

“I am not you and
I have no knowledge of you” *)

Letters to Celia about the Dialogue

- The title comes from the legend “The Happiness of the Fish” by the Chinese poet and Tao philosopher Tschuang-tse who lived about 300 AD. Translated by Martin Buber.

The world belongs to him who does not feel.
The essential prerequisite for a practical person
is a lack of sensibility.

Fernando Pessoa *)

*)Fernando Pessoa: The Book of Unrest of the Assistant to the Bookkeeper Bernardo Soares. Preface and Translation from Portuguese by Georg Rudolf Lind. Zurich (Ammann) 1985, page 30.

About this book

“No one I asked questioned the Old French proverb: <Love is a Child of Freedom>. Yet this freedom scares us. To let go on the one hand and trust the bonding on the other? To do so we feel too unsure. We rather assume the bonding be alternating possession. Within a very short time we thus suffocate love. The fact that freedom does not mean non-commitment does not enter the mind of many. That it deepens the bonding sounds unbelievable... And yet we all know that feelings cannot be forced. But what is this art of free bonding? How can freedom and bonding be joined?”

M.L.Moeller

Michael Lukas Moeller was born in 1937 in Hamburg, Germany. After studying medicine and philosophy in Hamburg, Munich, and Berlin, he earned his PhD in 1967. The subject of his doctoral paper was *Psychodynamics of Test Phobia*. As a trained psychoanalyst he specialized in psychotherapy and psychosomatic medicine. In 1973 he was appointed professor of mental health in Giessen. In 1983 he took over the professorship for medical psychology at the University of Frankfurt.

He became especially well known through his involvement with the development of self- help groups. For about 15 years he has been devoting his energies primarily to psychoanalysis of the relationship between couples. Apart from his numerous scientific works there are the following book publications: *Self-Help Groups. Self Treatment and Self Knowledge in self-responsible small groups.* – Reinbek 1978 (Rowohlt). *Help in Different Ways. Self-Help Groups and Experts Work Together.* Stuttgart 1981 (Klett-Cotta), *Truth Starts for the Two of You. The Couple in Dialogue.* (rororo 9153) and together with H.-J. Maaz, *Oneness starts as Two. A German-German Dialogue* (rororo) 9364).

Love, this relationship creating elementary power comes of itself if we let it happen. Why do we not let it happen? Why do so many relationships stagnate?

In the following letters to my friend Celia I will try to communicate five basic insights which also altered my life as part of a couple . Each of us creates his own relationship but is tightly intertwined with another within a huge unconscious relation sphere. We do not want either to be true. If we recognize this, however, we have a chance to develop our relationships in a livelier manner. The decisive way is the *essential dialogue*. It creates the undisturbed room in which we can make our experience sympathetic on alternating levels. Part of this has to be a language in pictures and stories and the insight that we know far less of each other than we think.

First Letter

Dear Celia,

In the past few years, in the relationships essential to me, nothing has made me as free as the slow growing together of a few basic insights into the life of a couple – into my own, that of my friends, and that of my clients. Five golden realizations. I promise you boldly: with them no relationship need fail ever again. It develops further: to a deeper bond or to a clearer separation in which a partnership is not simply severed but is dissolved jointly. This prospect slightly shocks some couples. <Development knows no security> Tschuang-tse comments dryly. Even for me this is sometimes hardly bearable. No stone shall remain on another? I liked what you said to this: that at least you were left with the security to develop yourself. Who, then, is seriously interested in “conserving” a relationship? Not I, that is certain. In my relationships I wish for a kind of decision help, a realistic chance to make it as satisfying as possible or, if that proves too difficult, to end it on friendly terms.

The presuppositions for gaining this realization were particularly favorable in the life I have lived and in my profession. But they were not sufficient: only the

relationship with you has opened my eyes within the past five years. Why? You are so different from me: Portuguese, a child of a working-class family. Twenty-five years younger and refused a secondary school education. Chasms in culture, walk of life, age, and education. How can I then understand even one of your sentences in a way you intend it to sound? And have you ever understood me? In spite of the obvious differences between us it took me years before I understood your otherness. But especially this big distance was what brought about the opposite: the relationship creating dialogues.

The blindness for the otherness of a person who is near to you is no extraordinary relation symptom – this is clear to me today – but an ordinary, typical human delusion. Only now I know that I know nothing about you.

<Knowledge is shallow, lack of knowledge is deep> How difficult it is to understand the simple Tschuang-tse today in a world that is so scientifically oriented.

That which is coming together for me very tentatively I consider the center of psychoanalysis *of the good relationship*. It must complete the previous psychoanalysis of the conflict-ridden relationship. Because only with the hope, with the picture of a good relationship, are we able to take the fears that lurk in every relationship and dissolve them. Sometimes this seems like a fairy tale to me. As if I had, so to speak, to give away a stone of the magi. It can be used also in your other relationships: In the family, in friendships, at work – most of all, though, in love. It glitters, this hard rock: a stumbling block – most of all because you meet yourself.

In my breathlessly short letters to you I omit how the mechanism of society has brought the love of us all into today's sad shape. We are this society and have no alternative. I only want to remind you that the heartfelt, tyrannical intimate relationship between two people is an unavoidable result of the capitalistic industrialization, and in my next letter I will come to the point immediately.

Love, Michael

Second Letter

Dear Celia,

The five realizations I wrote you about yesterday are different opinions of one and the same idea – a good relationship – and understandable only one with the other. I shall name them for you in preliminary and inadequate sentences. Incidentally, it is not easy for me to stick to the personal and to what applies just to the two of us. I am spoilt by science which always generalizes and thus becomes unconnected.

A good relationship does not exist, it can develop. Therefore I start this way:

1. In our relationship I would like to learn to start with alternating unawareness and not colonize you anymore with my concepts.
2. In our relationship I would like to learn to take seriously our joint unconscious interplay and thus to realize that I am responsible but not independent.
3. In our relationship I would like to learn to see essential dialogues as necessary and to make them a reality; only in this manner can I learn to take me and you seriously; and you cannot be essential to me if I am not essential to myself.
4. I would like to learn in our relationship to explain myself in concrete experiences and not in concepts because only pictures and stories can relate deeply and fully relate who I am - and who you are.
5. In our relationship I would like to learn to realize that I also create those feelings for myself which I assume you create for me, too – i. e. insult and guilt – or which I believe to simply come over me – such as fear and depression.

Two insights go along with these “learning goals”: first, that I make my relationship altogether very active, even when I believe that it just so happens. Most of all: to a large degree I also make my feelings in love myself. This is true for everyone even if they do not know it yet from their own experience. Secondly: in partnerships we have to exchange and check with each other far more than we imagine.

No one doubts the French proverb <L’amour est l’enfant de la liberte’> love is the child of freedom. For me that is the truth. It is beautiful. And it is

horrible. Because we destroy love when in our relationships we confuse commitment with possession of the partner. Very quickly we change from wanting to be with the loved one and the desire to "own" him in this *feeling* to the often stated: <you belong to me>. Presumably it is the wish for security, i. e. it is our insecurity which in this way changes the freedom within the partnership to suppression and causes love to shrink through a thousand little every day deeds. If we want to keep love free we need to liberate each other – to put it more precisely: to lessen the outer and inner suppression which we reproduce daily under pressure from society to keep ourselves under control. This liberation begins – and ends- with the decision to accept ourselves the way we are.

Love, Michael

Third Letter

Dear Celia,

How shall I begin with the unendingly diverse first insight? – The other person is different. That is what "other" means. Words of wisdom. But no one lives by them. That baffles me most of all today. Every couple that comes to see me is, within a very short while, caught up in the old familiar quarrel: <No, it was not like that at all; it was rather like this.> They search for truth which usually corresponds to their own interpretation. I then say to them that they are right. We have only one reality: the one we experience. That is our reality and truth. However, that which we deny incessantly is the equal truth of the other. And that one is simply different.. Therefore in this relationship it does not matter if we find out what really transpired but to ask yourself: How did you experience this? And how did I? It is crucial to understand the two experiences alternately. In this way and only in this way do we make our connection ourselves.

The subjective reality, yours and mine, is essential. It does not do us any good to identify the objective reality. What would we want with an objective truth floating above us? I have only one answer: with it we want to distract ourselves, deceive ourselves. This objective truth is insignificant. Significant is: to

manage to get along with the two realities. Most couples see a reference to this like a liberation. They finally take the first step to find themselves behind the wall of the so-called reality. Only men find it difficult to see that facts are a special form of fantasy. Research in England showed that almost all marriage quarrels are due to alternating misunderstandings, to say it more precisely: they are due to the inability to realize that the other person has his own reality. The blindness to the otherness of the other person not only applies to husbands and wives but also to the relationships between men and between women. It is, therefore, a dangerous illusion to count on the <same wavelength>

The first insight can be summarized in one short sentence: Your relationship is not my relationship although relationship is our concern. That makes me shudder sometimes. Only when I discover that the realization <I am not you and I have no knowledge of you> is the best supposition to learn to understand each other do I feel better.

Love, Michael

Fourth Letter

Dear Celia,

What happens if I do not accept your otherness? I imagine myself in a sound world with you, in a well-functioning life, in a single reality. A beautiful heart-warming illusion. So simple, so convenient.

This picture of the happy home, however, is not sufficient. Because if I spread my reality over you, if I presume to know how you experience life without asking you then I immediately impose my reality onto you. An unnoticed impudence. It is a daily happening with all couples.

Because of occupational interpretation, psychoanalysts and other helpers find themselves particularly frequently in this situation and, therefore, are marked with increased relationship breakdowns. You, too, can probably find the unnoticed absolute positioning of your own personal reality in your relationships. Today I can hardly believe how unabashedly I once explained and defined my

partners with my picture of them. Without realizing this we simply assume that we know what the other person feels, thinks, wants, desires, and does. I call this today *the colonization of the partner*. It concerns the attempt to fit the other person, as a province, so to speak, into one's own world. If he does not want this, he is loveless. No wonder that sexual problems, too, are the result. Almost every quarrel in the relationship is the fight over who wants to colonize whom. This war has no end. A pretend solution is the suppression of one partner. One or the other will give in eventually. The peace in the home has become a fermenting friction. In this way we have dug our own grave. We can no longer empathize, no longer harmonize with each other. We can no longer express our essential needs. The disappointment of the suppressed needs remains unnoticed. Accordingly we gather suppressed anger in the relationship. We obstruct the self-development of both of us. Our aggressiveness increases the guilt feelings and finally narrows down the relationship until it reaches a deadlock. Naturally, eroticism does not thrive in such an environment either.

We overlook that the relationship is not a condition but a continuing development. When we do not realize the otherness of the other person we start a relationship, which, within a few years, finally has to break up. Happily, I want to add. Because even worse than dead relationships are those pretend relationships which exist only as an even co-existence and know a joint being only in the management of every-day life. According to my own observations this is the most common type of marriage. I presume by now that the secret intention of many marriage partners is to be together just enough to *not* get to know each other.

In such a pretend relationship we continuously provide disappointments. However, the more I am disappointed the more I fixate on my unfulfilled needs and thus also on my view of life. The aggressiveness is based on the disappointment. It is frightening how much hate accumulates in the course of years between a couple. It climaxes in couple racism. I begin to scorn the world of the other which with its constant infringements on my life became so tiresome

and yet remained so foreign. Racism always attempts the termination of the other.

With longer lasting relationships this is the most difficult task: to work together to eliminate this hatred and the disdain behind which there is a great sadness about the life that has been missed. For most who want this help is often too late. But most don't even try. A sad ending. Hopefully we will spare ourselves.

Love Michael

Fifth Letter

Dear Celia,

Even if I consider it worse to presume that you see yourself, me, our relationship, and the world different from me, this is not sufficient for the two of us to create this revolution, which, in my relationships, I have experienced as a great liberation. Four other insights are an inseparable part of this.

This is the second insight: My behavior and your behavior are always determined twice: by you and by me. This collusion determines, in unsuspected ways, almost everything I do and you do – starting with thinking and deciding and ending with feeling and dreaming. Not before meeting with couples groups did I notice how much for instance the dreams of partners – mostly during the same night – revolve around the same subconscious theme. But which couples discuss their dreams? Partners who feel an essential relationship with each other are no longer independent individuals. Each of them is an involuntary accomplice in the actions of the other. The unconscious of both partners has a common denominator, is tightly interwoven. Because the unconscious recognition is about ten times as extensive as the usual conscious awareness.

Imagine: You are ten times more aware of me than you realize – and I of you. Therefore the feelings in a partnership, which result from unconscious awareness and stem from the huge field of unconscious relations, are far more

important than the judgment of the mind. Only sometimes do we realize part of the unconscious happenings – with so-called transferences or warding off of fears. If I see you as my youngest brother and you me as your older one, this corresponds to an unconscious agreement.

The alternating unconscious relation happens very quickly and without grammatical and logical language: through little movements, changes in facial expression, the tone of voice, gestures, and the order of movements. The choice of partners is unconsciously determined in this way. "Love at first sight" shows the swiftness of the unconscious exchange. But this not only happens in the beginning but at any time during an existing relationship. Thus in unconscious actions we create all our moods, which in our consciousness seem to simply fall from the sky. Between us we can much better suppress that which scares us. Twice sewn lasts longer.

The most important result of this insight for every day life is that the reason for alternating reproach but also self-accusation or sense of guilt is removed. I cannot accuse you of anything because I am always party to your actions. With accusations or self-accusations both partners always try to make *only one* partner responsible. This morally directed behavior reveals itself as defense against the alternating entanglement and dependence.

Love Michael

Sixth Letter

Dear Celia,

What can we do? That leads to the third insight. There is only one way out, and that is really the best: we have to explain each other to one another, i. e. really talk with one another. We have to agree to these *essential dialogues*. Only in this way can four kinds of readiness be united: that I open up and speak – which is not easy for anyone – while you listen to me, and that I am attentive and listen to you when you speak of yourself.

Suddenly it is clear that such a relationship is a joint action – and a relationship is really just that. In these dialogues it is realized, put in motion, and then develops. This, also outside the time agreed upon, changes the entire relationship with the other person. The essential talks need an undisturbed situation and more. Thus my recipe for such dialogues – a do-it-yourself:

At least once a week a dialogue. Hopefully regularly, otherwise nothing develops. Repetition is the secret to success. It provides time for learning and readjustment of ideas; it allows the relationship to develop in depth; the unconscious thread does not get lost. No interruption: no telephone, no meals, no children, and not surprise visits. Not longer than one-and one-half or two hours, otherwise the unnoticed fatigue promotes aggressive themes. Each partner about himself. An open dialogue. No colonization attempts. No probing questions, no pushing. Dialogues are no obligation for disclosure. Divide talking and listening as equally as possible. Be silent and let the other be silent whenever it is called for.

Almost always everything goes wrong at first. But with time two will learn better than one alone. We not only hinder but sometimes also support each other. Each partner develops himself and thus helps the other to also develop himself. In success and failure we are alternately models for each other. In this way we can come near to the ideal of a good relationship. For me that means: that each partner can develop better in a relationship than alone. Up and down the opposite happens: self-development is hindered whenever possible.

These simple dialogues, actually the most common thing in the world, create fear and strange difficulties even when the partners are ready to consider them as useful or even as necessary. These barriers resemble the resistance to psychoanalytical therapy. At the beginning nothing works. Everyone dreams of waiting until they happen to be in the right frame of mind or until there is a good opening in their every day life. However, this opportunity hardly ever occurs on the spur of the moment. More spontaneous is the unconscious resistance. A quiet

evening or half of it would suffice. But who has that time? Either we have work to do, or we have plans, or we are too tired, or we prefer to watch TV.

Love Michael

Seventh Letter

Dear Celia,

This essential relation – this is the fourth insight – also has a different language. Even about our feelings we speak in general abstract terms.

When you called me “funny” on the telephone the other day, and I agreed with you, I was ready to ask. The result surprised me: You not only thought I was funny in totally different behavioral ways but you meant something completely different when you used the term “funny”.

With abstract terms we tempt each other to a so-called understanding, invite to projections which we cannot even realize, and sometimes poison the entire relationship with unknown misunderstandings. This changes when we describe in concrete terms the graphic mental image or the little experienced scene which appears whenever we use an expression such as “like a lot” or “find detestable”. Immediately the understanding deepens, becomes more vivid and less misleading. Thus language of images rather than language of concepts.

And now the last insight. “If you want to get something done, do it yourself.” A Canadian proverb which weighs heavily. Do something when you feel something, and do not wait for the other person. My feeling is already an impulse to act. If I first block it to then be insulted when you do nothing either, then I will simply blame you about what I myself “did”. “You don’t do anything,” is then my accusation.

Another dangerous pitfall in the relation is my expectation that the other person should realize my condition. This is usually an excessive demand, an overcharge.

The proverb goes still deeper: even my passivity is my active achievement. Much more than I realize I do myself – not only the persons in my dreams who are not me; not only my mistakes; but also my love, my passion, my total concrete sexual experience; and -I said this before – also insults, fear, depression and guilty conscience which I love to attribute to your behavior. What do I intend by feeling insulted? This question of the secret intentions is central to me. I myself create insults, fear and depressions with your help.

I am responsible for what I feel. That means for me: I try to accept responsibility for myself. I read the following sentence by the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber: “It is a matter of importance to begin with oneself, and at this moment I have to concern myself with nothing in the world but with this beginning.” To begin with oneself but not to end with oneself, that is the meaning. “To start with oneself but not be concerned with oneself.” That is harder than I thought.

I am convinced that love is the child of freedom. And until now – development knows no security – I considered love the most essential part of life. But if I want to be free and allow the other person freedom I must be true to myself. So finally everything leads to the same question: Do I have enough courage?

Love Michael

Eighth Letter

Dear Celia,

One and one half years have passed since the first letter. During this time I have learned much about dialogues. In relationships that mean a lot to me I would not like to do without dialogues. Why? Only in these dialogues do I really experience the other person. The relationship changes in time to a deep commitment through common activity, and there remains no cramping or restricting. It gradually frees love from the debris of misunderstandings and

unnoticed disappointments. I feel as if I suddenly saw clearly into an open space. But this also means that the journey leads into the unknown. The dialogues always create more than each of the partners alone could have provided or anticipated. Dialogues are always full of surprises. Especially this makes some people uneasy.

Dialogues, which I had with others over a long time or only for a short while, are as different as day and night. With regular dialogues over years I experience most clearly how much we create our relationship ourselves, and how seldom a relation runs its irrevocable and destined course. The power of chance still remains undiminished.

In the beginning Marina considered the dialogues "a happiness creating program". Others said the same thing in different ways: It sounded as if everything were doable.

In this respect I would like to say this: In every case we forget all too gladly that the relation is "made" by us. Or else, by whom? A relation cannot be other than constructive. It is our creation through and through. But for the most part we act unconsciously. We imagine wrongly that we are passive or are even victims. We do not completely realize what we are doing. But we can find out if we pay attention. The best possible situation for this to happen, I believe, is in a dialogue.

Of course, not everything is doable. Almost everything is a matter of chance. It is hard to believe how much we deny this. But there is still much more to be done than we assume. Of that I am now convinced.

Only one presupposition has to be fulfilled: both partners have to be connected enough that they can experience and work through their relationship. In short: dialogues have to happen. And exactly that does not happen as a rule. Both of us have experienced that. If not even this minimum is present, the couple is less able to make decisions. It can neither connect nor split up, much less develop. Unfortunately that is normally the case when a couple comes to me in my practice.

The dialogues work best when they take place regularly. Just like many couples who come to me in my practice, Marina and I notice almost with amusement how the level of our underlying irritation in every-day life rises when a dialogue was missed. No wonder: we are missing the tuning of our needs and the alternating empathy with the momentary inner attitude of the partner.

Love Michael

Love and money

...unfortunately come together exactly at the time when love shatters, when the joint account of feelings is dissolved. Maybe it is a small consolation then that in the bank account the conditions are still all right.

**Mortgage Bond and
Communal Obligation**

Most popular German Securities –
High Income from Investments-
At all Banks and Savings Banks

Mortgage Security

Ninth Letter

Dear Celia,

I also tried dialogues in short meetings with friends: with Karl, with Christiane, with Manfred, and with Bine these were often deep, much to my amazement. I am glad to have found this way and have the feeling to have learned and exchanged something really important. Even with six-year old Lasi a real dialogue happened the other day: for ten minutes, and it was at his request. I was totally surprised. Dialogues between parents and children are just as significant as those between adults. They strengthen family life. If someone from out of town visits me

for a while I desire a dialogue. My meetings become thus livelier and richer – much different from my earlier meetings during which I spoke with my friends not only about unimportant things but also tried to stick to the essential.

Months after a single dialogue during a visit I asked Bine about her feelings at that time. What she felt seems typical to me: she had been very excited. It seemed adventurous to her but also dangerous especially since she did not know what exactly happens. Our mutual trust helped her through her fears. As soon as she started to speak her anxiety vanished. Now she tries dialogues in her relationships with different levels of success. She calls them “life enriching”. She thinks, however, that they are unusual for most people. Perhaps they would even prefer to go to a psychoanalyst because they can still hold on to a helper and are not confronted with each other. Fears can also show themselves much more strongly. You observed yourself that suddenly and without explanation words and thoughts disappeared which only just a moment ago you had on your mind. I pay attention to such moments within myself. They signal a repression at the moment of its emergence. There is a fear here which is connected to that which disappears.

Love Michael

Tenth Letter

Dear Celia,

Of course, it is easy for me to be in favor of dialogues because the couples, who come to my practice, sufficiently show me which fears in what way hinder or prevent those dialogues.

All become acquainted with dialogues. Within a short time they consider them convincing. But the labor pains are sometimes very hard. So I point out to myself and others the strong and tough opposition of the unconscious to these dialogues. It shows how deep the dialogues go. They pay off. I have experienced that we can improve our love through them. In a love

handicapping society in which only seldom a good relationship can happen spontaneously, there is not much left for us to do but to work for this "love upkeep" just as hard as for a living. But this emotional work is crippled subconsciously. A kind of inner boycott results which resembles the resistance to a revealing psychoanalytical therapy. That is understandable: we do not like to meet the fear which we – mostly together – suppressed very nicely. On the other hand: we do not solve relation-hindering problems if we avoid them.

What is there to do? Very often there exists a situation in which one partner wants the dialogue, but the other does not. When then the one who is for the dialogues complains helplessly that nothing can be done I become very suspicious. In most cases he did not state his "Yes" calmly and clearly or insisted on a clearing up of the situation. He just gave up. Thus he becomes an accomplice to the "No". It is necessary to insist on the "Yes" patiently and steadfastly and to respect the fear of the "No". By the way, in almost all cases the couple divides the dissention between both partners, i. e. the mixture present in each of us of a "for" and an "against" into the apparently opposite positions: One is "pro", the other "con" even though both are both.

There is a practical solution in case the opposition does not let dialogues occur: *Preludes* about dialogues. One can agree on these much easier. The subject of these talks is: What do I mean, and what do you mean by "dialogue"? Do we want to have them? If so, how? These talks, then, clear the working relationship. But most of all, any possible hindering reservations come up for discussion. Thus they diminish. And the transition to the dialogue is much easier.

Eleventh Letter

Dear Celia,

In the preludes usually the question arises what dialogues mean. Petra says that she feels here differently than during the essential talks which would happen anyway. The difference lies in the way in which each person takes up a relation

to himself: more decisive, deeper, more open, more observant, riskier, more spontaneous, dreamier. This became obvious to me immediately although I had never thought about it difference before.

I was reminded of a sentence in classical literature: <In each of us there is something precious that exists in no other> This sounds trashy in a capitalistic society which has to concentrate on our equality in monetary manpower. But in friendship and love we feel the truth of this sentence. Martin Buber remarked on this: "That which is <precious> in a person he can discover only when he truly realizes his strongest feeling, his central wish that which is within him, which moves his core." To me, exactly that seems to be the thread for the dialogue partners. Because of this the talk alters also the relation to oneself. That seems to be the main result.

This brings me again to a persistent illusion: However much we desire this, we cannot change the other person; he can only change himself. We can be happy if we manage to change ourselves. Through this other conditions arise in the relationship – a bigger openness. Only in this way do we also move the other person.

Today I like to term the dialogues <exchange of self-portraits>. When this is clear to both partners, no so-called <relationship box> can develop. I mean those tiring discussions in which especially educated, verbally well-trained people tear each other apart with words. If this happens in a dialogue, the unconscious interferes. We create <relationship boxes> ourselves with unconscious intent and the perfectly matching actions: through constantly alternating infringements for instance, through colonization, through not-letting-finish or making-talk, in short: through the urge to overpower the other person and to make him part of oneself. If a dialogue works in this way the couple has erected a common opposition. Behind that there is a strong, almost cannibalistic urge, an oral aggressiveness, which brings forth strong feelings of guilt. In such verbal battles we devour and punish each other at the same time. They are an every day occurrence with almost every couple. If we observe the beginning of these arguments,

experience sufficiently how fruitless they are and understand that they are the common weapon against the underlying themes their dissolution is much easier than we first thought.

Love Michael

Twelfth Letter

Dear Celia,

The main opposition shows itself in the cancellation of agreed upon dates – for thousands of reasons. Naturally, an interruption can occur without opposition. So it proved advantageous to agree upon a set make-up date. This saves the exhausting run-around and guarantees regularity. Furthermore clear agreements make it easier to see when they are broken. Thus at least the unconscious counter-current cannot be glossed over any longer.

When someone, after a few minutes in a dialogue, jumps up and leaves with the words, "This is it!", the opposition, the unconscious fear is obvious. It is less obvious with shortenings of the agreed upon time. Shortening is suspect and should be considered an information of the unconscious.

But part of the opposition is the intention to misunderstand dialogues. So it says: <This is only talk about that which will not happen>. This talk, without consequences, distanced from life, is not meant. And it does not occur either. If you are involved with dialogues you will feel this immediately. Some people assume that dialogues might replace life. That would be absurd even in terms of time. Dialogues could develop life together but not replace it.

Others think that now the essential would be stated only in structured dialogues and the normal exchange would be cut off. The opposite is the case: these dialogues slowly bring about that also the usual talks, i. e. at the table, will deepen because the feeling for the essential on both sides is better developed.

One objection cites the sentence by the French statesman Talleyrand: <Language has been given to man to conceal his thoughts>. I ask you: Did

Talleyrand want to conceal with these words that speech can also openly impart thoughts. Of course, I can be verbose and erect a continuous defense. That can be managed even in dreams or gestures. However, if language is able to conceal thoughts it is also able to expose them. One creates the other. Moreover, these dialogues do not concern themselves with language or thoughts but with the experience of that which happens between two people. But you know that already.

The Portuguese are supposed to have a life so rich in feeling and fantasy that they consider the change to reality almost unnecessary. When you now travel to Portugal you will probably notice that your countrymen understand the essence of the dialogue better than most Germans – but use it even less. We experienced that ourselves. <I owe my life to my dreams> I read once. It was sprayed onto a mirror. To whom does that not apply? Maybe that is why the phrase of Erich Kaestner sounds so true to me: <There is nothing good unless you do it!>

Love Michael