

An essay into Headlessness and the End of History

By George Schloss.

(Footnotes refer to a series of questions put to the author, which are listed with his replies in an appendix)

*Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed into nightmare by a rocking
cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round
at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?
W.B. Yeats The Second Coming*

*We shall not cease from
exploration
And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we
started
And know the place for the first
time.*

T.S. Eliot Little Gidding

Neither Yeats nor Eliot, arguably the two finest poets in English of their generation, were alone in their premonition that something was afoot, something had to give and the bubbling stew we call modernity, long since come to a boil, was coming to a head. Still, however well-versed they or anyone else were in the unexpected means the expected adopts to achieve its end, little did they dream that only a few miles away from where they were writing just before the Second World War the ultimate in revelation was about to take shape and give to airy nothing its final habitation and a name. Indeed, as with all prior epochal shifts in perspective, was to appear, not parading in full panoply to the blare of trumpets along some crowded avenue but, quite in keeping with its self-effacing nature, was to slip in unobtrusively, almost surreptitiously, through a clearing in the woods.

As many have already observed and one wag summed up nicely by noting that though history doesn't repeat itself it certainly rhymes, not since the ferment that erupted two-thousand years ago in the then known-*historical*- world, the arena of a dominant Rome lording it over a Carthage wiped off the face of the earth, an inert Athens and an inconsequential Jerusalem, has there been such general consensus - the correspondences are too palpable to be ignored - that humankind is about to suffer yet another sea-change, though whether into something rich and strange remains, literally, to be seen.

Just as with the rise of Christianity, no sooner had the gods made in our image been banished from center stage by the Church Fathers than they began to show up under assumed names in sheep's, if not lambs', clothing and even today, despite, or maybe because of, the ministrations of our current crop of high-priests and witch-doctors, can still be spotted embracing the sporting life on any psychoanalyst's couch in the land; so recent rumors as to the demise of the one and only successor to Pan - Pan being the latest and last of antiquity's idols to be pronounced dead on the arrival of the God-man - are now seen to have also been greatly exaggerated. Summoned home at last by the experiments to where he belongs, as much a posthumous victim in triumph as ever he was of mistaken identity in defeat, the God-man, too, still lives and along with the rest of us saints and sinners can be found for the looking any day of the week in the place he never left. ⁱ

The experiments. If the Greeks didn't have a word for them the Hindus did: *Shruti*, the absolutely indispensable text absent which root all subsequent fruits are merely flowers. Deriving from immediate insight into reality, speaking by authority of its own voice, Shruti is the one thing necessary, the bottom line for which there can be no substitute but at best only a reasonable facsimile by way of commentary. Classic examples up to now would be the Upanishads or Vedas, the Tao, the Buddhist canon, and in our Western monotheistic tradition, the Old and New Testaments and the Koran. However exalted or informative the interpretations of these sacred texts, like barnacles hitching a free ride on the back of the mother whale, the relation, though symbiotic - at once totally dependent on the host's largesse for subsistence yet, at the same time, returning the favor as best it can by tidying up - is essentially asymmetrical.

Our task, then, is to tidy up, always keeping in mind our total dependence on evidence provided by the experiments. By virtue of the fact that they are what they designate, these constitute the one absolutely indispensable text for which there can be no translation and no substitute and which, by reason of their all-inclusiveness, relegate image, symbol, concept, everything that's been thought or said or written or read in the past and I dare say will be in the future (including this) to the realm of commentary.

Unfortunately, as Galileo discovered when his inquisitors, even those well-disposed, flatly refused to look through his telescope, one can only preach convincingly to the converted. Short of at least some acquaintance with these magical markers that render the invisible as visible as it's always been (though with rare exceptions our consciousness as a race was as ill-prepared as it was well-equipped to see it) and which, much like safety-matches or lighters compared to the hit-and-miss method of primitive flint, insure both fire and light *every* time, I can hardly expect those unfamiliar with them to agree with my conclusions or to see in them anything more than mere assertions. Nevertheless, it's my view that this union of the container with its content, this joining at their root of the contemplative and active, techknowledge and technology, the esoteric and exoteric, the original and the new, marks the completion of the modern project that, beginning some five thousand years ago with an ostensibly civilizational expansion but now speeding to its close in our current contraction into a global village, has, by making meditation available to the market-place, rendered transparent its reason for being. As a result, we find ourSelf, both singly and collectively, in the unique position of possessing for the first time the potential, the conscious and concrete capacity to be both "in" at the Creation and, at the same time (since the two go hand-in-hand), present at "the end of history."

Fortunately, though the experiments can't be put into words, like the act itself compared to the protestation or even the confession of love, they can be shared. As I intend to demonstrate through, of all things, the testimony of history - that most unlikely vehicle for yet another "proof" - it's to the providential manifestation at this time and in this place of these built-in, unassuming instruments that we must turn for assurance that God or Consciousness or Awareness - call It any "thing" you like - is alive and well and never shuts one door without opening another.

A quick visit to headquarters to look over, into and finally through these simple tools of Self-confirmation should do the trick. The Pointing Finger, the Spectacles, the Closed Eye, the

Paper-bag and Card-experiment along with, perhaps, the Whirling Dervish and the Foursome, the Classified and Self-portrait, should provide sufficient back-up to corroborate my claim that, as another commentator remarked in a different context, the medium *is* the message. Put to the proof in person, in 1st Person – and performed with due diligence any or all will do – the possibilities of their application, of the implicit made explicit in every field, are virtually infinite and can't help but condition the way we go about our business of filtering reality through the partial lenses of such disciplines as religion and philosophy, mathematics and 3rd Person science, history, even speech itself - all the mind-body stuff that precisely because it's delivered us to this pretty pass is itself, like Ariel finally set free to assume his proper place in the order of things, about to be delivered and receive its reward.ⁱⁱ

For the first time in history – and we'll be addressing quite a few firsts before we're finished - the sacred text that speaks by authority of its own voice no longer requires translation into Mantalk or, when memory fails, needs to be set down in some new-fangled black and white derivative - the visible echo of speech we call writing - but comes to us in original living color and, to avoid confusion, in no uncertain terms: in silence, in Godspeak.

This has never happened before, certainly not on a universal scale. But then, until the thirty years ago that more or less coincides with the appearance of the experiments (except, as we shall see, there are no coincidences), when was the last time you heard of, no less watched a man *on* the moonⁱⁱⁱ as distinct from the Man in it? Or, like Zeus surveying the goings-on at Troy from the parapets of Olympus, were you able to enjoy a war in the safety and comfort of your living-room? Or, to go from the ersatz sublime to the ridiculous by way of the absurd (which also has its uses, as witness the consummation of history itself), did you have a thousand horses at your finger-tips or like a god could command heat and light by the flick of a switch, not to mention ice in summer, a privilege once reserved for the divine Caesar but assuredly not his Alpine runners falling more dead than alive at his feet?

As only a cursory glance at the modern world makes clear, we're all potential emperors now, our badge of office "the customer is always right." And gods-in-waiting too, as the engine that first propelled us out of the Fifth Great Day – the desire to know – continues to hone our Sabbath sense^{iv} and ready or not we prepare to exit the Sixth one way or the other. And if this sounds too apocalyptic for words, it's meant to, "apocalypse" itself like its Latin synonym "revelatus" (our revelation), signifying no more nor less than an uncovering, an unveiling. Restored to their Source, no longer captive to bomb, bacteria and barbarian, such lurid futuristic imaginings and fundamentalist visionary concepts as the end of time, the end of the world, the end of history, take on *new*, take on their *original* meaning, even as the simultaneous translation provided by the experiments – at once a liberation from, and a transformation of, language – reveals ours: that with the successful negotiation of the detour we call history only to see it arrive by hook and by crook where it started, its *essential* task completed with the uncovering of these simple tools, we now have available and available to all the necessary means to achieve *our* end, to *begin* the Great Work of *consciously* rejoining the birds and the bees and the little children too. In that sense and in that sense only the possibility *as possibility* has already been *realized*, is already here and now. Not incidentally, it also offers one more instance of how the principle of asymmetrical balance - two-way looking - moves in tandem to serve its own end, however unconscious it may appear on the surface. The same

consciousness that over millennia of struggle and suffering laid the ground-work for the final recognition that it inhabits one world is the very same that by the law of inverse progression (for every explosion an implosion, for every complexity a simplicity) has at last come to see that the world is inhabiting It. And this, too, in its universal accessibility, is a first.

Whether this awareness will be made flesh and put into practice is, of course, something else again. As Father de Caussade insisted and we'd be the first to agree, our primary object is not to study the history of the operations of Providence but to become, each of us individually, the Subject of those operations, to be It as well as see It. But surely the two perspectives - a meditation for the market-place no longer solely confined to meditation *on* or contemplation *of* the market-place but combined with active participation *in* and for the sake of the market-place - are better than none or even one and, alone together, constitute all there is.

And if it be argued, as no doubt it will be, that if past is prologue this possibility is no different from all those other possibilities, those pie-in-the-sky panaceas that, ranging from a muscular Christianity to a busy Mahayana Buddhism, were mother's milk to us, again we can only reply, it ain't necessarily so. Though congenitally starry-eyed we may still look to outer space for signs and proudly if heedlessly point to that other dream of flight once bogged down in seemingly endless rehearsals but now dotting the horizon, now we need look no further than home to, as zero is to one, its polar reciprocal revealed by a history at once humbled and fulfilled, humbled because fulfilled in, of all places, a paper-bag.^v Where once the dream of idols defined the taking up of the person into heaven and against all odds and the law of gravity proved it to be no idle dream, so now, in the infinite light and lightness of the experiments, those odds are made all even^{vi}. A conclusion that would not have been lost on a Plato with his notion of the good life as serious play or, for that matter, on a Karl Marx who, with unaccustomed insight worthy of a Zen master, announced that if history's first act ended in tragedy, its second would more closely resemble farce. Is that to be our destiny - to end up in a paper-bag? Or will there be a third act - the destiny of our destiny the freedom to have none?

One thing we can say with certainty. If history teaches us anything at all - and, as we shall see, it teaches us more than we know but no more than we had a right to expect - it's that where predictions based on statistically repeatable "natural" events like the sun rising and the seasons coming and going have been shown by 3rd Person science or just plain common sense to obey the laws of probability, when it comes to the divine-human dimension, to the realm of freedom, the law of love if you will, they have just as consistently failed where prophecy and possibility have not. No more than we might have detected an embryo Christianity slowly germinating undercover of the first great universal empire, who could have predicted the cosmic reach of the experiments or the design and form they would take beyond speech, beyond custom and tradition and boundaries, beyond history, beyond even the cosmic horizon itself? But they *were* prophesied; in fact, were fitted to our exact measurements. As the experiments incontestably demonstrate, not by taking thought and adding an inch to his stature shall *homo faber*, the maker of, among other things, history, inherit the earth, no less the Kingdom (though, God knows, more possessed by it than of it, he's tried to), but by subtracting eight.^{vii}

Yet even here the paradox inherent in the divine-human equation becomes transparent through two-way looking. Because it was precisely this disobedience to the "heavenly" injunctions characteristic of all traditions that, marking our career from the beginning and supposedly signalling our separation, not only from every other creature on earth but even, it was said, from our "Maker", provided the impetus that once upon a time was called the "fortunate fall." It was precisely this taking thought *and* adding an inch to his stature that qualified the toolmaker in his freedom to eventually uncover the tool (the experiments) that at once turned everything right-side up by revealing it upside-down. And it was precisely this stunning reversal to end all reversals – what the Greeks welcomed as the "catastrophe", the about-face necessary to transform tragedy into triumph - that empowered him not only to arrive where he started and know the place for the first time but in the twinkling of an eye achieve what all the King's men - the seers and sages and avatars and saviors – couldn't put together again simply because the time was not ripe, not to say rotten-ripe: to establish without question once and *for all* and on an absolutely rock-bottom footing the meaning of who we are and why we are. And thereby hangs a tale. And that tale we call history. Not this story or that story, but the story of the story itself.

To devalue it would be a serious error. To assume that simply because we've consciously come to and at long last secured the point *without position* from which for the first time as a race we can at once see and see with certainty, not only from here to there but from there to here as well and that all things, including history, arise from the Void, is in no way to suggest they simply pop up in a vacuum. No more than the material ingredient, though freely poured in any which way, can a-void con-forming to the structure of the cake-mold that contains it, can we continue to pretend that the Void is a vacuum or, in the Presence of the experiments, deny the Self-limiting "desire" for Self-expression that would otherwise render null and void the capacity of a limitless Gap to reveal *all* its possibilities. ^{viii}

To devalue history and, overly simplistic, fail to acknowledge its role as intermediary in what, for all we know, may represent the most central "experiment" of them all, the model and *sine qua non* of all experiments – human life on earth – would not only constitute a gross miscarriage of justice directed at both the living and the dead but a disservice to ourSelf. To find ourselves artless in an art-full, man-made world released for the first time from the time-constraints of a "natural" evolution that, if not consummated, has certainly been brought to a halt by our presence and, no longer confined to the realm of instinct, now *demand*s a *conscious* art for its very survival, and then to confuse the issue by ascribing to history a simplicity God doesn't give it, a simplicity that rightfully belongs at its Source and only at its Source, would be brash enough. ^{ix} But to overlook the road and especially the road-builders that got us there or, if you prefer, here, to make a mockery of all the told and untold suffering, the tangible stuff ground into dust that literally paved the way on which we walk, would be worse. Worst of all would be the pretension, not unknown to the species, that somehow things and events simply happen, that behind what appears to be the strangest and most extraneous of all cosmic anomalies and deviations - history itself - no guiding principle both in-forms and en-folds it and that things can fly "head on" into the "face" of reality with impunity.

To his dying day, Einstein, along with a few though by no means all his colleagues, insisted that God does not play dice with the universe, a faith which, taking into account the facts, is not only as far as reason and logic can go in that direction but as well-meaning an interpretation and statement

of purpose as we're likely to get from the perspective of 3rd Person Science.^x The *FACT*, however, indicates otherwise. As witness the dearth of dinosaurs recently, not to mention the shocking display of intimacy - the scandalous foreplay still being publicly exhibited and, in some cases, publicly enjoyed, between an evil always with us and freedom - God does indeed play dice with the universe but, built for loving, the dice are loaded. Which would seem to indicate there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in even our philosophy but, in light of the absolute certainty the experiments provide, need be dreamt of no longer.

One of them is the distinction often made between the contemplative and active paths, the Way Of and the Way To. Students of comparative religion may recognize variations on this theme still going on in Buddhism: the order of precedence awarded "self-power" by Zen adherents as opposed to a faith-based, almost Lutheran "Other-power" by followers of Pure Land doctrine. Conveniently enough and not surprisingly, similar distinctions arise within the three Western monotheisms. Witness the differences, if only in emphasis, between the esoteric and exoteric traditions, the way of Mary and the way of Martha, between the approach adopted by an Eckhart, say, vis-à-vis a Thomas Aquinas in Christianity or a Rumi over against an Averroes in Islam and in Judaism by the Kabbalists virtually taking on the whole Jewish canon, Torah, Talmud and Old Testament included. On the one hand, interior evidence *of* the Fact provided by subjective individual experience – broadly speaking, by the insights of contemplation and mysticism; on the other, exterior descriptive evidence deduced *from* the facts by objective and consensual observation – the outlook of a theology on its way to becoming 3rd Person science.

What we've never had, however, though there were certainly intimations of it in Eckhart's favoring of Martha and the Kabbalists' rejection of mysticism as the be-all and end-all, is evidence *after* the Fact, the union of both perspectives – interior and exterior – neatly packaged in one universal revelation, a wedding-gift for a marriage, though made in heaven, not yet consummated here on earth. And we never had evidence of it before for the simple reason that there had never been a need for it before on a universal scale. The returns of history, the *facts* impelling its re-turn to where it started and, as we see now, implicit in the structure of "Other power", were not all in yet.^{xi}

True, there had been hints and more than hints - sometimes delivered by word of mouth, sometimes written in blood and, on at least one occasion, both - that there was more than enough of the Already-here to go around and match the not-yet step by step, that, if anything, we suffered more from a lack of demand than from any lack of supply. What was required was the one thing necessary, a need on the part of the party of the second part that could only be answered by the "desire" on the part of the party of the first, a desire that, like air to the about-to-be drowned, would co-respond not only in kind but, given the nature of the beast and *its* gift for reciprocity, in kindness. That need was provided by the special conditions of modernity with, as Yeats and Eliot and others reminded us, its very real inklings of, if not *the* end, *an* end.

The rest, too, is history. Having come full circle from, at one pole, an unrealizable commitment to total transcendence (as in, for instance, the other-wordly aspiration of the medieval cathedral), to, at the other, its consequent collapse into our current fragmentation, caught between the devil of an atomized disillusion and the deep blue sea of atomic dissolution, universal humanity suddenly awoke to find itself in a unique position, one it had never occupied before, certainly not as a

collectivity. What with reaching for the moon and other points north, south, east and west – all of which turned out to be made of green cheese – it was about to discover that in a world where, given enough time, what goes round comes round and there are limits to even the worst possibilities, if you "let go hell" as one observer put it, "your fall will be broken by the roof of heaven." ^{xii}

Enter the experiments - a surprise to say the least - and, if absolutely unheard of in evolutionary circles, a chance for a whole new ball-game. And this without so much as altering that will-o'-the-wisp, human nature, or changing the rules that had been in effect since the beginning. On the contrary, here was an opportunity to play the game as it was originally designed - the old old-thing in the guise of the new new-thing, a cosmic face-off so to speak between Who's inhabiting What and What Who. Indeed, assuming the species' will to survive, no less live and enjoy the ride, with no place else to go, no less hide, except, one way or the other, Nowhere, there was nothing left to do except look It in the eye, head for home (which it was doing anyway) and undo.

When extremes meet extreme measures are called for, not least the capacity to identify the Measure, then keep the beat. What could not have been foreseen, however, since it had to await the mandatory receptivity on our part and, in any case, could only be confirmed after the Fact, was that, like the age-old paradox of squaring the circle prophesied to be solved at the end of time, the issue had been decided in advance, had already been shaped by the contour of its beginning, in effect, by the nature of the Gap. ^{xiii} Like Plotinus' description of the flight of the Alone to the Alone, the All-one to the All-one, the unique called out to the Unique and the call was answered with the only leap in perception commensurate with a vision of one world, one humanity, a leap that not only represents a difference in degree which, tried in one form or another has been found wanting, but a difference in *kind*. And it makes all the difference. Not this or that one's testimony, however authentic, but a haircut to fit *every* sentient no-face, the only kind that will do. The vision of the veritably new held in perfect, if delicate, equipoise by its veritable – and now absolutely verified – mirrored Original.

It's my claim that the manifestation of the experiments in, of all times and places, this time and this place, in this the hour of need to end all hours of need when we are witnessing, if not for the first time in history, the first time on a global scale, the complete breakdown of all "traditional" structures and beliefs in all fields – religion, science, language, the arts, modes, manners, morals, what have you – yet at the same time are privileged both to observe and participate in its concomitant *breakthrough*, is confirmation enough and hope that if all's not right with the world, at least God's still in his heaven and, *the asymmetrical balance acknowledged and preserved*, we have a chance. Which, suiting the Word to the action and the action to the need – the magnitude of the present high stakes - is no more nor less than we've always had and can only lead to the inescapable conclusion that this same revelation of Self-power - the implicit made explicit by and through the experiments, the only form adequate to the infinite content it's meant to express - also carries with it the assurance, as manifested in and by history, of Other-power. In effect, the two, generally conceived as its immanent and transcendent aspects, are one, different sides of the same coin. Just as, when gathering in a circle ^{xiv}, we link arms to form a continuum only to arrive where we started and know it for the first time, know it because we see it, so, too, the arrow of history, however aimless and random its trajectory may appear, has also been homing in on that Self-same Gap, the bull's eye whose center nowhere and circumference everywhere both contains and embraces it. In

fact, as we see now and can only see now after the Fact, the two, inextricably joined at the root, arrive at their predestined destination *simultaneously*.

Quite simply, the Self-realization now available to each and every one of us with an eye to the truth is precisely what constitutes the end and meaning of history.^{xv} The last of a series because for the first time in history it stands outside all series including its own, it has, by delivering us to the experiments, delivered itself. As with each of us individually, so history, its mission accomplished and function fulfilled, has achieved that perspective from which for the first time it can see itSelf whole and at the same time can be seen whole for what it is - as something more than "a tale told by an idiot" or, at the opposite end of the spectrum, a human-interest story to be divined by faith. In reality it is a divine story waiting to be *realized* by the being-to-be dying to be free within all of us, that same being Who, until it possesses the totality of time as well as space, cannot be said to be wholly incarnate or to have realized by means of its emptiness its fullest possibility.^{xvi}

Alfred North Whitehead once noted that the last thing a science discovers is what that science is all about and, as again we see when we gather in a circle and render the future retroactive, the "end" is the only true starting point from which logical deductions can be made.^{xvii} And Headlessness, the Science of the 1st Person, is no exception. As befits a prerogative that, like death, presupposes finality and all-inclusiveness, there's more to it than meets the eye, a point Douglas nicely brings to our attention when he distinguishes between foundation and superstructure, between how many faces we see in the paper-bag - the experience - and what we make of it - its meaning.

It's my claim that, touching *all* bases, the experiments now offer the opportunity to combine both perspectives. Percept and concept, subject and object, mystic, if you will, and (to indulge in a little metaphysical shop-talk) *a priori* and *a posteriori* views as ways to truth before and after the fact - in a word, the long-sought philosopher's stone that the thinkers and theologians and alchemists and, yes, even the sages and seers and saviors have failed to establish on the rock-bottom foundation of absolute certainty is now available to all in the one grand omni-science of Headlessness, the union of all knowledge so long dreamed of by so many.

The implications - that it's not only by reason of what the experiments "say", which is Self-evident, but that they *are* at all, *which is not* - are, by extension, enormous. It's one thing to *uncover* the Fact of Who we really really are and in this simple affirmation realize without emotion that whether we know it or not or even like it or not we're built for loving, that, as any fly on the wall could tell us if it could only talk, in order to exist at all the structure of reality demands it. It's quite another to *discover* What that Who really really really is and then re-cognize that at the very heart of the heart of All-Possibility lies an infinite compassion which, though obviously expressed in infinite ways, has never appeared more infinite and more beneficent than in the possibility of its own Self-revelation by means of these simple instruments. Indeed, like life-giving water dammed-up and only waiting for a sign the flood-gates have been opened, like tears for the blessed who mourn and shall be comforted, its will-less willingness or, if you will, its "desire" to express and share ItSelf turns out to be in an exact mathematical, a one-to-one reciprocal relation to the need we all share to share that desire and that will, in effect to know Who we really really are. And this for the simple reason that from first to last, from beginning to end, it *is* Who we really really are.

On this score it would be remiss not to point out yet again that it's hardly an accident that the vehicle of choice to convey the good news has been the candidate which, by general consensus and in virtually any forum, would surely be voted the least likely to succeed, namely history. Though it's not my intention to add insult to the injury of our pretensions or, going along with St. Paul, compound the error of our ways by persisting in them that "grace may abound", surely it's telling us something: that not through our good and human offices alone, our self-power, are we assured of that "Other-power" which, surpassing all other assurances, is none other than that "Non-other" Who is our Self and which will never abandon us however much we abandon It or try to. Will not because It cannot. In fact, if history tells us anything - and, thanks to the experiments, for the first time in *its* history it's now in a position to - it's not despite, or not only despite, our mistaken perceptions and, with rare exceptions, our faulty interpretations, that this Other-power has, like a permissive but loving mother, somehow come to the rescue of her wayward children who, parting company with the Measure and overstepping its bounds, have been caught red-handed butting their heads against a blank wall - the Not-yet not yet perceived as the wide-open space it really is, the Already-here. It's because of them. It's precisely because we've lost ourselves in this hallucination universally agreed on and, taking it to the end of the line, have exhausted all its possibilities, that, awakened from at worst a nightmare and at best a dream, we find ourselves in this age of space-travel face to no-face with the one unexplored Possibility - the possibility of the dream redeemed.^{xviii}

God, they say, works in mysterious ways and none more mysterious than that the road to the place where we started should be paved with the stones of delusion. And we need look no further for a tidy demonstration of this than to its most recent and, as it turns out, its ultimate manifestation: the course a well-meaning "natural religion" or, as it was called, Deism, took some three centuries ago when, abandoning its faith in revelation in favor of a belief in God based on a reasonable deduction from the phenomena of nature—what it considered the facts—it ended up dispensing with God altogether in a world peopled by 3rd Person Science. Which, God being a not-God, was just what the doctor ordered preparatory to the ultimate in revelations, a *comprehensible* mystery for *all* to see. And, for good Measure, to provide a prescription to help clarify some of the more enigmatic declarations formerly made in His name, our particular area of concern. Take, for instance, "the last shall be first" which contains in its own right the whole of the meaning of modernity we see being played out before our eyes - King Clown and his daughters finally getting their shot at the deer, a chance to go to town and raise hell. Or the otherwise even more unfathomable but nonetheless harrowing, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." And they have.^{xix}

All of which can only point us to certain inexorable conclusions . For one, an invitation to a beheading by way of raising hell is not a summons to raze it and, throwing out the baby with the bath-water which would obviously be Self-defeating, dispose of Heedlessness, assuming that were even possible, at the cost, God forbid (and He has), of Headlessness. As it was in the beginning and still is and will be world without end even now with the future behind us, the name of the game is as it's always been, two-way looking. Nor does it resolve itself into a popularity contest as the Lord God well knew when, yielding to Father Abraham's pleas, He reluctantly settled on ten good men, assuming they could be found (and they couldn't), as sufficient to spare Sodom. As Douglas

suggests so succinctly in *THE LITTLE BOOK OF LIFE AND DEATH*, the purpose of the experiments is not to stand the *world* on its head, to provide a road-map, no less a road to the establishment of a heaven on earth, but, quite the reverse, to recognize ourSelf right-side up with the realization that earth is already in heaven here and now for those with eyes to see. Even for those with eyes that don't or won't. This is the message of history. This is the dream come true, not the one expected but the only one possible: the realization that, prisoners of grace, the door through which the poor in each of us must pass on the way to freedom is always open if visited by the poor in spirit Who, equally always with us - "nearer to us than our own jugular" - will never abandon us.

Which, as I intend to examine in more detail in a sequel, if it's in no way to endorse a blueprint for Utopia neither is it to deny its uses, the quest for Nowhere that has at once defaced the epoch we are now quitting and, at the same time, finally unmasked it and revealed it for What It is and Where It is. Rather it's to extol it, to praise "the nothing in its life that became it like the leaving it"; that, however misplaced and misapplied the longing for It, in the long run the longing has not been misguided. And we need look no further than the century just past which, for all its unspeakable horrors, has demonstrated with unparalleled and definitive forcefulness, that it, too, if only by reason of its greatest gift - the Presence, as manifested in the experiments, of the Unspeakable ItSelf - was not immune from redemption, was something more than a catastrophe looking to tie up its loose ends. Awful as it may sound, if we hadn't taken the long way round, if we hadn't been there and done that and, suffering nihilistic breakdown after breakdown until we hit bottom and tested to their utmost limits our worst possibilities, how could we have uncovered our best and recognized that, from atom bomb to antibiotics, though all goes wrong it may still come right? Absolute creatures that we are, how could we be absolutely sure that the only place "out there" where, despite our fondest hopes, a lamb can safely lie down with a lion is in a zoo? Or that the journey that began with the expulsion from Eden and, passing by Sinai to pick up some pointers on how to behave, then headed for the Promised Land only to be detoured, inexplicably at the time, towards the building of the Heavenly Jerusalem and a vision of the perfect world, has now come full circle to arrive where it started, again not in the way expected but the only way possible? Absent the immediate certainty of the experiments - the signs of the time that are a sign of the times - how could we possibly know what finally issues, what *must* finally issue, when we go round in circles, especially when they seem to be spiralling out of control?^{xx}

George Schloss

Biographical Note

I've deliberately saved the autobiographical material you request for last. I can't imagine you want a Who's Who kind of thing - born in such and such a place and so on - since the very reason for being of the experiments is to provide the definitive answer to that question, *the Question*, once and for all. Let's say that a search that took well over a half-century began, appropriately enough, in England during the blitz where, as a visiting soldier before I was posted to the Continent, it

occurred to me for the first time that a guy could get killed. Which would seem to confirm Dr. Johnson's rather rueful observation that, "When a man is about to be hanged it concentrates the mind wonderfully." In any case, with many detours on the way it then went on to include such spicy items as a brief flirtation with Catholicism, a pilgrimage to India (I like to think before it became fashionable) and even a stint, a short look-in at Kyoto, before it ended some ten years ago when, after a despair only alleviated by far too many books (though they at least offered the consolation and saving grace of a reasonable facsimile), I graduated from the Lesser to the Greater Mysteries by discovering Douglas' work. And I say "Greater" advisedly since in their all-inclusiveness, all-comprehensiveness and all-embracingness - a.k.a. as omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence - the experiments cover by un-covering everything essentially worth knowing about everything and everyone. And that includes Douglas. Much as I cherish and honor him as a friend in whom, when it comes to doctrine, I've never detected one false note, I think he'd agree that the value and truth of the experiments is not dependent on his or anyone else's teaching. They are literally God'speak, the good news announced Q.E.D. through God's body. And that, too, by virtue of its coming last, is a first. After all, in a world whose whole thrust toward self-government may anticipate Self-government - and I emphasize the *may* - stranger things have happened, like "playing" God by putting a man on the moon. Who knows? As in our individual lives when, caught between a rock and a hard place and faced with the possibility of suffering a really real live cata-strophe like hanging on a cross and/or disappearing in a paper-bag where we're literally compelled to recognize that down *is* the way out, we may each of us actually begin to take the job seriously.

Since we began the discussion with a consideration of history and since ideas, the concepts presumably derived from right perception, have consequences, it might be a good idea to end there and show, as the Buddhists do, how right seeing can affect right thought, how put in their proper place by the experiments, the two sides of every story, the two wrongs making in all one right, are reconciled in their one truth, in the third "thing" which is no-thing at all.

We often hear it said, especially these days, that it's not the destination that counts, it's the journey. Indeed, it's become the badge of modernity, the very watchword of the now-people who, absent Presence and two-way looking, pretend to live in the present but whose now, even before they say it, has already become a then. In reality, this is just a late version, a renewal of an old quarrel that's been going on for centuries with the ancients who claimed just the opposite. For instance, taking his cue from his teacher Plato, Aristotle insisted and, by extension, was eventually joined by contemplatives everywhere, that "to find is better than to seek," whether heaven or hell is irrelevant for the moment.

Well, which is it? Either/or? Or, both or neither? Or both and neither? The experiments - meditation for the market-place - suggest and more than suggest that, as with the "end" of history, the journey *is* the destination but we have to arrive where we started before we can begin it.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ⁱ Alan. Would you elaborate on the following: *Summoned home at last by the experiments to where he belongs, as much a posthumous victim in triumph as he ever was of mistaken identity in defeat, the God man, too, still lives and along with the rest of us saints and sinners can be found for the looking any day of the week in the place he never left.*

George: We can approach this on two levels. First, from a spatial, let's call it a vertical, experiential dimension and, secondly, on a horizontal plane: how that experience, any experience, is expressed in time and translated into behavior - in this case, history.

Let's start with the experiential and a piece Douglas wrote a few years back called "On Having a Head." As he demonstrates, once we see on present evidence - and this through any number of experiments but, in this case, primarily by means of the the Pointing Finger experiment—that all that's there, or rather here, is nothing at all, just pure awareness, it's also palpably obvious if only to the touch that something else is stirring in that region. For instance, I can lift my arms which appear to arise out of nowhere, and holding each ear, or what I've learned to call an ear, between thumb and forefinger, see that between them they contain the whole wide world or whatever part of it is in view. It could be a landscape or a room or the computer I'm writing on now or you or my own image in a mirror. That I can also realize, that is make real, a similar marvel by simply extending my arms and consciously embracing the universe is merely frosting on the cake, further corroboration of this phenomenon.

I can then take a further step and - eyes open or closed makes no difference - start examining with my fingers that massive and material lump between the ears that has certain definite features: a nose, mouth, cheeks, chin etc., so shaped and formed that it distinguishes it from any other species on earth. I can then identify it as human as distinct from bird or beast or insect.

Finally, I can locate unique characteristics such as a mole, a scar, a beard or buck teeth, in my case, baldness, and so on that help define my individuality. (And, by the way, to be in-dividual means to be undivided). And just for good measure and to insure this individuality I can, if I choose, take a look at the fingers that are doing the walking and notice that no two prints are alike.

Well, you might ask, what has this got to do with Jesus the Christ? As it happens, a great deal.

Let's start with step #1, the Pointing Finger, and call what we're pointing at the Godhead as it's generally been known to the mystics, notably Eckhart, Ruysbroek and many, many others including Sufis and Kabbalists, or as Jacob Boehme preferred, the *Urgrund*, the *mysterium tremendum*, the empty Ground that cannot be described because raining on the just and the unjust it has no characteristics whatsoever other than the capacity to make room and contain *everything* within it. Setting aside orthodox monotheism's difficulty with the notion that there can be an "entity" without attributes beyond Jehovah or God the Father or Allah, let's call, for argument's

sake, this unbounded Source the divine - in Eastern terms, *sunyata, nirvana*; in the negative theology of the West, the divine darkness or, as Douglas in the *Trial* prefers, not-god and then move onto step #2.

Although not entirely another kettle of fish, all things considered (and, after all, we are considering all things), step #2 is still a pretty big fish in its own right because it now introduces something new into the equation (and, not incidentally, the subsequent need for two-way looking). It comes up with a body and a body that unquestionably has a head. As Douglas cries out, usually with great glee, "But what a head!" What a head, indeed, because as we've seen, although itself bounded by something called ears it contains between these two extremities the entire universe. And this, by definition, is what is meant by the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the *head* of the Universal Church and, by extension, the cosmos itself. The Byzantines referred to him as the Pantocrator, the God-man, the Crown of Creation and Lord of the Universe. At the other end of the spectrum and just to show the process plays no favorites, he's also acknowledged in Negro spirituals as the one who has the whole world in his hand.

Steps #3 and #4 follow quite naturally as we ascend from the Genus God-man to the species human (usually referred to as generic Man, though he could, of course, be a woman), and then to the top of the heap and the end of earthly evolution, to the individual, any individual. It could be you or it could be me or it could be an individual by the name of Jesus of Nazareth who, so far as we know, was the first to suspect that within the context of a particular prophetic message - and I'll get to that in a minute - he had a claim on his inherent and all-inclusive birthright or on at least three of the four perspectives listed above. Thanks to his acting on this conviction (combined with the full faith, if not credit, of those who believed in him and, spreading the good news, laid the groundwork for what subsequently unfolded), we can see now and see with *certainty* some two-thousand tortuous years after the event, that the universal recognition of this birthright consists of nothing more nor less than the ultimate awareness of the structure of reality and our place in it. And this, not because he said it or his followers said it or I say it or you say it or William Blake said it who, when asked what he thought of Jesus Christ, replied, "He is the only god, sir. And so am I. And so are you," but simply because the experiments say it and say it loud and clear: that this is what is and all there is, there ain't no more.

Not surprisingly - since, again, it reflects the structure of reality - this four-square design, this given, is acknowledged in other traditions. In Mahayana Buddhism, for instance, it's approximated by the Three Bodies of the Buddha consisting of the Essence Body which is identical with the void, the Body of Bliss and finally the Body of Transformation, which is the Essence Body made manifest on earth as an historical Buddha, entrance into which club, according to Zen, is potentially open to everyone. Even more striking, however, is its total correspondence with Hindu doctrine or, rather, Hindu doctrine's total correspondence with it, with the rock-bottom evidence provided by the body. As outlined in the Upanishads, in the realm of sound the four portions of the Self, though pronounced OM, are written AUM, with A signifying the waking state, U the dream state, M the condition of deep sleep, and underlying and underlining all - symbol of the silent ground in which it lives and has its being - the abiding bottom- line that contains it. And if we have any doubts as to how, for the truth to be truth, it must be all-pervasive and, endlessly repeated,

apply not only to special cases but to every aspect of existence even its lowliest, we have only to consider the total dependence of the print, the variable letters you're reading now, on the blank and silent and constant page it's being written on. That is, if we care to emerge from chaos into some sort of cosmic legibility.

We can now turn from the first to the second category, to the dimension of time or how the real will seem. What distinguishes the Judeo-Christian tradition from its counterpart, the so-called Wisdom of the East - and a very great wisdom it is indeed - has been its emphasis not so much on "what is" but on what will be, on becoming rather than being. In contrast to the East's weary resignation to the cosmic cycle, to the everlasting round which, reflected in the relatively static nature of its societies until only yesterday when it came under Western influence, the dynamism so intimately connected with a linear history consisting of a beginning, middle and end has its origin in the West or, rather, in the Judeo-Christian West before it incorporated its Greco-Roman part and evolved into Christendom. And we can follow that way of thinking and that perspective right from the notion of the Creation, the Big Bang itself, to the subsequent expulsion from the Garden with no possibility of return but only of a forward-looking advance, to the Exodus from Egypt which, as much a flight from the tyranny of the cosmic gods made in our image as from political oppression until, passing by Sinai, it temporarily came to a halt in the Promised Land. But then a funny thing happened. Spurred on by the prophets and particularly one special prophet for whom even this first foray ever into freedom and the Beyond was not enough, pausing midway to catch its breath (and breadth), it executed an about-face and reversed itself. It literally turned everything upside down or, as we see now, right-side up - blessed are they who mourn, the last shall be first and so on. Not surprisingly, given the biblical orientation towards history and its completion, this about-face, this "when", this exclusive once and once only that we've come to know as the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection (cf. Blake), was first figured *in terms of time*. And if I use the word "midway" to describe this shift, I do so advisedly because, as we see now, that's what it was, a station on the way to its ultimate "where", to the end of the story and its promised fulfillment in that "heavenly" space certified by the experiments, those universal instruments of the Parousia designed to lead us by way of the Second Coming of the Christ or, since we can be more specific now, of the Christ-head, to the longed-for and, given who we really, really are, the justifiably longed-for the to to the justifiably longed-for Kingdom of God. And if the notion of a *Second* Coming no less is too much for us moderns to swallow - a folly to the Greeks and a stumbling-block to the Jews, some folks still get touchy about it - we can just as easily split the difference and call it the First.

Now I realize that what I've just written is, if taken purely at face value, arguable to say the least; in fact, has, to put it mildly, been the subject of some violent disagreement over the years. So let's look at the record and *see* if we can zero-in on the truth, on not only "what is" but how "what is" appeared, how it seemed to happen.

As the story goes, a human, an individual from Nazareth named Jesus decided, whatever his reasons or inspiration, to take it upon himself to announce that the aforesaid and long-awaited Kingdom as detailed in the prophecies was at hand, a proclamation not all that novel in a world which, very much resembling ours in its generous allotment of assorted kooks, was being blown about by conflicting winds of doctrine, literally feverish with great expectations and talk of a New

Age in which "Pan is dead" had become almost a universal watchword. What distinguished him, however, aside from what, as reported, must have been an undoubted personal charisma, was that, unlike other itinerant preachers on the circuit, he felt called upon to do something about it. He goes out into the countryside, deliberately and fittingly enough at harvest-time, and declares the end. Nothing happens, nothing at all. In his dismay and bafflement, he retreats for the traditional and symbolic forty days into the wilderness (cf. Noah on the waters and Moses on his mountain) where, after resisting several earthly temptations, he recognizes that for the prophecy to be fulfilled it must be acted out to the letter and the letter - notably Second Isaiah - reads: that, for the Son of God to appear in person (or, as we would say, in 1st person), the Son of Man, the Suffering Servant, must give up his life. With this in mind he decides - quite logically it appears in retrospect - "to impersonate" the Messiah, that is, to assume in his own person the necessary requirements for the role already outlined in the scenario, one of which is to offer himself as ransom. "Greater love hath no man..." etc. What's pertinent for our purposes and no doubt accounts for his Self-proclaimed deathlessness as the Way and the Truth and the Life is that, orthodox to a fault thank God, he never once as Jesus or, as we would say, the little one, designates himself the Son of God but, in perfect accordance with the script (and, by extension, reality), only refers to himself as the Son of Man who must first make the ultimate sacrifice in order that the Son of God may come.

The rest is history and, as it happens, the absolute content and meaning of the card-experiment. Looking back from its vantage-point from which, for the first time ever, we're in a position to take in the whole picture since, as the conscious Measure, we demonstrably contain it - and, after all, looking back is what history is - everything falls into place and not only history but the myriad other speculations that have been littering the fields of metaphysics and religion and philosophy for millennia. And if I've perhaps gone to too great lengths to answer your question it's only to stress how truly epochal and all-inclusive the experiments are. Because it's thanks to them that we're now in a position as never before *in* history to trace its course from first to last and recognize how, reflecting the three stages of our own individual development, it passes from childhood, from the make-believe of myth and rumors of prophecy, to its real live enactment in the supposedly once and once only event of the Cross and from there, by however devious a route its crooked path is made straight, to its ultimate consummation in this particular experiment where, as both conscious witness to and active participant in this same drama of Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection, we see the mystery played out before our very eyes, endlessly and ceaselessly repeated in Fact just as it's always been since the beginning of time by every living creature on earth. And this is what I mean when I claim that the experiments come not to destroy but fulfill the prophetic books - the Old and New Testaments as well as any other testament, personal or otherwise - that they and this experiment in particular constitute the last and final affirmation of who we really really are if only by virtue of their pride of place in the body, in God's body.

As for the "*as much a posthumous victim in triumph as ever he was of mistaken identity in defeat*", appropriately enough we can address the last first.

According to the Gospel accounts, nobody present knew quite what to make of it, including the principal figure himself who, as his last words indicate - a direct quote from the Psalms - remained canonical to the end. And this condition persisted until Saul, renamed Paul, of Tarsus

came along and, as the only one of the original bunch who might pass for what today we might call an "intellectual", wedded his undoubted familiarity with the mystery cults then raging throughout the Near East - the myths of the dying and resurrected god - with the certainty provided by his own overwhelming vision on the road to Damascus. Interestingly enough, it may well have been that this certainty was reinforced, not so much despite but, because he was the only one of the apostles who had never actually seen Jesus face to no-face. In any case, if Jesus is the first putative one and only Christ, Paul, on the strength of his being the first begetter of the doctrine, becomes the first Christian.

And so begins the gradual conversion of Christianity, not only into the official religion of the empire three centuries later but into the exact opposite of what its founder intended or even dreamed of, into the civilizational entity we know as Christendom. But lest we're tempted to take cheap shots, as so many have and still do, at "God's providence", not to speak of the natural course of things, it's also important to remember that if the advent of the message in its institutional and organized form at once signalled the end of the beginning for its founder even as it consecrated his new career as "posthumous victim in triumph", it also marked the beginning of the end for all of us in person, in the 1st person of the experiments. Because as I've tried to show, using the experiments as a gauge - at once the goal to be reached yet the place from which we start - we can chart a direct line from the events characterized as Western "Christian" history to where we are now. From its self-styled universal mission and subsequent exploration (and exploitation) of the known-world to one world; from the unheard-of-till-then separation of Church and State ("render unto Caesar") to our equally unheard-of till-now recognition of the individual and his and her right to freedom of choice; and from the failure of its high hopes and great expectations for a Second Coming that inspired the medieval cathedrals to the ensuing disappointment that in turn encouraged the first halting steps towards a 3rd person science - it's all of apiece. And the same applies to its aftermath, to that science which, no longer confined to the service of the sacred as it had been for the highly developed Chinese and Hindus and Arabs and even for the Greeks, but devoted to the less transcendent but more modest and profane improvement of the human estate, by lowering its sights, led in turn to its own reversal, to the bottom-line from where we see now for the first time that only absolute immanence has the capacity to transcend, that not until we are Nothing can we pretend to contain All. Which is no more than to say - and it has been said and not only by Jesus - that the Kingdom of God is not "up there" but "in here", within us. But with this difference. No longer solely dependent on faith or belief however well-founded or on a mere assertion by him or anyone else, it's a real, live, palpable and sensible Fact to be experienced and enjoyed and celebrated by all in that marriage of matter and spirit that, once known as the resurrection of the body, we here and now call two-way looking.

And if it be asked, and it has been, how then account for the undoubted and acknowledged influence on Douglas of Zen, say, as the religion of no-religion that most closely approximates Headlessness, the answer in historical terms is equally simple. As we see now and could only see now since only now has the story arrived at its happy ending, had it not been for Christendom's "perversion" of Christianity - its infiltration of pagan elements itself a perversion of its original message - and had this not been followed by its own subsequent breakdown into warring denominations until they, too, collapsed of their own weight into the totally secular,

commercialized and expansionist world we live in, no one outside of China and Japan would ever have heard of Zen, least of all Douglas. We, or rather, they would still be sitting cross-legged in forest monasteries. Which, of course, would have been fine for the select few (and an all male crew at that) but what about the rest of us?

And the same goes for the usual charges levelled against the West and its so-called Universal Church. Because if it's true that more often than not its outer, its exoteric rind was bitter and hard to swallow - the Crusades, the Inquisition, the innumerable atrocities committed in its name - it's equally true its pulp - its saints and mystics and great thinkers - was often sweet to the taste. Most important of all, it was they who provided shelter and protective covering for the one thing necessary, the seed. So that when the time was ripe, even rotten-ripe, and the fruit came tumbling down - and it has - the seed could safely fall to the Ground in the experiments. And it has. And we all know what happens or, at least, what may happen, if "a grain of wheat die..."

ⁱⁱ If anyone would like to know more about these experiments I can provide either the descriptions or reference material. See also page 20 and announcements about local workshops at which they are the main content.

ⁱⁱⁱ Alan: Do you mean by *Man in it* the face we make out to be there when we look at the moon?
George: Yes, that's what I do mean - the man in the moon.

^{iv} Alan: What do you mean by *Sabbath sense*?

George: According to the Creation story in the Old Testament, the Sabbath is the day when God rested. So, by extension, the Sabbath sense (at least as I use it) is that same sense come to awareness in the experiments when we rest in our emptiness and capacity. By the mere and sheer presence of the experiments - the fact that they exist at all and what that possibility entails - we have in a sense already exited the Sixth Day and are present in the Seventh. The Kyoto School - Nishitani, Tanabe, Abe - touch on this when they distinguish between the "already here" and the "not-yet." It's my view that, thanks to the awareness provided by two-way looking, we can now see that the "not-yet" is already here, or at least as already here as it's going to get. Paradoxical all the way, the goal, the destination, where we think we're heading, is now revealed as where we've been coming from all along. The Storehouse experiment demonstrates this very nicely: that in reality the future is already behind us. Which, I suppose, is what is meant by the concept life-in-death and the "end" of history.

^v The paper-bag experiment. Two people face to no-face, one at each end of a short tube.

^{vi} Alan: I need some help with "*Where once the dream of idols defined the taking up of the person into heaven and against all odds and the law of gravity proved it to be no idle dream, so now, in the infinite light and lightness of the experiments, those odds are made all even.*"

George: The ascension into heaven, so-called, has indeed, proven to be no idle dream since, as I've tried to show, it's come true, not in the way expected, of course, but the only way possible. Because it was precisely the failure of that transcendent hope and the ensuing decline and fall into modernity

and disillusion that plunged us to the bottom-line and the "heavenly" immanence now available to all here and now.

^{vii} Alan: Eight inches representing the height of my head?

George: That's exactly what I mean - the length of the head.

^{viii} Alan: I read this to mean the desire for my third person expression is the obstacle to the first person or Self-expression; the freeing of THIS? Is this what you mean?

George: Although that may very well be, I don't think it's what I meant. The cake-mold symbolizes the structure of reality, of All-Possibility, of what is. When I pour the liquid into the mold from the left or right or center or from wherever, it can take an indefinite (not an infinite) number of paths, routes, ways, but however it flows and varies and deviates, when it congeals it still must take its ultimate shape from the shape of the structure itself. In that sense, it has no choice. I suppose, seen from the point of view of the 3rd person, we could call that the way of life-and-death or, better yet, life-in-death. From the standpoint of the 1st Person, however, this limiting of the shape is not a deprivation of its limitlessness. On the contrary, it's an affirmation of it. If the limitless 1st Person - omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent; God, if you will - could not limit its limitlessness into the limited it would not be limitless. There would be something it couldn't "do", so to speak, somewhere it couldn't "be."

^{ix} Alan: Has evolution been brought to a halt?

George: I think it has, at least for the time being. Just as there've been no evolutionary changes on earth since our arrival some millions of years ago, so I seriously doubt any could occur under our watchful eye. Which is not to say that if we destroy ourselves lock, stock and barrel or are destroyed in turn by some cataclysmic cosmic event something else might not come along in time. But the whole point of history - and, by extension I might add, the experiments - is that in this business of nurture vs. nature there's no longer any need for natural evolution. We have all that's necessary to be all that's necessary just as we are. And even if we do happen to modify the species either by chance, accident or design, it still won't be evolutionary; it will have been created by us. As for modifying the Genus, as suggested in my comments in Question 1, that's literally impossible. It's not by accident that the 1st Person is absolutely, positively, non-get-atable or that there's nothing there to get at. If only in Self-defense, it "knew", knew without knowing, what it was going to have to deal with - us.

^x Alan: I think of absolute certainty as third person conviction because certainty and uncertainty would not apply or be relevant from a First Person perspective. Is that a correct interpretation?"

George: Wow! First Person perspective *is* absolute certainty. We have it, It is it. Even language "knows" it. It says day-night=Day. "God has no arms, no hands but mine." (St. Teresa of Avila). I "have" the conviction that I AM is the absolute certainty. Since I can't draw it here, imagine an isosceles triangle with the points at its base signifying uncertainty/certainty and its apex Certainty. Or better yet, try one of the nice exercises in Headlessness. Let your right-hand represent certainty and your left-hand uncertainty, both small-caps. Now look. Who's got them both? If that ain't Certain what is? Or try this one on for size. Just say aloud, "All *things* are relative". You've just proclaimed the absolutely Certain truth and, incidentally, settled the perennial debate that's plagued

philosophy and some schools of the Vedanta and Buddhism from the beginning: this whole business of non-duality vs. duality - matter vs. spirit etc. It all depends on your perspective and *whose* perspective. If, from a 3rd person standpoint - God projected up there into his heaven, Blake's Nobodaddy - you *imagine* yourself as an observer rather than a participant as well - *the* Participant - of course when you train your sites on the base of a triangle all you'll see will be uncertainty/certainty. Just to bring it closer to home, the Foursome experiment demonstrates this exactly. Seen out of the corner of your eye, those on your left and right *seem* to be confronting one another. But is that the whole story? Is that what they're really doing any more than you are? Of course, the pathos of the situation is that it's not just a question of your containing them which, given this experiment, couldn't be simpler or more patently obvious. The pathos lies in drawing their attention to it, in getting them to see as clearly as a mathematical equation the inequality that exists between 1st and 3rd persons. Are *they* really confronting one another, however much they may believe and are convinced they are? Which, in my view, is the task for Headlessness: not only enjoining people to love one another with feeling, with words and music - we've been trying that for aeons with only limited success - but to demonstrate it's what we're doing anyway whether we know it or not or even like it or not, that, in a word, it's in our own and best self-and-Self interest to do so.

^{xi} Alan: What is it about the present situation that you consider makes "*evidence after the Fact, the union of both perspectives - interior and exterior*" now necessary "*on a universal scale.*" Please explain what has changed to make the need now.

Not to pay lip-service to the Johnnies-come-lately on the scene or even to sound too alarmist since it's been a long time a-coming, but I think a glance at the recent headlines might help answer that one. One world means one universal world and a language to match. Not a sterile parody as was proposed some years ago by devotees of Esperanto or, thanks , first, to the British and now the American hegemony, the colorful if somewhat limited pidgeon English now spoken by some two or three billion people on earth, but a language that everyone can understand and, at the same time, that not only says something but has something to say - Godspeak, the voice of silence. It's time. The explosion of 3rd Person science with its two-edged sword of danger on the one hand and opportunity on the other has led to its corresponding implosion - the experiments. It's worth noting too, that reality never fails to work in just this way. We just don't get one without the other - no atom bomb, no penicillin. Which is not to suggest we all run out and learn some equivalent homogeneous babble or give up convenient simultaneous translations but recognize where speech comes from and Who it comes from and allows, nay, encourages all those surface differences. Nor is it to suggest that I hold out any great hope that this ideal state will be realized, but only to acknowledge that for the first time ever the real possibility of transcending local religions and beliefs and customs and the means of locating and so containing them exists, that's all. But then, who could have dreamed even as recently as a hundred years ago, that fifty or sixty nations might at least give the appearance of getting together to rid the world and not just some locale of its present menace? In present menace? In any case, in an ideal world, which is no world at all, Headless people would not go around decapitating others, only their selves. Whether the experiments will foster that kind of behavior in more than a few is anybody's guess. But are more than a few necessary? Again, who could have suspected at the time that the essential message to the world from Athens would narrow down to a handful , to an Aeschylus or Socrates or a Plato and Aristotle

or from Jerusalem, to the prophets and Jesus and St. Paul, that it was they who laid the Ground-work within their traditions just as a Gautama and Lao-Tze and Chuang-Tzu did within theirs.?

^{xii} Alan: Who said "*let go and your fall will be broken by the roof of heaven.*"

George: This is a joy and a beauty. It's by Djuna Barnes from her novel *Nightwood*. Djuna Barnes was an American lady, born in the late nineties - the 1890's that is - who was a charter member of that very vocal contingent of American expatriates in Paris after the First World War. She knew everybody - Joyce, Hemingway etc. Wrote novels, short stories, plays, but none so accomplished as *Nightwood* which was picked up by Eliot when he was the head honcho at Faber and Faber and who also contributed a very flattering introduction. And, in truth, it's an overlooked gem. Coming back to the States just before the outbreak of the Second War, she lived about three or four doors down from me in Greenwich Village. I used to see her in the park once in a while, a formidable presence I can assure you, in fact something of a recluse, and though I knew people who'd met her I could never summon up the courage to approach her. I would now, if only on the strength of that quote which, as far as I'm concerned, says it all. Because "let go hell and your fall will be broken by the roof of heaven" is exactly what happens and is happening all the time whether one is aware of Seeing or not. It wasn't long after I'd discovered Douglas and his work that I vaguely remembered it and sure enough, going back over my copy of forty years before, found it underlined. Interestingly enough and much to my surprise, it was the only thing in the whole book I'd underlined. So I guess there really are no accidents. I guess I was implicitly feeling my way towards what the experiments make explicit - an enormous difference, of course, the difference between dining oneself and watching other people dine. Still, as a description of what takes place in all of us when we're running on all six cylinders, it couldn't be better said.

^{xiii} Alan: Could you explain what you mean by the Gap."

George: I think my response in note 8 should cover that one - the Gap as the cake-mold. (Endnote 8, above)

^{xiv} Alan: What do you mean by gathering in a circle?

George: I think that is covered in my answer below.

^{xv} Alan: Could you be a bit more specific in relating the following extract to the experiments? *Quite simply, the Self-realization now available to each and every one of us with an eye to the truth is precisely what constitutes the end and meaning of history. The last of a series because for the first time in history it stands outside all series including its own, it has, by delivering us to the experiments, delivered itself?*

As regards our interpretations of history, the problem up to now has been that, with few exceptions - St. Augustine's *City of God* is an early attempt - we've never been able to secure a purchase outside it from which to see it whole. It would be much like your asking me to make a fair appraisal of the Earl of Oxford (a.k.a. Shakespeare) without having read Hamlet or King Lear or the Tempest. Sure, I might make some hit-and-miss judicious comments here and there as to this and that play, just as our better historians have turned their attention to this or that period, even in some cases like Toynbee or Spengler, or Polybius and Ibn-Khaldoun and Vico before them, to universal

history, but always from a conditioned as distinct from an unconditional point of view without which it's impossible to uncover its essential meaning. However indirectly, the Classified experiment addresses this issue.

Let me put it this way. We know from their testimony and behavior and example that over the years Self-realization has been available to a handful of people, the rare few - the great saints and sages and mystics and so-on. We know that what they saw, usually at great cost though not necessarily so (cf. Traherne who appears to have been a natural as was Heinrich Suso, a disciple of Eckhart's, and de Caussade, one of Douglas' favorites), is now available to all of us by way of the experiments, just as we know that the equivalent of a dozen or so lackeys required to run around lighting two-hundred candles so that Louis XIV could see what he was eating is ours for the turning on of a switch. Hegel was the first to claim that this resolution of the Master-Slave or Master-Servant relation - the switch replacing the lackeys - constituted the end of history, its meaning and purpose, what history had been for and finally all about - the realization of the essential equality of all people. What Hegel, great as he was, could not see, though he suspected it, was that this turn-about had in turn to be turned-about, that the Suffering Servant, the so-called King of the Jews, hadn't worn his crown of thorns for nothing, that, as exemplified in the paper-bag experiment, the Servant=Master relation which to some degree seems to have been resolved at least in the eyes of the law of democratic polities, had in turn to be modified to read its exact reverse, the Servant as Master, as omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent ruler of the world. Nishitani, one of the great representatives of the Kyoto School of Zen, calls it "the reciprocal interchange of absolute inequality," a tough one at first bite until, coming out of the paper-bag, you chew it and digest it and realize that, taken word for word, that's exactly what takes place, I as absolutely Nobody absolutely disappearing in your favor, you, reciprocally, disappearing in mine. And this despite history's (and historians') seeming disclaimer is what's really really been going on if only underground since the beginning of time. We just didn't know it, that's all, because we didn't see it. And seeing, the basis for knowledge, comes first. Hence the centrality of the experiments.

Further than this we can't go, at least conceptually, quite simply because that's all there is. What we can say with absolute assurance is that what was once accessible to the fortunate few is now available to all at least potentially thanks to this most unlikely source. And in delivering, via the experiments, this possibility of realization to each of us individually, history, its purpose satisfied and meaning made plain, has done the same for itself, has taken at least the first step towards its own liberation. Which is not to suggest it goes away any more than mine - or, I assume, yours - went away when over ten years ago I first came across Headlessness. But - and I speak for myself now - it has been transformed. What I saw as evil or, if you will, just plain bad in my own life (whether self-administered or not is beside the point) because it failed to affirm my little one, I see now, at least in my better moments, as the only good available to me at the time, if only because it led me to a realization of who and where I AM. In this sense, Mr. Eliot was quite correct when, as regards his own personal destiny, he wrote that "In my end is my beginning." So, too, with history. Though neither its slaughters nor deliverances - the *facts* of its past - can be changed, in light of the FACT it served as a channel to reveal, our interpretation of its meaning most certainly can be and must be. If, in the end, as he goes on to say, the end is the place we start from, we better make sure where that end is so that we can begin.

And, again, and at the risk of becoming tiresome, we have an experiment to illustrate the truth of this - the Machine, a variation on the Circle. Since it's rarely performed I don't know if you know it or not but it's a marvelous demonstration of what I'm talking about, not so much of beginnings and ends but of ends and beginnings. I remember one occasion quite forcibly. We were at a Gathering in Nacton. It was late morning and Douglas as the leader (though, of course, it could be anybody) represented himself as a very, very old inventor, a very tired, very weary party who, nevertheless, had to get through this last task before we could break for lunch and he could sit down and rest. The ground-rules were as follows. He would lower his arm which, acting as a semaphore, would indicate to the person standing closest to him that the exercise had begun. Since we were holding hands this person would in turn signal by the slightest pressure that he or she had received the signal and so it would pass from hand to hand around the circle till finally arriving back where it started, to its originator, it would trigger the semaphore and the experiment would be over. Like God he could then sit down and rest and like humans we could then sit down and have lunch.

Now this experiment is generally offered as an exercise in freedom and it certainly is that. After all, whenever I receive the signal, let's say from the person on my left, I have a choice before passing it onto the person on my right. I can either do so immediately, or delay a little or a lot, or not pass it on at all, in which case, as we say over here in baseball, the game is called off because of rain. (And that may happen to the race, too, if we don't attend to our proper business). But for our purposes that's not what concerns me here, rather a variation on the theme. Because on this particular occasion it struck me that as the recipient of the impulse I had absolutely no choice either in what or when I received it. In that sense, as heir to everything that had gone before, to all the other impulses that had travelled the circle until they reached me, I stood at the end of a series over which, like the date and place of my birth or my genes for that matter, like history itself, I had no control whatsoever. By the same token, however, if I stood passively at the end, as being very much present in the Gap and aware of it I also stood actively at its beginning. I could, depending on the conditions set down and my own inner state (like love), respond accordingly. And, albeit the image speaks louder than words, this is what I mean when I say we - each of us - are at once at the end of history yet at the same time at its beginning or, at least, at the possibility of a new beginning. Because if, like man-made history, the experiments are new, for the first time in history all of us can consciously see in this particular experiment the new finally join hands and unite with its original. Can see, too, by this recognition, that the circle of history coming to a close, it paradoxically opens. As a result, to the degree I see that I'm no longer the center of the universe but the universe is centered in me, I have to take responsibility for it or, if you prefer, that I'm now "responsible" to it, literally in a position to answer to it and for it. Dostoevski in one of his novels touches on this when he has one of his characters shout (his characters are always shouting), "I see now I am responsible for everything," which, however impressive it sounded when I first read it years ago, I must admit to not having the vaguest idea of what he was talking about. I do now. Though, as in this experiment, I may appear to be free to make this or that choice right down to doing nothing (that is, depending on my psychological and sociological conditioning - my so-called state of mind - refuse to pass on the impulse so that Douglas can sit down and rest), as to making a choice one way or the other I have no choice at all. As St. Paul put it so poetically but we see now in the flesh, we are literally "prisoners of grace."

That question answered with certainty, it only remains to be seen what we do with it and make of it, how that certainty translates into individual behavior, from Seeing to Being, always mindful, of course, that to the degree each of us falls short of that centered vision, to that degree do we pay a price for our absence.

^{xvi} Alan: What exactly do you mean by *the being-to-be dying to be free within all of us...?*
 George: I guess by its very nature when we deal in language paradox has to be the name of the game. As I intend it, "the being-to-be dying to be free within all of us" is for want of a better word, God. God, or if you prefer, the 1st Person, has no being, is a pure abstraction until "incorporated" in me or you or whoever. "God has no arms, no hands, but mine." That's St. Teresa of Avila. Angelus Silesius says it even better. "I know that without me,/the life of God were lost;/ Were I destroyed, he must/ perforce give up the ghost." "What has been said of God/ suffices not my mind./ The more-than-God is where/ my life and light I find." I don't know how far you want to go on this. I probably should have been satisfied with referring to these or Eckhart's sermons (from which the above derive) and let it go at that.

^{xvii} This refers to the 'Circle' experiment.

^{xviii} .Alan: You are saying the awakening to this space here is the redemption of awareness from the waking dream of everyday life? Or is 'the fulfilled life' the possibility you refer to?

George: I interpret the manifestation of this Possibility via the experiments as an expression of what once upon a time was referred to in the Western tradition as Providence and in Buddhism as Other, as distinct from Self, Power: how all can go wrong but if pursued to the end - the world being round - can still come right. The only difference between the world and Providence, between, if you will, the perspective of the 3rd and 1st Person - and it makes all the difference - is that Providence, as again demonstrated in the Circle and Machine exercises and in the Foursome as well, is, when experienced rather than merely observed, an *open* circle, in reality just another name for God. Any closed circle that we can imagine or draw, like this 0, like the great globe itself, is essentially an abstraction and as such, if acted upon as the be-all and end-all, an hallucination. A necessary one, of course, which is not only the reason for two-way looking but precisely its point. Were there no hallucination, no dream to be redeemed on the dark side of the moon, we'd still be in the Garden with all the other birds and bees, but the All-Possible would have been deprived of one of its possibilities - to know itSelf, to be conscious and aware of itSelf - and, as such, unfulfilled.

^{xix} Alan: I need some explanatory comment here.

George: It might help here to consider the four castes as established in Hinduism following the Aryan invasions. Working from the "top" down and in order of "importance" we have first the Brahmins, the priestly class, then the Kshatriyas, the aristocratic warriors or royal power, and then the third estate, the Vaisyas, the merchants and farmers - these three and these three categories alone qualified to be "twice-born." And we see something like this reflected in the course of Western history along with its philosophies, their reasons for being. Beneath them but still included in the scheme of things are the Sudras, the workers and peasants. What with Marx and the rise of socialism on the one hand and the emergence of consumer capitalism and democracy on the other,

no need to go into that most recent development as it, too, becomes part of the mix, indeed becomes the dominant factor in what we mean by modernity, at least up to now. Every man and woman, too, doing what is right in his or her own eyes.

What's often overlooked, however, is that there was a fifth caste, if it can be called that. Just as Zen has often been called the religion of no-religion (though it's my claim the title is more aptly applied to Headlessness), this was the caste of no-caste, the Chandalas, the outcasts, those with neither affiliation nor home, spiritual or otherwise. No accident that these were Gandhi's Untouchables. No accident that half-way around the globe their opposite numbers arrived in America in steerage or in Australia in chains or that from here to Hollywood they included, though not exclusively, actors and mountebanks, jugglers and medicine-men, the dispossessed, the nameless. No accident, either, that the experiments, the pure light of the single eye that, shining through the prism of this world, reveals religion, all religions in their true if various colors, were devised not in safe centers like Oxford or Cambridge or Berlin or Rome for that matter but, outside the loop entirely, by the son of a struggling lower middle-class green-grocer in a small coastal town, an obscure scholarship boy who also found himself dispossessed and with Nowhere to go (Douglas Harding).

As for "*The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*" Isn't that what history's all about - violence - with the century just past (and who knows what's yet to come) witnessing the sum of death by war greater than in all the previous ages combined? And yet, and yet, inexorably and inextricably correlated with these numbers and this historical and historic breakdown like none ever seen before on the face of the earth, hand in hand comes its corresponding historical breakthrough to the bottom line. Can there be any doubt that you and I and all of us to some degree live by violence and will continue to live by violence - on Indian land, for instance, or aborigines' land? (And whose land were they living on?) To my mind the only workable translation of the sixth commandment is not "Thou shalt not kill" but "Thou shalt not murder", as even the Jains in India understand who, if they really really lived by the first rather than the second rule, would, paradoxically, all be dead in a week. Blake, that magnificent precursor of two-way looking, said it best of all. "The cut worm forgives the plow." And the plow is history and the experiments the harvest.

^{xx} Alan: A bit more elaboration here please George.

George: You ask what that's all about. I guess it's about two-way looking and the need for it, at least for the likes of me. This is hardly the time or place to discuss it, but it leads us into all kinds of issues that have to be related to Headlessness - like pacifism, for instance, and non-resistance. Kierkegaard once asked whether a man has the right to allow himself to be put to death for the truth inasmuch as Jesus did it once and for all. I think the question might be better put to ask whether I have the right to stand by and watch another be put to death for any reason - like my child, for instance, or any child.

There was an interesting exchange of letters during the Second World War between Martin Buber, the Jewish philosopher, and Gandhi, Gandhi insisting that the only answer to Hitler was non-

resistance, Buber pointing out that were he, Gandhi, living under the Nazi rather than the more benign British hegemony, no one would ever have heard of him or his non-resistance movement. He would have been snuffed out in a second. Interestingly enough, the Bhagavad-Gita, Gandhi's Bible, adopts Buber's perspective.

The point I was trying to make, however, was the danger of confusing Utopia or the hope of it -the not-yet - with the Nowhere which is of an entirely different order and already here. Douglas addresses this beautifully in the *Little Book of Life and Death*, the unbridgeable gap between the notion of heaven on earth and the reality of earth in heaven which is where we all are anyway only we don't know it. And we don't know it because we don't see it. Or at least haven't up to now.

Experiments referred to in the Essay

The following notes are intended to help readers with no previous contact to get a taste for the experiments. It is impossible to communicate what they are about in such a limited space and, in any case, they have to be tried out rather than read about. I can provide more detailed information or you can try www.headless.org or come to Richard Lang's workshops on 27 February and/or 2 March 2002.

Paper-bag.

An open-ended paper bag or short tube. Two people, one at each end put their faces into the bag and consider, on the evidence available to them, how many faces are present and the differences between the end they are located at and the other.

Pointing Finger.

Point at the place where others see your face and see what, on present evidence, it is pointing to.

Two-way Looking.

Becoming aware of what I am looking out of not just what I'm looking at. Symbolized by both hands, back-to-back, with first fingers pointing, one hand pointing out at the world and the other back at what is looking.

Card Experiment

A card with head-sized hole with a small mirror attached to one of the bottom corners. The mirror reveals the little me, the headed one, 'out there' and the hole in the card the space for everything which appears through it and then in it as it is gradually brought up to what is looking to blend with the space that awaits it here.

Foursome Experiment

This experiment leads to a demonstration of the Eckhart quote *"the same eye with which I as subject see God as "object" is the same eye with which God as subject sees me as object"*. A full description with George's commentary will follow in a future edition. Four people form a square with two pairs standing opposite one another and facing inward. For any one person to see any of the others he/she

must disappear or become space for that other. Yet for that person observing the others they do not appear to be disappearing for one another. So what is really happening?

Classified Experiment

An experiment where you are given a group identity, unknown to yourself but obvious to others, and required to find your way to your own group.

Machine Experiment

As described by George on page 17

Storehouse Experiment

The Storehouse. Deals with "the Power behind the throne". The Storehouse requires two people. #1 sits in a chair looking directly ahead; #2 stands silently behind and, beginning at one side, either left or right, slowly, very slowly and in a semi-circular motion, passes one by one a series of objects for inspection through #1's field of vision. These objects can be anything that comes to hand: if performed outside, a stick, a stone, a leaf, a flower; if inside, a pencil, a coin, a wrist-watch, a handkerchief, a piece of paper, whatever. We can now see how everything arising out of Nowhere it reaches apotheosis at center, and then returns to where, Nowhere, it began. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust and so forth. And yet, if we want to survive, no less live, we still have to navigate the Meanwhile.

Spectacles

Bring a pair of spectacles slowly to the face and observe as the two eye pieces conform to the single eye or capacity that awaits them.