Gertrude talked intelligently on the subject which was usually a man's kind of field, and they got quite interested. Then Herman took me out to Peter's corn patch and he said, "I am amazed." He had never met a woman like that. Gertrude had virtually floored him, for she could talk like a man in a manly field. That was one side of her that I found utterly delightful. But more than that, it made communication between us exceptionally easy and uncomplicated, for I, myself, had already discovered that she thought very much like a man and yet looked very feminine indeed.

⁵ Although the audio recording is missing the opening words of this sentence, Wolff evidently is referring to his moving to Lone Pine with Gertrude to live and continue his work.