

### Letter 35 - May 17, 2005

Dear Carl, There was an interesting review the other day in the *Wall Street Journal* of all places - though not all that surprising since it seems to have become, if only by default, the most literate, if not quite literary, of all the dailies - of a book called *The Cube and The Cathedral* by one George Weigel. Apparently at once a critique of modernity and an apology for the Church and offered, coincidentally, in commemoration of the recent investiture of the new Pope, it provides us with a marvelous jumping-off place from which to examine this whole question, not only of what the religious types are about these days but what, conversely (and I do mean conversely), we're about or should be. So with all due apologies, a short excerpt to get us going:

"What is the deeper source of European antipathy to religion? For Mr. Weigel, the problem goes all the way back to the 14th century, when scholastics like William of Ockham argued for 'nominalism.' According to their philosophy, universals - concepts such as 'justice' or 'freedom' and qualities such as 'white' or 'good' - do not exist in the abstract but are merely words that denote instances of what they describe. A current of thought was set into motion, Mr. Weigel believes, that pulled European man away from *transcendent truths*." (italics mine). "One casualty was a fixed idea of human nature. "If there is no such thing as human nature," Mr. Weigel argues, "then there are no universal moral principles that can be read from human nature." If there are no universal moral truths, then religion, positing them, is merely a form of oppression or myth, one from which Europe's elites see themselves as liberated."

As I'm sure you've detected by now, there's enough here - or would be - to keep us busy till doomsday if it weren't for the fact that, thanks to the experiments, we've already been there and done that, in effect have answered to what, as it turns out, was no false alarm, but merely a warning shot across the bow. As a result I'll simply look back and limit my remarks to the most salient points that, for our purposes, began with Augustine for whom redemption lay beyond history - "you do not belong here, you belong somewhere else;" were then somewhat modified to suggest that maybe, just maybe that somewhere else lay closer to home than was at first imagined or thought, only to have both versions knocked into a cocked-hat by virtually everybody's villain of the piece, the above-indicated bad actor who went by the name of William of Ockham, the godfather of the show-me school of modern empiricism no less. No matter that, much like another Brit of our acquaintance, Ockham and his nominalism merely picked up where Aquinas with his "God must be proved by the senses like any other concrete thing" left off and took it to its logical or, if you will, its blessedly illogical conclusion. Or at least began the demolition that was to come to a head, to, literally, *the* head, only yesterday and so, setting everything right side up, was able in good Hegelian fashion to succeed in subverting the original subversion. As Henry Adams, whom I mentioned in my last letter, speculated and we now see with absolute certainty, it *is* possible, with the help of these built-in tools, to prove unity by means of multiplicity, i.e. by means of history. But that we can take even that conclusion a step further and walk the last mile with it on the low road to Nirvana, we owe to these consoling instruments which instead of joining in mourning for our lost transcendent truths welcome our new-found immanent ones, and declare without benefit of clergy (or of words as well) that, if, indeed, the world is a wedding, then very much like the father of the bride, rather than lose a daughter we've gained a son. In short, *pace* Mr. Weigel the only thing fixed and absolutely

certain about that most arguable of subjects, human nature, is not so much its vastly overrated diversity but its diversion from the absolutely singular and constant divinity now exposed at its very root for all to see. Can you believe that, despite our modern marvels - sonar, radar, moon-landings and so on - and the obvious correlation we're now in a position to make between extremes, between beginnings and ends and the simplest and most complex of things, it's nevertheless taken us and our company of surrogate arks, quarks and atoms these billions of complicated years to arrive at this now most obvious and simplest of truths? As with 1st Person Science, there's a lesson here, too, that we're going to have to learn.

### **Letter 36 - May 31, 2005**

I don't want to linger too long with Pannenberg as he hops along on his one leg and that one wooden. As Douglas concludes in the *Hierarchy* and I've cited a couple of times myself, the indirect, the Omega factor, even though we may label it as the last to come first, has got to take a back seat, at least at first glance, to direct perception. Still, as my father used to say, we can learn from anybody, even a fool, and Pannenberg, by latching on to the one thing necessary for *him*, is far from being a fool. Thanks to the very existence of the experiments, his thesis can now be certified indisputable: that rather than "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," the historic process, provided it ends up with its finishing touch, namely the experiments, can now be seen to be the bearer *par excellence* of meaning as it negotiates, mediates if you will, the perilous path from sacred myth to divine vision via profane history which, though still bottom-fishing in its native habitat, still exercising its prerogatives by signifying no-thing, can now switch sides with a straight face - indeed with no face at all - and, looking out of its single eye, square the circle. So - miracle of miracles - past becomes prologue and Presence, in the person of those same experiments, its own reward.

Again, as Headlessness demonstrates (and, fittingly enough, it seems capable of demonstrating any-and-everything in addition to nothing - that's what it's there for), only when seen as a Whole can history reveal that like God it has nothing and precisely no-thing to hide and that half-truths, that refuge of the so-called wise, will no longer do. Thus, we have the egregious spectacle that's been making the rounds since the Year One, in fact initiates it: that it's precisely because the Whole, the total view, is inaccessible to finite eyes like ours it doesn't exist at all or, awaiting us, presumably in some other world, might just as well not exist. So mystery as the unknowable rather than the merely unspeakable (*mystes* - closed lips) becomes the stock in trade and foundation on which innumerable careers and quasi-legitimate beliefs, even religions, are erected to the greater glory of ...I'll leave it to you to fill in the blank. The heart-breaking fact, of course, is that the epigones of received opinion - in this case, the historicists, even the poets or, at least, some of them - are literally quite right as far as they go but as usual just don't go far enough. Because, as a pop-tune might have it, who could ever take a pair of bewitching eyes, however black or blue, quite seriously again when it's now demonstrably certain the language of Fact neither winks nor blinks out of its single one? And the same goes for the chorus of tropes, of analogies and symbols and metaphors now relegated to playing walk-ons in the provinces but still basking in the reflected glory of a god (or, as is now rumored, a goddess) who, like some transvestite beauty-queen, is claimed to have exposed his or her bare ass to Moses once in a fit of derring-do. Hegel got it

exactly right. Reflective history reflects; philosophic history - what we might call theonomous or absolute history - sees.

On this score, Pannenberg has a rather remarkable and surprising foot-note - a lengthy and incisive quote from another important scholar, Hans Jonas - which, if you'll forgive my exceeding our agreed-upon limits, I'm going to include almost in its entirety. I believe you'll see why - it's that illuminating:

"A telling symbol" (sic!) "of what happened to the Biblical word through him (Philo Judaeus) and his successors is unwittingly supplied by an *allegory* which he (Philo) evolves from an etymology of the name 'Israel'..The name is taken to mean 'He who sees God,' and Jacob's acquiring this name is said to represent the *God-seeker's progress from the stage of hearing to that of seeing*, made possible by the *miraculous* conversion of ears into eyes." (As usual the italics are and will be mine. And if I pause here it's merely to underscore not only the significance of conceiving the movement from hearing to seeing as a progress rather than a reversion to an original state, albeit conscious this time, but also to note the use of the word "miracle" for what, as we're now aware, thanks to the experiments, is a perfectly normal condition. Which is in no way to suggest, of course, that "normal" itself doesn't constitute a miracle. In any case): "The allegory falls into the general pattern of Philo's views on 'knowing God.' These rest on the Platonic supposition that the most genuine relation to being is intuition, beholding. This eminence of sight, when extended into the religious sphere, determines also the highest and most authentic relation to God - and with it also to the *word* of God. To this Philo indeed assigns a nature, which makes vision, i.e., intellectual contemplation, and not audition, its genuine criterion. Referring to the phrase in Exodus, 'All the people saw the voice' (20:18), he comments: 'Highly significant, *for human voice is to be heard but God's voice is in truth to be seen*. Why? Because that which God speaks is not words but works, which the eye discriminates better than the ear.' "

On second thought, since there's so much that specifically concerns us packed into this one small paragraph, I'm going to reserve any remaining comments for my next.

### **Letter 37 - June 6, 2005**

Dear Carl, A follow-up to my last where I ended with that marvelously revealing footnote that Pannenberg extracted from Hans Jonas' book, *The Phenomenon of Life*. In fact it's so instructive and so central to our thesis that, if you'll forgive me, on the chance you don't have my letter handy (and even if you do) I'll repeat its most salient points since they bear repeating. (Again the italics are mine): "...A telling *symbol* ...unwittingly supplied by an *allegory* which he (Philo) evolves from an etymology of the name 'Israel'...The name is taken to mean 'He who sees God,' and Jacob's acquiring this name is said to represent the *God-seeker's progress from the stage of hearing to that of seeing*, made possible by the *miraculous conversion of ears to eyes*...The *allegory* falls into the general pattern of Philo's views on 'knowing God.' These rest on the *Platonic supposition* that the most genuine relation to being is intuition, beholding. This eminence of sight, when extended into the religious sphere, determines also the *highest* (sic!) and most authentic relation to God...To this Philo indeed assigns a nature, which makes vision, i.e. *intellectual contemplation*, and not audition, its genuine criterion. Referring to the phrase in Exodus, 'All the people saw the voice' (20:18), he comments: 'Highly significant, *for human voice is to be heard*

*but God's voice is in truth to be seen.'* Why? Because that which God speaks is not words but works, which the eye discriminates better than the ear.' "

As I say, I find this short excerpt quite literally and absolutely extraordinary for our purposes and well worth parsing virtually word for word since, speaking of perfectly natural phenomena like miracles, we now know, thanks to the experiments, that, with a few minor though telling alterations (like the deletion of *symbol* and *allegory*), it only took two thousand years or so for Philo's seemingly arcane libretto to be set to its appropriate music by Douglas. I should also point out on this score (no pun intended) that though my copy of the Jonas book indicates I read it soon after it appeared more than thirty years ago and, as is my wont, underlined a good deal of it or at least that which appeared to me most pertinent, when it comes to the above passage, appropriately enough given my condition at the time, there's not a mark to be found on it anywhere in sight. And with good reason. Not having discovered Douglas' work yet I can only assume that like most readers, like Jonas himself and later even Pannenberg, I took it, I won't say with a grain of salt, but as I can only suppose most modern readers - I dare say almost all - must have taken it: as a charming descendant, if you will, a poetic relic of that heroic period in which, it was reported, there had been "giants in the earth in those days" to go along with folks who lived to be as old as Methusaleh. That its "telling symbols" and "allegories" meant to "represent the God-seeker's progress from hearing to seeing by means of the "miraculous conversion" of ears to eyes were, in reality, rather than "Platonic suppositions" or the ambiguity of "intellectual contemplation" with its kindred association of, if not deep meditation at least deep thought, no more (nor less) than concentrated looking on its way to a simple seeing now available to any and all at will and as easy as turning on a light-switch, hadn't, obviously, appeared on my screen as yet. Nor with the exception of Douglas and perhaps a few of his earliest friends, on anyone else's.

Which is not to oversimplify if that's possible and "head" the other way since, at the other end of the spectrum, we have the traditionalists, Guenon and Schuon, for instance, who, though I can't cite chapter and verse at the moment, might very well have made the case or tried to - Guenon especially - for the above, for a Methusaleh really really having lived nine-hundred years if only on the grounds that, quite suitable for the childhood of the race, time was experienced more slowly in those days when the atmosphere was young which, for all we know - and thanks to the environmentalists we know more than we used to - might very well have been the case, at least to some degree (the virginal absence of pollution and so forth), but, nevertheless, doesn't even begin to address the central question. Or should I say the central answer that once implicit in its hope of heaven has now turned explicit in its realization - not in the way expected, of course, but in the only way possible: via the experiments where, as we recapitulate our journey from Alpha to Omega, we literally do "see" the voice that speaks in silence to "all the people" and, what's more, see what it says? And what does it say? Why simply this: that, no longer solely dependent on a mystical "intuition" blindly feeling its way towards a place it can't quite put its finger on, or an "intellectual contemplation" constantly at odds with itSelf and the temptation to add an inch to its stature rather than simply subtract eight in the kindest cut of all, all that remains for us, if only by attrition, is to grow smaller and, setting our sights lower not "higher," put an end to transcendent aspiration in order, paradoxically, to attain it. Which, as we both know if the rest of the world doesn't (at least for the moment), for all intents we already have. "In the latter days

one-tenth of what was required in the beginning will be sufficient." But although, like Philo, this Sufi *hadith* may say what the *nostrum* is, typically it doesn't and can't show *where* it is - or isn't. That had to be left to the experiments, to, when all else failed, no-thing making its non-self available to one and all in person when All, including itSelf, seemed lost. Which, of course, it had to be in order to be found.

### **Letter 38 - June 14, 2005**

Dear Carl, Many thanks for your seconding my appraisal of Philo Judaeus of Alexandria, a truly extraordinary figure and, although generally acknowledged as important, nevertheless somewhat underrated if not overlooked, at least in light of what the experiments confirm. If it weren't that I might be leaving myself wide open to wise-cracks from the peanut gallery as to "Why don't you?", I'd almost be tempted to throw in the towel right now and call it quits, he comes that close. I mean, other than to appeal to the experiments themselves as the final arbiter, our natural inclination might well be to ask - not quite rhetorically when we consider Aquinas' ultimate silence - what is there left to say after such knowledge now that we see what a Philo, though still understandably encumbered with his culturally conditioned "symbols" and "allegories," could come up with, only comparable in its way to what was going on just up the road with his neighboring country-cousin and co-religionist, an almost exact contemporary who, though fully equipped with the same instruments, was, in addition, quite prepared to "act out" the problem and, in the name of precision, explore and eventually uncover a way to fulfill rather than destroy, first the human, then the divine possibility of what was to turn out to be no dream. But because, however, the crucifixion and resurrection merely prefigure the experiments it is these last that close the Book once and for all, not only on the Seal of the Prophets as later claimed but on the Seal of Prophecy itSelf. At least close it enough to enable us to speak with certainty about such formerly moot issues as the distinction between words (not to speak of the Word) and works or whether we even have the right any longer to "walk by faith and not by sight," now that the single eye (I hesitate to say "ours" or "my") has finally gone public. And not a moment too soon (or too late either) but just right, considering the end in view.

That said, though I'd love to linger, even luxuriate with Philo - he's that accessible - it's time to move on with what we can only call our theology of history, more convinced than ever that we're on the right track. But rather than take as guides a Burckhardt or, in our own time, a Voegelin, both extraordinary figures in their own right and both joined by their mutual taste for island-hopping, for settling, out of a reputedly vast sea of indifference, on the high spots shored up as "fragments against our ruins" (a Renaissance Italy, for instance, and/or an ancient Athens), much to my surprise (since I was largely under their influence) the discovery of the experiments literally forced me to take a completely opposite tack and opt for the object of their mutual distaste, especially Voegelin's. I refer, of course, to his constant whipping-boy Hegel who claimed he saw, if not "good in everything" at least purpose, meaning, direction rising out of the great teleological land-mass seen from the only historically universal perspective available to him at the time and, as it turns out, since we're now in a position, thanks to the experiments, from which we can specifically underwrite his claim, for all time as well. Given that assurance, how could I choose not to join with him, especially now that, tellingly enough, he's completely out of fashion? I know that, I, for one, aided and abetted by our marvelous instruments that literally pick up where he left off and confirm his

perspective, in fact, adjudicate all perspectives - "the astrolabe of the mysteries of God," Rumi might have called them - I can and have.

Which brings me to, I won't say one of my own whipping boys or fallen idols but, like Voegelin himself, though certainly not in his class - in fact, as I recall, when I mentioned him last week, you hadn't even heard of him - another formative (but now former) influence who, for reasons obvious to me now if not then, has also, again in light of the experiments (what touchstones they are!), not quite measured up. But then, with very few exceptions, who or what has? I'm speaking of Richard Weaver, a teacher at the University of Chicago not long after I left, and author, surprisingly enough, of something of a best-seller right after the war, a semi-popular but nevertheless serious book called *Ideas Have Consequences* which I'd have to put, at least as far as its effect on me, in the same category as von Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, a critique similar in style and outlook that also appeared around that time and also represented an opening volley against the still prevailing though already-beginning-to-wane influence of what we can only call the Whig hegemony with its theory of history that as far back as the French Revolution and even before had already begun to opt for the latest rather than the last word as the measure of all things. At any rate, along with Huxley's wonderful anthology with commentary, *The Perennial Philosophy* which, though on another level, also intimated and more than intimated that, perhaps, there was not as much good in goodness as we liked to think, both books were to serve as something of an eye-opener for a child of the century like me.

But, since I've run out of space, I'll have to reserve my appraisal of that shock of recognition, especially as regards Weaver's work both then and now, for my next.

### **Letter 39 - June 20, 2005**

Dear Carl, I mentioned Weaver in my last letter for a reason. Not that his work was all that important although, symptomatic of a sea-change in certain quarters, it represented something of a turning-point for me, a marker that indicated I was still capable at a relatively early age of looking the other way if pressed. And under his direction (and others'), look the other way I did. Following Hegel's blue-print for the triadic turn from thesis to antithesis to synthesis, I moved from the received opinion of what I've already called the prevailing Whig hegemony - what in plain English or, better yet, plain American we now refer to as common garden-variety liberalism - to its antithesis, a modified conservatism that, if not quite as pugnacious as Weaver's, resembled something on the order of Voegelin's or Leo Strauss's, until aided and abetted by the experiments, indeed, impelled by them and again in unconscious obedience to Hegel's iron-clad dialectic, I was once more forced to reverse my field and so land fat, deep and in the middle of Nowhere, from which burrow (as distinct from perch - literally a whole in the ground), I now propel these, I won't say missiles but, missives. And also apologize for this inexplicable fit of archness.

In any case, if, for Voegelin, the villain of the piece (and peace, too), was Hegel (with Nietzsche thrown in for good measure), and for Leo Strauss, Machiavelli (all of whom will figure favorably in our sequence if I ever get to it - but that's another story), for Weaver the front-runner and odds-on favorite for the booby-if-not-more-sinister prize was William of Ockham, he who in the name of nominalism first

seriously questioned, even challenged the reality of transcendence and universals some six centuries before another Englishman of our acquaintance administered the final *coup* with a mere flick of the wrist. "Entities are not to be multiplied without necessity and what can be done with fewer assumptions is done in vain with more." So went Ockham's watchwords which, largely responsible, they say, for the collapse of the "medieval synthesis," for, in effect, the cathedrals tumbling down, were finally translated into the language of absolute silence and officially pronounced dead only yesterday by the experiments. Whether Weaver, had he lived, would have seen it that way is, of course, something else again, but since he died young and avoided the fate, we have no way of knowing, though I suspect that, given his comfortably doctrinaire and stubborn despair at the course of modernity, nothing would have or even could have changed his mind, that is to say, would have or could have encouraged him to look the other way and see what his so-called "collapse" had presaged, indeed, made pro-vision for.

Now I don't want to start getting cute and playing with words but it seems to me that, stacked up against the straight-forward language of silence, the ambiguous, even parodic, nature of speech - its two-faced duality designed to conceal as much as it reveals - is so pervasive and so insistent that it's worth bringing it to our attention, especially in this instance which is ripe for analysis. For example, here, with all its hidden ambiguities, is a direct quote and, in effect, the sum and substance of Weaver's entire, if unwitting, argument: "The practical result of nominalist philosophy is to banish the reality which is perceived by the intellect and to *posit* as reality that which is perceived by the senses." Please note the pejorative and more than pejorative insinuation of that "posit" with its unabashed implication that a superior and highfalutin Mantalk - the intellect - passing itself off as Godspeak can take precedence over the lowly language and logic of the body however that precedence had already been established, first on a cross and then seconded by the Thomist pronouncement that God must be proved by the senses like any other concrete thing - the "nihil est in intellectu quin prius fuerit in sensu" I quoted a few letters back and which Weaver was either ignorant of - doubtful - or simply ignored. It is, of course and as the experiments incontestably demonstrate, the *nihil*, the nothing, that provides us with the essential key: whether to take all this dithering at its face or, as we see now, its no-face value, which choice I, for one, was not even aware of until after I'd made it and saw, almost three score and ten into the finish line and with the help of our simple exercises, that, rather than a dirty word, reality as *truly* perceived by the senses - that lowest of the low - is simply the way things are. From which, as acted out in the experiments, everything *naturally* follows: the demotion of transcendence along with the "logical realism" propounded by its name-calling camp-followers; at the same time the promotion of truth to the bottom line, not higher but lower than the lowest thing so as to include it. And if, according to Weaver (and others as well whatever their persuasion), this "lowest" was only a presage of the disaster we're now enjoying, well, isn't that just what we've been heading for and are at last in a position to welcome - the long-heralded apocalyptic cata-strophe that coming in like a lion will absolutely, positively and literally, like the revelatory turning-round it spells out, be hoist, like everything else, by its own petard and go out like the lamb it really really is? Can it be an accident that, as if to cover all these bases and so play both ends against the middle, the two foremost and most popular heralds of what was promised at Alpha as the original dispensation but has only now come to total consciousness in, through and by means of the flesh at Omega, have

had as their role-models, Gautama,,the king Self-demoted to beggar and, at the other end of the spectrum, Jesus, the beggar Self-promoted to king?

#### **Letter 40 – July 7, 2005**

Dear Carl, I want to stay with an analysis of Weaver, again not because he's that important but because he represents the classic protest, or at least one of them, to the decline and fall of transcendence until even that perspective - antithesis responding to thesis - is rendered cockeyed by the arrival of the synthesis, the experiments. Let me go into more detail since, absent these literally miraculous instruments, I suspect I'd still have to agree with him as I did for years along with the many so-called "thinking" as distinct from "seeing" people that still do. In any case, given his diagnosis and what might politely be called his prescription for recovery (as distinct from uncovering), that's exactly what I did do following a first dis-illusion. Like him and so many others who couldn't "see" the no-thingness for the *nihil* in nihilism or the *deus* for the *devilus* in the ape of God, I just assumed that our "progress" indicated it was to be downhill all the way rather than the downward path to wisdom it later proved to be when, by virtue of being reduced to less than no-thing and smaller than the smallest thing, I was able to squeeze through and - talk about saving grace - virtually come out unnoticed on the other side along with the assurance - no, the guarantee - that so might everyone else.

At any rate - and this is the point of my little excursion - it's this development, the death of transcendence or, as it later came to be known, the Death of God, that filled or would have filled Weaver with horror had he lived. Witness his very pointed casting off of Ockham, the patron-saint of empiricism, long before the alleged Self-slaughter really took effect under the aegis of Altizer via Nietzsche. Incidentally, it's interesting to note as a sidelight that, not long after I left, the two - Weaver and Altizer - might actually have met at Chicago where Altizer, though still unpublished was a graduate student and the slightly older Weaver an instructor.

Since the subject is so vast or could be, what I would like to do and still stay within the bounds of our agreed-upon format is to take note of some of Weaver's more salient points and briefly show how, once apprised of the nature of reality by the experiments, all misses, even near-misses (and he's certainly capable of those), assume the characteristics of parody, a development not all that surprising when self-effacement, denied its *original* meaning, is more closely allied to modesty than humility. Which, I dare say, might very well account for the limited rightness, even attractiveness, of some of his diagnoses - "there can be no truth under a program of separate sciences" - but complete and total wrong-headedness as to his prescriptions. For instance, he talks about and censures the "endless induction" of empiricism, forgetting for the moment that it's precisely the lure of that supposed endlessness that, in the words of his (and, I might add, our) darling Shakespeare, has led us to that "place" where time not only does, but indeed "must have a stop". And never more literally and graphically and pointedly than in the experiments, any experiment, where Alpha is finally "faced" with Omega at the Gap. But I'll let him speak for himself and so be, if not condemned, challenged out of his own mouth:

"Since the time of Bacon the world has been running away from, rather than toward, first principles, so that, on the verbal level, we see 'fact' substituted for 'truth',



and on the philosophic level, we witness attack upon abstract ideas and speculative inquiry."

To which we're now in a conscious position, thanks to the experiments, to reply with certainty for the first time in history that, reality being demonstrably round, it's neither physically nor metaphysically possible to run away from first principles - not to speak of that Hound of Heaven, *the* first principle - without, at the same time, running toward them. Which - again witness history and its downward path to wisdom - is not to deny the cost in time and trouble it's taken us to arrive at an end-point which, fittingly enough, also signals its beginning, in effect, its all in all. As must be obvious by now, one result of the experiments, and certainly not its least, is that contrary to Weaver's claim, rather than too empirical we haven't been empirical enough. Despite our evolutions and revolutions, with few exceptions we simply haven't had the courage or (desperation) to go the last mile and beard the lion in its den. But now the predicted end of the world, or at least that world, very much at hand (literally), we're being forced to. As for substituting "fact" for "truth" - 3rd person sandwiched, like a hunk of baloney, between thesis and synthesis - has it been other than a temporary (and temporal) though necessary stop-gap to be offered up on the altar of Silence, the truth as demonstrable Fact, when the time was ripe? As for "the attack on abstract ideas and speculative inquiry" which, in the name of removing "all barriers to immediate apprehension of the sensory world" he deplores, it seems to me that simply to substitute those terms, however unwittingly, as surrogates for concrete truth and visible certainties is a dead give-away and merely confirms in practice that the good, in the person of Mr. Weaver and all those others whose name is legion, is indeed still very much the enemy of the best.

#### **Letter 41 – July 20, 2005**

Dear Carl, Once more with Weaver till we clear up the remaining perspectives he so conveniently sums up for us by listing the sins of modernity: its inordinate, indeed inhuman, speed as if designed for precipitous descent (which, of course, it is); its elimination of degree whether as consequence or cause, its deterioration of language, its obscenity by way of enacting that which should be performed elsewhere - all the usual suspects since Plato's day and a few more of our own thrown in and all repeating the same necessary pattern and arriving at the same necessary end, the end of a world and if not the hope, in Eliot's words, of "faring well," at least of "faring forward." And faring forward we certainly have till, come full circle (the world being round), we've ended up where we started, capacious enough, because empty enough this time to "know the place" - again in Eliot's words - "for the first time," and know it with a certainty never available before.

Take the notion of "objective" truth (as if there were such a thing), that darling of 3rd Person Science and the reputed loss of which Weaver mourns even as he sees it sacrificed daily on the altar of the relativism he despises, forgetting, of course, or just plain ignorant of the now demonstrable fact that, pose as man may as the measure of all things, God is still the measure, world without end. And that world, however you slice it, is still a wedding where for a Father to lose a daughter is still to find a son and never so patently obvious as when a hitherto virgin observer is uncovered to reveal, not just any old "I" but the once mythic I AM, the very Participant and Subject itSelf now a candidate for the celebration of the flesh come to term.

And we could go down the list. For instance, he quotes with favor Goethe's dictum directed against didacts that "one may be said to know much only in the sense that one knows little." Which vision, if it can be called that, doubtless accounts for Goethe's own overblown reputation for wise resignation, that is to say for one who has not gone far enough and come out the other side. How else describe what can only appear to be his timid half-way measures when compared, say, to a Rumi's wild celebration of one who knows *all* simply because he really really knows *nothing* and knows he knows no-thing? And why settle for less, that is to say, merely more, when the whole Monty is available?

Or what are we supposed to make of the "threat" that Weaver sees as the inordinate "desire of immediacy...its aim..to dissolve the formal aspects of everything and get at the *supposititious* reality behind them?" (italics mine) As if, with the exception of that ill-assorted bunch we know as mystics, saviors, seers and saints (and they unable to transmit the Word except by mouth if even that), it wasn't all supposititious B.E. (Before the Experiments). "It is characteristic of the barbarian...to insist upon seeing a thing 'as it is.' The desire testifies that he has nothing in himself with which to *spiritualize* it; the relation is one of *thing to thing* without the intercession of *imagination*. Impatient of the veiling with which the man of *higher type* (sic!) gives the world imaginative meaning, the barbarian and the Philistine... demands the access of *immediacy*. Where the former wishes representation, the latter ...impatient of symbolism, of indirect methods.. insists upon starkness..." And so on. Can you believe it? Aside from the Fact that's it's literally impossible to see a thing - any thing - "thing to thing" (since he or she who has eyes is not a thing but merely a surrogate for no-thing), we really have come full circle and if it's only to emerge into Vico's new barbarism, so be it since we have no choice anyway but to "fare forward" and end up where we started. What's interesting for us as an object lesson (or should I say Subject lesson?) is that it would be practically impossible to find a clearer text in which virtually every recommendation is at odds with reality as demonstrated in and through the experiments: as if, absent no-thing, the relation of thing to thing were even possible, no less required the intercession of the imagination to spiritualize it, to - get this - spiritualize spirit as it were; as if the veiling indulged in by our higher types (and, of course, I include my ex-self in that category) hasn't exacerbated what's been the problem all along? If I didn't know better I'd almost be tempted to raise a glass to what passes for the new barbarism which isn't new and isn't even barbarism but the answer to the parody of the real true thing that's made the experiments possible in the last place.

That said, what else can we do except keep on dancing?

#### **Letter 42 –August 1, 2005**

Dear Carl, Having disposed of Weaver (I trust), I'm sort of at an impasse and, although convinced, like Vico, that, despite all the philosophers and theologians, the notion of God is far too simple to be "proved" a priori but by the same token can't be denied a posteriori (in our case, by means of the experiments), I'm still not quite sure which way to run with it or whether to run with it at all. In which case, we might very well find ourselves right back where we started or if not right back certainly closer to the beginning rather than the end, to Alpha rather than Omega. But then I recall a biblical "tradition"

I came across somewhere, that what Ezekiel once saw in heaven was far less than what all Israel was about to witness on earth and I realize that's just where we are with the sea about to part and the Promised Land in view - redemption in and through history, rather than from it as Augustine believed, the means to its own meaning not just limited to the chosen few but available to all, at least to all those willing to strike their tents and take a chance on getting their feet wet. As I've tried to clarify so often in the preceding, the fact that we have the experiments must mean the end of history, not in the sense that it's all over but in the sense that we are, that in reality the Already Here has always disguised itSelf as the Not Yet only we didn't know it because we couldn't see it. Which Self-revelation of the Day of the Lord, of the eschaton with its promise of full disclosure, calls for a celebration served not too hot, not too cold but just right and, it literally goes without saying, ready to delight the eye as well.

That said and the perpetual passover we're now prepared to enjoy acknowledged, there are a few points I'd like to clear up before proceeding with the main menu which, as I think we've already discussed, will certainly include, among others, all those who approach our conclusions in one way or another yet none of whom can match the experiments for their all-inclusive and absolute certainty. I'm referring, of course, to Jonathan Edwards and Altizer, to Gebser and Tillich and Nishitani and Masao Abe's seminal work on Dogen, always, of course, as regards each of their viewpoints, as measured against the ultimate, because immeasurable, measure, the experiments. For instance, just as we were able, in an earlier letter, to take on Einstein and his unrequited search for the thing itSelf simply on grounds that, expert that he was (God help him), he, too, persisted in looking the wrong way for his Unified Theory, his "final solution" so to speak, so too we're now in a position -the position, arrogant as it may sound - to award the imprimatur to any and all comers who warrant it. That's assuming we can find them. Does a Newton with his now demonstrably certain "no action at a distance," a stance quite suitable for one who "would feign no hypotheses since hypotheses, whether physical or metaphysical, whether of occult qualities or mechanical, have no place in experimental philosophy," qualify any more than those of faith used to? Well, like just about everyone else - certainly like his companion band of third-person brothers - yes and no. Yes, certainly, if only on grounds of his true humility in face of the facts that "these are things that cannot be explained in few words" - or, we might add, in any, including these - "nor are we furnished with that sufficiency of experiments" - (though we certainly are now) - "which is required to an accurate determination and demonstration of the laws by which this electric and elastic spirit operates." But, then again, no, by virtue of his, if not ignorance, at least neglect of the Fact that, as his persistent yet respectful critic and counter, Bishop Berkeley, pointed out a generation later and the experiments confirm: " an unperceivable reality is unthinkable." And, as we're in a position to point out with absolute assurance, no longer even desirable. And so, thanks to that long longed-for "sufficiency of experiments" Newton called for and to which he contributed more than his share by helping to exhaust all possibilities that side of paradise, all has come true and we find ourselves back with William of Ockham, only this time on a firm, a demonstrable footing. It's really uncanny: first Ockham, then Berkeley and - not to speak of Blake -

now Douglas. Saved at the bell yet again by yet another Brit.

Since I mentioned him and, appropriately enough, still have a little space left and I'll need somewhat more for that arch foil and fool I've reserved for my next - that hero in his own way, Giordano Bruno - why don't I give the somewhat neglected Bishop Berkeley his due by just letting him speak for himself or through one of his chief interpreters, Alexandre Koyre? Here's Berkeley: "He (God) is omnipresent not virtually only, but also substantially because virtue cannot subsist without substance." To which Koyre comments: "In Him we live, we move and we are,' not metaphorically or metaphysically as St. Paul meant it, but in the most proper and literal meaning of these words. We - that is, the world - are in God; in God's space and in God's time. And it is because of this ubiquitous and sempiternal co-presence with things that God is able to exercise His dominion upon them; and it is this dominion or, more exactly, the effect of this dominion that reveals to us His otherwise unknowable and incomprehensible essence..." All of which words - and I never get tired of repeating this - can now be vouched for, indeed confirmed for the first time ever in and through their medium of exchange, the flesh - literally Godspeak - once and for all.

#### **Letter 43 –August 6, 2005**

Dear Carl, Why, you might ask - and you'd certainly be entitled to - why include so anomalous, even so obscure a figure as a Giordano Bruno in any serious discussion as to how we got from there to here, from a total commitment to what has been characterized as the objective transcendent goals of an ancient and medieval spirituality now turned inside out or, better yet, upside down, to, thanks to the good offices of Headlessness, a totally dedicated realization of an immanent subjectivity? A good question and, considering the nature of the Subject itSelf, deserving of not only a better but the best answer which, conveniently enough, I happen to have right here in my hand, in the person of my pointing finger.

Seriously, though we could no doubt pick and choose between any number of representative figures, Bruno, by virtue of his position in both time and place, seems to me perfect for the job, the classic case of the antithetic advocate sandwiched in between thesis and synthesis, the man in the middle caught somewhere between the devil and the deep blue sea or, if you prefer, between the conception of the world seen as a finite, closed hierarchy (the medieval view) which he opposed, and the wide open spaces of an infinite universe which still current, if popular, belief he not only promoted but endorsed and was finally burned alive for. And quite justifiably, too, as it turned out, if only according to the lights, such as they were, of the Counter-Reformation Church which, intent on recovering from the onslaught of the new 3rd Person Science, took these things seriously. That, as it turned out, the Church was right for the wrong reasons since, by definition, it's not the universe or any created thing that's infinite but only God or a reasonable facsimile thereof just as, by the same token, Bruno was wrong for the right ones by reason of his refusal to accept the notion of a closed hierarchy, - as we now know, all this had to await further adjudication, indeed, had to await the final judgement of

the experiments for its ultimate resolution. Quite simply, though "boundless but finite" (Einstein's temporary and temporal compromise) may have served for a while and still does in some quarters, on the strength of the experiments alone it still doesn't appear good enough, at least for the likes of a simpleton like Me.

The upshot of all this - and, of course, it's become the seminal issue of our time if not yet quite a commonplace - is how, by losing his place in the world, not to mention the cosmos - "the center of the universe which we do not know where to find or whether it exists at all" (Galileo) - alienated man was literally driven by despair to find that center in hisSelf and so, speaking of providence, arrive at the truth quite despite himself. That we have arrived at it, that having lost our place in the world we've ended up by finding its place in us, is, thanks to the experiments, an absolute certainty available now to everyone, in retrospect a phenomenon not all that surprising when you consider what's been going on since the first fortunate fall. On this score, if you'll forgive a slightly personal note, I'm reminded of what an eye-opener it was for me when, in Paris during the War and long before any of these issues became a reality for me, I came across a line of the poet, Paul Eluard, to the effect that, "There is another world and we are in it." At twenty-two I thought that was the cat's pajamas and I suppose I still do. But imagine what I felt almost fifty years later when to my surprise I discovered that, like the Lesser in regard to the Greater Mysteries, he - we - had only been half right: that there is indeed another world but it is in us and the experiments demonstrate it like nothing else ever has or can.

In that sense Bruno, as witness a few brief excerpts from his work which I intend to append in my next, assumes the symbolic role of something like a wrong-headed yet pioneer figure. "Let us not be embarrassed by the old objection that the infinite is neither accessible, nor understandable," he boldly (and rightly) suggests as he takes on the entire establishment. "It is the opposite that is true: the infinite is necessary and is even the first thing that naturally cadit sub intellectu." And, of course, there's the rub. Along with Galileo, for instance, with his self-appointed task of making "the world's essence manifest to the senses, but even more to the intellect," the appeal is made to the mediate, to Mantalk, rather than to the immediate, to God speak, and so, off and running with the mixture as before - literally the rationale of 3rd Person Science - he as well as his colleagues and just about everyone else in the mix continue to head in the wrong direction and so miss, yet again (this time by a mere three or four centuries), the one combination that will open all locks. If, as Bruno rightly claimed, the infinite is the most accessible and understandable because, as we now know because we now see, it is the simplest and only constant among "entities;" if as he also rightly assumed that to return to that blessed state all we had to do was "expand ourselves infinitely," then the only problem was and still remained until only yesterday how accomplish that two-faced operation without, at the same time, falling on our double-edged sword and, if you'll pardon the deservedly mixed metaphor, literally keep from blowing ourselves up by bursting with pride. "Great wits being sure to madness near allied" it's been the problem ever since, as witness the course that is laughingly referred to as history: how return, by squeezing in

between the interstices, to our natural habitat (now known as the Gap) and so avoid the spectacle of getting stuck in a wilderness of swelled heads? How follow the lead of those great pioneers - Lao-Tse, Gautama, Jesus - and, finally resolving the transcendent-immanent puzzler, grow bigger than the biggest thing by simultaneously (and paradoxically) becoming smaller than the smallest? How indeed!

#### **Letter 44 – August 10, 2005**

Dear Carl, Before offering up a few choice tid-bits from Bruno himself which can certainly illuminate more than I or anyone else ever could the pathos of his position, at least in light of the experiments, I'd like to address, briefly but nevertheless succinctly, what we might call the pathos of our's. I'm referring, of course, to the almost total lack of interest in, no less response to, what, taking our cue from Douglas' observation on page 225 of the *Hierarchy* to the effect that our *second* concern - and there's no question it is our second concern - must be to find in the Now all our to-morrows and yesterdays, we've agreed to designate as 1st Person History. To tell the truth, with the exception of Alan Mann in Australia who's been kind enough to reprint some of the material on his website and has offered pertinent suggestions of his own, the response has been virtually *nil*.

Now I know this must sound an awful lot like sour grapes and maybe there is that element in it. After all, like limiting the significance of Waterloo to a stop on the Brighton Line, nobody likes having his little darlings, no less his sacred cows wandering to and fro in the earth and up and down in it untended and unacknowledged. But I think it goes deeper than that, deeper than watching the bonfire of our vanities go up in smoke. In any case, the best I've been able to come up with in my quest to find a suitable image to describe the condition – and it's a universal condition – is that of a Don Juan pretending to ply his trade with absolutely no idea where babies come from and caring even less. Which, though it may constrain his personal responsibility, is in no way to suggest it limits his enjoyment – look, Ma, no hands – or even the ecstasy that goes into the making of them. It's merely to suggest that if kissing has cousins and one thing leads to another and, as Douglas rightly contends, any way is the right way home, then some ways are "better" than others. Better in the sense that it's now demonstrable, courtesy of the experiments, that the world really is a wedding, that Providence coupled with Grace is faster and surer and, if equally fulfilling, more complete, than either of them taken separately and covers more territory. As a matter of fact, covers *all* the territory – the Word as well as the Silence, the Word *by means of the Silence* – in a way that nothing ever has or can. And if you're wondering, and justifiably so, what all this has to do with Bruno or Bruno with it, it's my contention that our, literally, happy ending would or could not have come about – I won't say without him specifically or solely – but without people like him, people who, martyrs to motions not their own and all unknowingly as they may have been, were, nevertheless, instrumental in breaking ground that led to the breakdown that led to the breakthrough that are the experiments. As we'll see when it comes time to discuss Altizer – and he, above anyone else I know of, with the possible exception of Gebser, is sensitive to this issue – though the prospect from Alpha, presumably available from the beginning of time, may arguably be the one thing necessary, only the view from Omega is capable of providing the finishing touch, the absolute confirmation that includes it.

In any case, following, just for the record, are a few excerpts that, in light of the experiments, leave our putative hero condemned out of his own mouth, illustrating, as Koyre describes it, " the decisive shift (also adumbrated by Nicholas of Cusa) from sensual to intellectual cognition in its relation to thought," that is, from 1st to 3rd Person perception. Thus, though we now know better, "Bruno asserts that sense-perception, as such, is confused and erroneous and cannot be made the basis of scientific and philosophical knowledge...that whereas for sense-perception and imagination infinity is *inaccessible and unrepresentable*, for the intellect, on the contrary, it is its primary and most certain concept." Indeed, *concept* it is. But why not let him speak for himself and so stand condemned out of his own mouth?

"No corporeal sense can perceive the infinite." (!!!) "None of our senses can be expected to furnish this conclusion; for the *infinite cannot be the object of sense-perception*; therefore he who demandeth to obtain this knowledge through the senses is like unto one who would desire to see with his eyes both substance and essence." (Indeed he would. In fact, could we come up with a more succinct way to express what we mean when we say we see both 'content and container' simultaneously? Though note, in the following how he does leave himself an out of sorts). "He who would deny the existence of a thing merely because it cannot be apprehended by the senses, nor is visible, would presently be led to the denial of his own substance and being. Wherefore there must be some measure in the demand for evidence from our sense-perception..." There must indeed and for the first time in history that demand (and, given who we are it's altogether a reasonable one) has been met, revealed for all to see.

I don't suppose that from where we sit there's any point in pursuing this any further despite his generous if unwitting offers. For instance, in the same Dialogue, one of the interlocutors asks: "If the world is finite and if nothing is beyond, I ask you where is the world? Where is the universe?" To which comes the immediate response: "The world will then be nowhere. Everything will be in nothing." Or as we might say, "in No-thing." Since `a la Tertullian, this appears an obvious impossibility, the answer, though now seen to be absolutely correct, is immediately rejected. And so we're to be sentenced to our explorations for another three or four centuries

#### **Letter 45 – September 1, 2005**

Dear Carl, "Depend upon it, sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully." So said Dr. Johnson. And so say we all (or a reasonable facsimile thereof), when "faced", as I've been these past couple of weeks, with a comparable fate. As a result, despite some fuzziness around the edges, I'm anxious to muster whatever strength I can and get back to our theme, I think it's that important. In fact, judging from the recent interest and increased volume of the exchange on the Internet (which, on the surface at least, is encouraging), it appears to me to be absolutely vital. Because despite the enthusiasm and even commitment which is becoming increasingly obvious as Headlessness catches on, I still don't get the sense that most of even its most devoted enthusiasts really realize not only what an *Open Sesame* they've uncovered – how the reward of what individuals have literally died for is literally in the palm of their hands, as readily available now as ice in summer – but are aware of its equally collective significance. I know I've touched on this before but it bears repeating. Although

during these latter days (and make no mistake about it, they are latter though not in the way generally intended) the Prince of Darkness no longer even bothers to resemble a gentleman – witness Auschwitz, witness the atom bomb - the *telos* of history, its end and reason for being, can no longer be mistaken for its *finis* and this by way of the demonstrable fact that having finally revealed its true "face" we've nevertheless lived to tell its tale. Thanks to the experiments, the long-heralded Omega-time is now a conscious and universal presence in our midst in a way, for all its Alpha intimations from the headless cave-drawings through the Buddha and Jesus right up to our own Nishitani, it has never been before.

That said - and admittedly it's a mouthful – we can light wherever the spirit moves and still make sense. Which, when push comes to shove, has got to be the name of the game. To that end and because it's so central to our theme at least as I make it out, since I know we've both discussed this, just for the record I want to spend some time on Jonathan Edwards. "On who?" I can hear the protests arise and not necessarily from the cheap seats. Certainly it would come as no surprise if even our British contingent including Douglas had never or barely heard of him, not to speak of our European no less Far Eastern colleagues, when he's only now being recognized as one of the few, certainly the first American theologian worthy of being mentioned in the same breath as an Augustine or an Aquinas. No matter since, native considerations aside, that's hardly the point either, any more than that, long before I discovered the experiments – in fact, while Douglas was still debating whether or not to publish them – I wrote a completely unrelated paper on Edwards for my Master's, or that, briefly before he died relatively young, having just been installed as the third president of Princeton College, he was and is buried in the local cemetery about a mile or two from where I'm writing and where my wife and I quite innocently and with no symbolism intended recently purchased one of the last remaining plots, not far from his neighborly headstone under a ginko tree. As I say, I would hope that none of these personal considerations would count against my appraisal of him as in any way prejudicing me any more than that my first wife's name was Edwards or that, by some strange coincidence thirteen years ago in 1992, the year I discovered the experiments, I came across the prophecies of one Malachi (apparently a worthy companion to Nostradamus), in which he claimed in no uncertain terms that this was it and the next Pope (the one we've just seen installed) would be the last in preparation for the Great Event, which, however you slice it, would signal the long-awaited end, the about-face so earnestly desired. I can only insist that none of these factors, barely removed from superstition, have anything whatsoever to do with my final appraisal of him or his relationship to our work any more than that in my late teens, long before I'd ever even heard of him, I spent, again quite coincidentally, a good deal of time visiting my mother in Western Massachusetts only a few miles from where he was born, lived and completed the bulk of his work.

That said, what does count, though – and this I would insist on – is the influence, effect and help I've received from a scholarly study I've mentioned before, a work I happened to pick up merely by chance (if there is such a thing) a couple of years back and which, as you'll see, since I intend to quote from it repeatedly, extensively and unabashedly, I might almost claim was expressly written for me, for us, for Headlessness. I'm referring to a book published locally by the Princeton University Press called *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History: The Reenchantment of the World in the Age of the Enlightenment* by one Avihu Zakai.



Other than that, judging from the credits, Professor Zakai is connected with Hebrew University in Jerusalem (though I suspect from his perfect familiarity with English and from his interest in Edwards especially, he's in all probability a transplanted American), I know absolutely nothing about him. Certainly, had it been my younger days, I might have searched him out. In fact, even now I've debated about getting in touch with him and no doubt would have and may yet if my strength holds out, but I wanted to get this down first, it seems to me that important.

Anyway, like setting you up for a blind date only to have you disappointed (and, believe me, I've been there - "My God, what a dog!"), I'll cease and desist. Just read and relish

#### **Letter 46 - September 5, 2005**

Dear Carl, I suppose as good a way as any to address the problem (which, thanks to Douglas' millennial work via the experiments, is now no longer a problem) is to address it as Zakai addresses it in describing how for Edwards "the matter of constructing time and history proved... difficult because" - and the italics will be mine - "from the beginning he found it necessary to establish a connection between the operation of saving grace in the personal experience of conversion as the manifestation of God's redemptive activity in the soul" (what we refer to quite simply to as 1st Person Science) "and the *external, providential scheme of time* showing that this personal salvation is *inextricable* from sacred, providential history. Having found the *evidence* of saving grace during his moment of con-version" (or, as we might say, during the 'turning-round' characteristic of any experiment) "Edwards attempted *to construe the whole space of time* according to this saving experience. The outcome was the formation of a philosophy of history based upon the divine agency in history." To put it as bluntly as possible: are we called upon to do any less? Indeed, other than to certify that what, from beginning to end, has up to now been offered as at best hypothesis and a hope, in a Word, faith, can we do any more? It's my contention that, grounded purely on the certain evidence provided by the experiments, we can. In fact, it's my view that, with all due apologies to that great master, Hegel, it's now incumbent on us to go him one better and, by way of offering the world what's "oft been thought but ne'er so well expressed," present it, not so much with a mere philosophy as he did but with an air-tight *theology of history*.

And lest there be any confusion or doubt concerning this contention, let's just take as our text the two seminal axioms from pages 224-225 of the Hierarchy which I've referred to more than once and apply them to the above: "To realize this instantaneous Now, to live in the present moment, taking no thought for to-morrow or yesterday" - what we might call, using Edwards' and Zakai's vocabulary, 'the individual and private spiritual experience of saving grace' - "must be my first concern. And my second must be to find in this Now all my to-morrows and yesterdays, " that is to say, the workings of providential history. Which history is now seen to be no longer non-existent and, as a result, ignored as in the East (at least, under the influence of the West, until recently), nor merely confined to the past as, beginning with the classic tradition, is still generally assumed, nor even extended, as in the biblical monotheisms, to a promised future where presumably God's mode of being will be all in all, but is very much present and operative - witness the experiments - as the continual and abiding Presence it demonstrably is.

What never ceases to amaze me though - and I suppose it's as good an excuse as any for my starting to clutter up the low-road instead of continuing to contribute to the now superannuated mess known as transcendence that's blocked off that once serviceable high-way - is how even those of us close to Headlessness simply take all this for granted, as if the significance and meaning, not to speak of the ramifications, of a finger consciously pointing inwards towards a certifiably absent no-face happened just like that instead of taking upwards of, by latest calculation, thirteen billion years or so to achieve. And as I've mentioned more than once, it's this aspect I want to pick up on: what, as I indicated in the tables I drew up a few letters back, I've called for want of a better term, Omega completion as distinct from Alpha fulfillment. Admittedly, it's this differentiation in which is distinguished, and not so much in degree but in kind, the *totally conscious* and *universally accessible* experiments from any and everything that's come before, from the headless cave-drawings through the models of the Buddha or Jesus right up through the claims of exemplars like Ramana or, on an intellectual level, a Nishitani, and which *ultimate* differentiation seems so extreme, even outrageous, as to elicit protests from so faithful a partisan as Anne. But as I still have to insist, the experiments really really are different, not so much because of what they represent but, on the contrary, because of what, in their absolute correspondence to reality, they *don't* re-present but rather, spared duality and mediation of any kind, make consciously present for the first time in history and even beyond: namely, that which from time immemorial has been unconsciously available to the birds and bees but is now both delivered in and of its silence by the testimony of the absolute no-thingness now *seen* to be at the heart of all creation.

In any case, my immediate problem is how, given the shortcomings of language not to speak of my own, to present the wealth of material, in this instance the marvelous and instructive approximations of an Edwards (or later an Altizer), or even to sort out adequately what is, by necessity, a very complex field and all in the service of illustrating how the dimension of history, seemingly so indifferent and even alien to that of spirit, can, if we're still on the lookout for miracles, be miraculously converted in the twinkling of an eye and - what more natural? - reveal itSelf as more persuasive than reason and more comprehensive than nature, not only because it includes them but, even more important, because its task has been to pro-videntially bequeath us, precisely for the sake of seeing, the experiments. To that end then, what follows.

#### **Letter 47 - September 14, 2005**

Dear Carl, First off, thanks for catching me up on my misappraisal of Edwards which, in my enthusiasm for Zakai's treatment of problems similar to those we have to deal with - rare enough in itself - I'm certainly guilty of. Not that my analysis, as far as it goes, is a complete bust any more than his - and I'll get to that in a minute - but there's no question that, encouraged by both their interests and mine in, and even insistence on, the significance of the historical factor I did go overboard in welcoming them aboard. What I failed to see but you did was that their, or at least Edwards', ship was headed in an entirely different direction from ours. Quite simply, despite his concession that "God's redemptive activity is secured and his *immanence affirmed* within the whole fabric of the universe" - a position, on the testimony of the experiments alone, we can certainly confirm - his out and out commitment to an overwhelming and overriding transcendence as set forth, say, in his *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* should have alerted me, if only by its tell-all and tall-tale fire-

and brimstone title, that for all his considerable and forward-looking contribution to history theory, we're still dealing essentially - dare I call it by its name? - with an out and out reactionary, someone on the order of a de Maistre or de Bonald operating a generation or two later. What this suggests, of course, is that, if we accept as we do, and as I claim we must, the experiments as the end-term even beyond the last word, then however right we sinners in the hands of an angry Edwards, let alone an angry god, may have been for the wrong reasons, we would never have nor ever could have arrived at those saving instruments. We would have been stopped dead - literally - in our own tracks, if for no other reason than that of the sabbath strictures directed against such an approach. Instead, continuing on the wrong path for the right reasons, we gave ourselves over to Edwards' villains of the peace, to the bloodied if more relaxed hands of a Gibbon with his history no more than the "register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind" or a David Hume content to discover the universal principles, if you can call them that, of human rather than divine nature. Which retreat from the *corpus mysticum Christi* to the *corpus mysticum humanitatis*, from the top-down to the bottoms-up approach, turned out to be - dare we say providentially? - just what the doctor ordered, the necessary dedivinization instrumental in leading us along the downward path where history, seen only yesterday as a vacuum but now twinned with the void, has finally come home, converted to its true meaning as realized eschatology.

Thus forearmed, I'd argue we're now prepared to take on all comers and pick (and pick on) anybody's brains, not least so tempting a subject's as Jonathan Edwards. Setting aside whatever bones we may have to pick with him - and God knows, judging from Zakai's book and the point you make, they're ripe for picking - the question of transcendence aside, there's still enough there by way of historical goodies to keep us busy for a month of Sundays or, for that matter, every other day in the week. And it's that "aspic" (sic!) I mean to address: that, in effect, when all is said and done, the work of redemption which, after all, is Edwards' principal concern (and ours), is no longer simply a private affair - "the operation of saving grace in the personal experience of conversion" - but, as we see now, given the very existence of the experiments, "inextricable from sacred, providential history." Not that these instruments constitute the only agents, of course, but all things considered - and we're finally in the parlous position where, the end-game in the process of being played out, we have no choice but to consider all things - they seem at once both the most all-inclusive and all-conclusive not only for this time and place but for any and every time and place. No frills, no figures, no tropes, no symbols - above all or, below nothing, no misunderstandings. Simply the remains and distillation of those Johnnies-come-lately, the bare bones of a 3rd Person Science and History drawn to their logical or, better yet, their illogical but, nevertheless, surprising, if not unexpected, conclusion. Though failed like everything else, they still constitute the last to be first in that long procession that begins with the so-called trivium from medieval days consisting of grammar, rhetoric and logic right through to the quadrivium of geometry, arithmetic, music and astronomy, making in all the seven-fold liberal arts so dear to our forbears along with their dogged companions, those hounds of heaven known as the seven deadly sins, all sent to remind us and on all counts - good and bad - that as a Sufi *hadith* I've cited before would have it, "In the latter days one-tenth of what was suitable in the beginning will be sufficient." And so, as prophesied, it's come about, not in the way expected, of course - what has? - but the only way possible.

In any case, given my own somewhat depleted physical state and the much of a muchness that *Zakai-cum* -Edwards provide both by way of exposition and explanation, if it's all right with you what I propose doing, at least for the next couple of letters, is to let him (or them) do most of the talking and I the commenting. As you'll see why, I think it's that important.

**Letter 48 - September 21, 2005**

Dear Carl, As I mentioned on the phone, I've been reviewing (yet again) Zakin's book on Edwards and I can't help marveling how fruitful its ideas and suggestions are and this absent any acquaintance whatsoever with the experiments. My God, it's almost possible to imagine that had he known Douglas' work he might actually have come up with our conclusions, he's that close. As for the one fly in the ointment - his views, reflecting those of Edwards himself, on the issue of transcendence - I think we can safely table those on the grounds that, "wrong-headed" as they may be, not only are they not overriding or central to his argument but, in light of the experiments and as we've discussed, are quite unnecessary to ours. In any case, since there's so much material here without it - what's there to transcend? - I'm going to postpone any treatment of it till we get to Altizer who does away with the notion so neatly and completely as to lay it to rest forever. Suffice it for the moment that as the experiments demonstrate, transcendence at best, at least as it's generally construed, is merely an *uber* - notion, no more and no less, and, at worst, a hangover from the bad old days.

At any rate, here are a few tid-bits chosen at random from Zakin that describe what will serve as parameters to what follows. Again the italics will be mine: "Yet Edwards's quest was more ambitious: to find a *plausible historical agent* which he could claim to show the vivid presence and *immediate* influence of divine agency in history... One of the main problems he faced in developing his philosophy of history was how to establish a close association between the personal experience of saving grace in the soul" - what we would call 1st Person Science - "and the operations of redemptive activity in history as a whole" - what we would now designate as 1st Person History - "for his own tremendous conversion experience had convinced him that God's work of redemption is inseparable from the working of saving grace in conversion." For which "con-version" I suggest we read, quite literally, the "individual" turning-round set in motion by any experiment. Likewise for redemption: again quite literally, the "collective" atonement, that is to say at-onement, attendant on any and all of these Self-same experiments.

"From the beginning he found it necessary to establish a connection between the operation of saving grace in the personal experience of conversion, as the manifestation of God's redemptive activity in the soul" - again what we refer to as 1st Person Science - "and the external, *providential* scheme of time, and to show that personal salvation was inextricable from *sacred, providential history*. Having found the evidence of saving grace during his moment of conversion, Edwards attempted to construe the whole space of time according to this saving experience. The outcome was the formation of a philosophy of history based upon the divine agency *in history*." (Interesting, isn't it, if only in passing, his use of the word "space" : how, in setting precedents if not priorities, the concept of duration lends itself most readily

to, almost demands, spatial imagery. For instance, we speak of "lengths" of time and so on).

"Edwards's invention of an ideology of history signifies an important stage in the development of his thought: the move to define the power of divine agency in shaping the historical process... What had obviously been lacking up to then was the dynamism entailed in the order of grace, the power of divine agency and redemptive activity in time and its relationship to history. In other words, Edwards's previous theology of nature referred to the essential nature of reality" - what we refer to as the province of 1st Person Science - "but not to the nature of time or the meaning and goal of history. Nor did it account for the role of God as the Lord of history, or for the *theological teleology of order inherent in history*. Accordingly, in constructing the dimension of time, Edwards's main goal was to establish an association between redemptive activity in the soul and its manifestations in time" - what we in Headlessness might now refer to as Alpha-directed grace in conjunction with Omega-oriented providence. "His aim was to transport the dynamism revealed in saving grace from the inner sphere of the soul into the whole realm of history, and thus to show the presence of God's redemptive activity within the whole of history."

Could our claim that "the theological teleology of order inherent in history" - his and others' hope and conjecture but our reality - be more clearly announced than in the testimony provided by the experiments and this, not only by what they "say" but by what they "are," indeed by the very fact that they exist at all and so provide us with "that plausible historical agent" whose "vivid presence" demonstrates "the immediate influence of divine agency in history?" That this has been realized and realized in a way it's never been realized before - its "last word", so to speak, which is no word at all since it's been delivered not only *in* but *by* that very silence that certifies it's authenticity - merely constitutes, as if we needed it, one more assurance of its culmination, its difference not only in degree but in kind from anything that's come before and yes, we dare say it and advisedly, anything that could possibly come after. And, for all their hypotheses and approximations, also applies to the testimony of the saints and saviors and avatars - you name 'em and I'm sure we could, by the dozens - as well as to Edwards himself with his suggestive but nevertheless passing-shows - crowd-induced revival meetings and awakenings as he called them - premonitory, if you will, of our gatherings though not quite, since gatherings, however helpful, are hardly, indeed are most certainly, not required (witness your experience). And it applies, too, a generation or two later, to a Hegel or a Blake, precursors all as we draw ever nearer to the all-inclusive and all-conclusive dispensation offered by the experiments. But we've been through all this before. What I want to establish, indeed, as far as I can see it's the only thing left *to* establish by way of credentials, is how it - we, the lesson of history itSelf - got that way.

#### **Letter 49 - September 26, 2005**

Dear Carl, Though seemingly disjointed (for which I apologize in advance), following are some reflections on our subject, on - if the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth we're now in a position to tell be told - the Subject, the complete and final scoop on the meaning of history, as we observe Old Chronos, temporal clock-time, transformed in the twinkling of an eye from "a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing" into Kairos, the Johnny-come-lately who, enlisted to tell the right time, not least what that *canard* "signifying nothing" really really

means, knows what he's talking about when it comes to redemption and its related concerns. The only problem as we track this conversion of history to its true meaning lies in the much of a muchness of the material, not only as regards the questions answered as the answers questioned. How can we do justice to them and to the names, the names, the names that keep popping up out of nowhere, those skeletons haunting the grave-yard of history and demanding not only attribution but in some cases - as we'll see - retribution? Isn't it revealing that, as Douglas was the first to insist, the very essence of the experiments in their role as reflections of beginnings and ends lies in their anonymity, their no-nameness and consequent refusal to leave so much as a trace, a remainder behind, yet at the same time to observe how the road to them is paved, not only with the bones, but with what we can only ascribe to the intentions, honorable or dishonorable, of who said what?

Forgive me but I can't help but offer a few random samples - in homage if nothing else - and if they're accompanied by editorial comment on my part it's merely to point out how, thanks to the experiments, we're actually and finally in a position to come to definitive conclusions about selected issues, certainly as to how and why, whether out of ignorance or self-flattery or sheer sloth, we were mistaken about this and that but are now free to let them go and so aid in that "consummation devoutly to be wished," our own liberation. And if it be pointed out that the examples I'm going to pick seem, at least at first sight, relatively arcane - "caviar for the general" - well, so much the better since the whole purpose of the exercise is to demonstrate that, as I've indicated elsewhere, ideas have consequences, however little at first glance they may seem to. Witness that crazy and rather obscure formula known as the Beatitudes that apparently popping up out of nowhere has had some effect, to say the least, if only as a gauge of what, presumably, we are not, yet see now we decidedly are. I might sight, by contrast and just as an example, Augustine's insistence in his *City of God* which, breaking with the consensus even then, told the sad story that rather than indispensable to collective redemption as well as to individual salvation as even his forerunners, the earlier Christians believed, history was not, as we see now, the story of God's unfolding providence but on the contrary had nothing to do with it, in fact revealed no pattern whatsoever but was at best moot if not in all probability merely the occasion for evil all the way. And so, assured, like its non-existent counterpart in the East, of no place but Alpha to come home to, conspired to set the tone, however inconclusive, for well over a millennium until the Reformation came along. And even then, before the issue could be definitively decided - and make no mistake about it, thanks to the experiments it finally has been - split again: on one side Luther's dour and very Augustinian *Deus absconditus*, very much a hidden god, and, on the other, Calvin's *Deus revelatus* who, though hardly possessed of a sunny disposition - the presumption being He had no reason to be - was nevertheless able to muster enough of an eschatology of hope to recognize, if only unconsciously, that, like the alchemical formula to which it's often compared - like curing like - freedom from history would only be possible, not by ignoring it, but by somehow getting through it and converting it. And so, for all of Luther's reputation as a mover and shaker and despite his mistaken observation that "that person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as if it were clearly perceptible in those things which have actually happened" (a judgement, we see now in light of the experiments, than which nothing could be further from the truth), it's come to pass.

And if all this seems, at best, to be no more than an excursion, however informative, or an opportunity to exercise my own particular hobby-horse, I would have to insist not so. Admittedly, it may look like I've rigged my argument by bringing in that arch-Calvinist, Jonathan Edwards, from left-field since, other than to help prefigure, like so many others, a suitable climate of opinion for the emergence, even the necessity of the experiments, and, if not anticipate their methods, at least some of their conclusions, there's no obvious connection between him and the evolution of Headlessness, can the same be said of Douglas? And since you can't tell the players without a score-card and for the moment at least, we seem to have descended into this business of name-calling, could there be anything more Calvinist, if only in its later and admittedly watered-down versions, than the Plymouth Brethren from whose doctrines he emerged, indeed escaped and arguably transfigured but which, nevertheless, as he's the first to admit, indelibly and providentially suggested what was once a notion but is now a demonstrable fact and so provided him (and us) with the twin pillars of Seeing: that, however you choose to interpret it, if the immediate structure of reality is a reflection of grace so its mediate structure - witness the very presence of the experiments - is attuned to a beneficent providence.

#### **Letter 50 – October 5, 2005**

Dear Carl, Just to review briefly in order to remind ourselves of what we're about: that like Edwards we're trying to find - indeed, in the person, the 1st Person of the experiments have already found - the link that binds grace and providence, the concrete agent that at once reveals both the personally-experienced vivid Presence combined with the immediate influence of divine agency in time, in history. In Edwards' case, he thought he'd found it in revivals, awakenings" as he called them, which would transform history into the dimension of "realized eschatology," the salvation of individuals that would necessarily converge with their redemption. What we see now is that his methods, though indicating a step in the right direction, were far too ephemeral and emotionally geared and, most telling of all, crowd-oriented to have a lasting, no less a definitive effect. Not so, of course, the experiments which, singly or in company, answer and more to all such objections by directly responding both to the personal experience of saving grace in the "soul" (Alpha) and the operation of redemptive activity in time (Omega). And this without any fancy embroidery or poor man's natural longing for a presumably wealthy symbolism when deprived of his birthright. Thus, by suiting the action to the Word conversion means just what it says: a literal turning-around, no if's, and's or but's, just as apocalypse, despite its accrued connotations of doom, is no longer Greek to us but literally translates into revelation, that is to say, like the good eye-opener it is, fits every face that his or hers may behold in all its pristine glory that eschatological holy of holies, the science of last things. Which is no more than to say that history is not just the narrative of human but of divine activity as well. (Witness the very existence of the experiments themselves). As Zakai puts it: "Without conversion there is no redemption, and without redemption there is no history....the urgency of redeeming the soul cannot be separate from the issue of redeeming the time, that is to say, the redemption of history as a whole. Behind the personal issue always lies the historical one." Unless, I might add, you believe in Santa Claus or the tooth-fairy or that babies are delivered by the stork.

What I find so telling in all this, if only as a side-light (and I've touched on this before), are the parodies it suggests, a few of which I've already referred to in the

course of these letters. Like Flaubert's Bouvard and Pecuchet we could draw up a whole list of howlers which, nevertheless, by their sheer naked honesty, couldn't help but reveal what happens to those unwilling and unconscious patron saints, sinners all of the new dispensation, who, stripped to their sensibilities by a mechanical universe deprived of its sacred dimension find themselves with no place to go except down and this not only to the beginning but to the end of wisdom where they connect at the Gap. I'm referring not just to my own experience but to something I stumbled across the other day in our local newspaper of all places, an observation attributed to Oscar Wilde of all people that "there is nothing that can cure the soul like the senses," a remark that, if hardly out of the mouth of a babe, nevertheless if read aright, and - in light of the experiments it can be - not only signals the end of a tyrannical transcendence but even honors, however covertly, its beginning. Who could have predicted that the expulsion from Eden signalled not so much the end but the beginning of a movement that was to initiate both sacred providential history and at the same time convert and literally incorporate its ostensibly terrible loss, together with its subsequent deviations, into a Grand, into *the* Grand Design, in order to issue, finally, into the experiments and so, taking the long way round to Nirvana, literally play into "God's" hands? To think otherwise and deprive it of its meaning - and I did for years - is, to put it quite simply, to assume that those hands, like those of a clock are there for no reason or rhyme other than to chime, no less tell the right time.

Speaking of which - the right time that is - let us now praise famous men and return to a few of our heroes, whether sung or unsung as the case may be, whether in or out of favor. I've already mentioned a few at random: Ramana, of course, and Nisargadatta; William of Ockham who prepared us for the pure empiricism of the experiments - no guess work, no conjecture, above all, no need for faith but only certainty - even Calvin. Now how about adding Nicholas Malebranche to the mix? Malebranche once a disciple of Descartes, who struck out on his own with his notion of occasionalism and took his lumps for it, not least being relegated to the back of the bus in textbooks dealing with philosophy? I think we discussed him briefly on the phone. *Occasionalism*, the doctrine that claims, as Zakai sums it up, that "finite created beings have no causal efficacy and that God alone is the true causal agent;" that states that "natural causes provide only the *occasion* for the operation of the one and only real cause, which is God," a.k.a. as the 1st Person Singular, and that, "in reality, what we call the cause is merely the *occasion* for God to exercise his efficacious will." Could anything be more patently obvious after the experiments than that this demonstration of the "inherent teleological and theological structure of order in the world," is a fact, *the Fact* in which "God's redemptive activity is manifested" and so knocks into a cocked hat all those more well-publicized claims that say different, that suggest that somehow God "governs" through secondary causes rather than directly through divine immanence? And, not incidentally, what could be more flattering, not to say conducive to being on one's best behavior (at least if you're as vain as I am), than to be first introduced and then acknowledged as God's occasion? At which, I won't say I'll rest my case - although I'm getting there - but I'll take the "occasion" to pause for breath in order to rest His which, of course, needs none.

#### **Letter 51 – October 10, 2005**

Dear Carl, It would be nice (I guess) if things were as straightforward as the Malebranche example I gave in my last note to which, speaking of unjustly ignored figures, I might add (as merely one among many), his younger contemporary, Bernard



Mandeville and his *Fable of the Bees*, another neglected but interesting piece of business in which Mandeville demonstrates how "private vices" - like eating forbidden fruit, for example - can, if you chew your food properly and are sure to spit out the pits, lead to "public benefits," like - shall we say? - the experiments. Unfortunately, however - or fortunately, depending on where you're coming from - "things" by their very nature are never quite as simple as they seem, only as they're *seen* and then only by you-know-Who or, if you prefer, you-know-What. But that, of course, is another story, is, in fact, *our* story, the one Hegel anticipates as exhibiting the "cunning of Reason," but we're now positioned, thanks to the experiments, to go him one better by pinpointing it more precisely as the "cunning of History," for all its "contrived corridors" the shortest (and sweetest) way we've found so far to the Land of Heart's Desire.

All this by way of referring to an interesting example - and, of course, there are many but we'll stick with only one as, perhaps, the most egregious - where the simple one-to-one relationship doesn't quite hold, there being on *occasion* not only a good deal more than meets the eye but, as Malebranche might have instructed his master - "I'm right, Descartes, and you're wrong" - a good deal less. I'm thinking of the well-known (though not well-enough known) confrontation between Newton and Blake which, though the two were separated by almost four generations, still resonates down those same contrived corridors. We all know or should Blake's "Mock on, Mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau; /Mock on, Mock on; 'tis all in vain!/ You throw the sand against the wind,/ And the wind blows it back again " to which the last verse reads: "The atoms of Democritus/ And Newton's Particles of light/ Are sands upon the Red sea shore, /Where Israel's tents do shine so bright," a howl of protest that has finally been vindicated by you-know-Who operating through you-know-What. But in light of these same experiments, and this not only in what they "say" or even represent but how they got that way (which is our concern), are things quite as simple as that? Is the road that has led us to them completely devoid of the ambiguity, that poor man's excuse for paradox, that characterizes just about everything else including all of history? Or as a poetess whose name escapes me at the moment once wrote of the gnarled trees of both Knowledge and Life, "Is it thus so plainly shown/ By twist or turn which way the wind has blown?" What I'm saying or trying to is that Blake's *declaration* along with so many of his others, absolutely on target as they were, would not, could not, have led us to the experiments (nor did they), if only because, his truth *believed* or even *known* (as distinct from being demonstrated), there would have been no need for them. Conversely, it was precisely because of his arch-villain Newton's thesis, partial as it was and subsequently, if not exploded, at least superseded, that's helped lead us mere mortals to this unexpected if pretty pass, and I say "helped" advisedly. To have stayed with Blake and be both solely and souly beholden to and dependent on the "genius" of his insight would have been to be deprived, however indirectly, of proof - and definitive proof at that - of our own, not the least of the collateral "worldly" gifts promised by those watch-words, "liberty, equality, fraternity," now realized for the first time ever in the only way possible: on a universal scale where geniuses - and it is certainly one of the great collateral gifts of the experiments - need no longer apply. And why? Because they're no longer necessary. And this we owe - dare I say it? - as much to the wrong-headedness of the failed Newtons of this world, despite the nobility, even majesty of their projects, as to anyone. As a well-known Newtonian once put it, as usual taking a step in the right direction for the wrong reason: "The truth is revealed not in God's word but his work;

it is not based on the testimony of scripture or tradition but is *visible* to us all the time and is understandable only to those who know *nature's* handwriting and can decipher her text." True enough but it's precisely therein that lies the rub, enjoined as we are to bow now to Nature's handwriting instead of "facing" the other way in order to decipher our own. So, as with Einstein three centuries later, participation - 1st Person Science at home in "Israel's tents" - is sacrificed at the altar of observation, 3rd Person Science, and along with 3rd Person History goes on its not-so-merry way from breakdown to breakdown to breakdown, from heteronomous to autonomous to theonomous until, hoist by its own petard, it finally succeeds in breaking through by breaking down and, fittingly enough, hitting bottom at anonymous - the experiments. Which is no more than to say - and it has - that God will not be mocked, not even by the Newtons or Blakes of this world.

### **Letter 52 – October 16, 2005**

Dear Carl, I don't mean to be chewing my cabbage twice or even three times but at the risk of becoming tedious I do want to clarify what might appear an unwarranted, even unjust critique of Blake in my last. God knows, as should be apparent by now, I loved, if not the man, at least the work "this side idolatry." I merely wanted to make clear, if only for the record, that had we stopped with his insight, searching as it was (and not only his but anyone else's), we still wouldn't have come up with the experiments and so completed the task of history. Just as "seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil," (Hopkins' phrase) a deflowered nature was no longer capable of acting as a primary source of inspiration, not to speak of knowledge, and had to be succeeded by a so-called man-made history, so, in strict conformity with Hegelian logic ( from thesis to antithesis to synthesis), that, too, had to be superseded by the once merely prophetic but now pledged vision provided by the experiments, the final stage in which deity totally reveals itSelf or, if you prefer, is at least totally revealed.

Now I recognize that in certain quarters, for instance those that harbor partisan views ranging anywhere from defenders of the cave-dwellers through the Buddha and Jesus right up to Ramana, Nisargadatta and Nishitani or anyone else you might care to name, these are fighting words and I'm going to get some flack for this, but, since the facts or, better yet, the Fact proves otherwise, I can't help it. On this score it might be worth taking as our text a recent note from Richard which he calls, Sharing Seeing: "...The headless way is not the only way home to God, and maybe not the 'best' way, whatever that might mean. I'm sure God has lots more tools in its toolbox. But to myself and many people who value their headlessness, it is a superbly simple and direct way. In my own view, as a tool for sharing awareness of who we really are, it is second to none...Given that, it is not however exclusive to any other way that is genuine...It's just that I'm meditating at Home, not meditating to get Home."

Despite the "second to none" and "I'm meditating at Home, not meditating to get Home"- neither of which can be bettered - despite, I say, this admission of the primacy of Seeing at least for him, I might be even more insistent and point out that just as in bowling a spare is not a strike or in archery there is one bull's eye and one bull's eye only, so with the experiments. Unlike anything else I'm aware of, they constitute the one medium I know of, in fact the only medium - if they can even be designated as such - in which God unmistakably speaks in his native yet universal tongue clearly and succinctly and definitively and this, paradoxically enough yet

fittingly, by means of the language of silence. And it's this, I have to insist, that, avoiding the ever-present danger of dualism, even of the Word, especially of the Word, makes all the difference and awards it preference over even so accomplished a translation as a crucifixion or, to go from the sublime to the ridiculous, a slap in the face as in Zen.

That said we can return to Edwards and finish up with our homage to him as one of the true pioneers in this conversion of history to its meaning, as one who was able to cut through the so-called "eschatological fiction" and reveal it to be not, or at least not only, as Joyce and so many others had experienced it, the nightmare from which, however fitfully, we've been trying to awaken, but the dream come true to which we've succeeded. Can there be any doubt that the rampant nihilism of the past century or two, a total nihilism surfacing for the first time in history, was merely a preparation for the revelation of the holy nothingness that, powerless to do anything except, like the flip-side of a coin, play into God's hands, underlay it? Or that concurrently, on one side of the globe, the so-called Buddha/Mara and, on the other - specifically in Kabbalah - the supposed Jesus/Judas confrontation was merely a forerunner of the about-to-be con-version, the turning-around and definitive reconciliation of 1st and 3rd Persons, the one inextricably bound, in fact, inconceivable without the other and both raised to their nth degree by our miraculous, because utterly simple, instruments?

On this score, here's an anecdote for you. Towards the end of the war - my war, that is, the one that was still going on in Germany - I found myself billeted in - of all places short of heaven on earth at least for a conquering hero - Paris. As a result, hanging around the Luxembourg of an afternoon I had the opportunity to meet a lot of the students and artists and poets also starting to stream back to town to resume their studies or work. Not surprisingly, I heard a lot of names I'd never heard before, nor, for that matter, aside from the French, had anyone else: Sartre, Camus, de Beauvoir, de Montherlant, Anouilh and so on. I even managed to get to know some of their work when I wasn't discovering those marvelous café's and even more marvelous girls. One of them I came across - poets, I mean, not girls - was Paul Eluard, an early and at the time still flourishing Surrealist - specifically a line from one of his poems which I've never forgotten. Forgotten? For fifty years it was my mantra, my watchword. "There is another world - and we're in it, " I used to repeat, especially at parties, in the hope of making myself interesting. I thought that was the cat's meow until I came across the experiments and graduated, as we all have and must, from the Lesser to the Greater Mysteries and saw in earnest that if there is another world - and, indeed, there is and it's the only really real world - it's in us.

### **Letter 53 – December 1, 2005**

Dear Carl, As you can see there's been quite a hiatus since my last letter, most of which I'd like to blame on my health or at least my gradually diminishing energy. Nevertheless, though hitting eighty-three a few weeks ago as well as being just back from the hospital one more time, I still suspect the greater part of the delay is simply due to the much of the muchness of the material, in this case my recent immersion or, as we've already touched on, my re-immersion in Altizer's work. Not that I mean to give him, provocative enough and certainly learned and exciting and difficult, too, more than his due. As the sequence will indicate, from our standpoint, he, too, like just about every one else on the hunt for the meaning of it all, can't help but come up

short absent the experiments. Not, I might hasten to add, because like Moses he's killed a man (at least so far as I know) and so has been condemned to remain all ears in sight of the Promised Land but, as history makes plain and the experiments certainly testify, words, words, words - and God knows he's got an abundance of them - even *the* Word simply won't do any longer. But we can go into that in more detail later on.

What I do want to avoid right from the start, however, is any suggestion of what's usually referred to as the historicist error, the claim that simply because we've survived the past and, thanks to the experiments, have collectively arrived just in time at what we can now safely call the Omega point - at, in effect, at least the possibility of a conscious completion of our destiny via 1st Person Science as delivered by 1st Person History - this somehow awards us a priority or privilege over all those benighted folks who had the misfortune of being born too soon, who, from the cave-dwellers to, say, a Nishitani - and, what the hell, why not throw in the birds and the bees for good measure? - were stuck in various degrees of unconsciousness or, at best, were conscious of mere fulfillment at Alpha, whereas climbing over all those dead bodies has positioned us at the top of the heap. On the contrary, if anything a case can be made and has been by traditionalists of all stripes that in accordance with the Sufi *hadith* that "In the latter days one-tenth of what was required in the beginning will be sufficient", precisely the reverse has occurred, that in the course of the great devolution it's we who've been buried *beneath* them. Which, of course, however you slice it, may be just what the doctor ordered, the cost of the pearl of great price precisely and paradoxically paid for by, coin of the realm, the lowest of the low, the only medium of exchange acceptable if the ultimate in differentiation is to be achieved and the last to be first not only encouraged but empowered to hit bottom and so learn, or re-learn, to look the other way.

In any case, though Altizer suspects what for the first time ever we're in a position to confirm: that what was formerly known, literally, as the *pro-verbial* gulf between East and West - "the never the twain shall meet" - is about to be bridged in the *coincidentia oppositorum* of vertical fulfillment at Alpha and horizontal completion at Omega, indeed already has been; though, as I say, he talks about it and, like just about every other interested party, continues to hope for it, absent the certainty *pro-vided* by the experiments, he fails to see it, fails to see that the ultimate union has already taken place with this final offer of marriage between a 1st Person Science, the workings of grace, and its providential opposite number, 1st Person History. Absent these simple instruments, simple because offered up in a becoming silence, though acknowledging and more than acknowledging both - at once the dynamism and historical orientation of the Semitic monotheisms and the more static because ahistorical perspective of the East, especially Buddhism - he's still hung up on their differences, when in reality both have now been surpassed, indeed, one might dare say, superseded. And so, to use one of his favorite phrases, in this definitive reconciliation all has now become all in all. In regard to this melding, isn't it interesting to note that Douglas subtitled *On Having No Head* - what, for all intents, is the introduction to the experiments - *Zen and the Re-Discovery of the Obvious*, when, at the same time - and we've discussed this before - his uncoveries are inconceivable without his rigid Christian indoctrination and background? Indeed, as I've addressed in a few of my earlier letters, our nodding acquaintance with, not to speak of our entire knowledge of Zen and the East generally, is entirely dependent on and

connected to the historical breakdown of the Christian synthesis, its high and mighty universal mission of propagating the Word to one and all watered down, first by voyages of discovery, then by the concomitant exploitation of the natives, only to conclude, in this pre-view of One World, with the incipient transfer of power to a couple of burgeoning empires of their own, this last in the presence of an obscure and transplanted Brit literally looking to survive during a world-wide economic depression. Well, I suppose stranger things have happened. Think of the emergence of Christianity itself. But more of this in my next.

**Letter 54, December 14, 2005**

Dear Carl, I've just finished re-reading Altizer's *History as Apocalypse* which, in light of the experiments and our own work might just as well be called *History is Apocalypse* (apocalypse here, absent its ominous connotation at the hands of those who weren't quite up on their Greek - the four horsemen and that sort of thing - corresponding no more and no less to its Latin derivative, *revelatus*, the pure and simple seeing that ends all revelations) - as I say I've just finished re-reading it and am so snowed with notes, ideas, possibilities, suggestions and, yes, doubts I can even begin to handle them, that I literally don't know where to begin. So I might as well begin at the end and repeat what I've already suggested more than once: that, for all the blind spots I can only attribute to his not having the experiments - for example, his persistent, if understandable, reliance on faith, in effect, on words (not to speak of the Word), when pure and simple seeing will do - Altizer, representing the very best from the Judeo-Christian, the Omega perspective so to speak, is, when it comes to describing the parameters that apply to us, as good as it's going to get. His misses - and God knows there are many, mostly having to do with his necessary reliance on said faith (and I do mean "said" as distinct from our certain sight and I'll get to that, too, by and by) - still come as close as anybody else's hits. So I'll handle them in some kind of order as best I can.

The first that comes to mind occurs right on page 2 in his Introduction where he confesses to a persuasion he adopted early in his studies and has never abandoned: "the conviction that Christian theology can be reborn only by way of an immersion in Buddhism." Could, in effect, anything be more on target from our point of view yet at the same time more Western, in a sense more ecumenically "Christian", especially when you consider - and I've noted this before - the sub-title to Douglas' *On Having No Head* sounds precisely the same note: Zen and the Re-Discovery of the Obvious? No wonder Altizer had me practically eating out of his hand right from the get-go, at least when it came to his diagnoses of the dis-ease which more or less agreed with ours: that the only if essential difference between the two world and not only world but cosmic views - both offshoots of even earlier traditions, the one, Hinduism, the other, Judaism - lay in their prescription for the cure: the one, Buddhist, content and not only content but insistent on harking back or at least remaining in a time-less, essentially static and ahistorical, primordial perspective - what I refer to as the Alpha state; the other, historical minded and so, in its dynamic forward-looking, far-ranging looking-forwardness ever on the prowl in hopes of discovering some time-free never-never land which, of course, in the person, the 1st Person of the experiments, it finally and essentially and, despite or maybe because of every fault of its own, it providentially has.

Which statement of our case immediately raises all sorts of questions and a good thing, too, or else, the essential issues settled, what would we have left to talk about? For instance, does the plethora of historical interest so characteristic of our post-modern era, register a genuine concern, not so much with past or even present as with its true meaning, the revelation of Presence, or is it merely indicative of a drowning in the last throes of total recall trying to remember what it will shortly no longer be required to? Or does it, as I've already suggested more than once, like the coupling of antibiotics and the atom bomb or the nothingness of heaven moving hand in hand with the nihilism of hell, reveal at once both possibilities, the coming erosion of historical consciousness already begun indicative that its work is essentially done? Because, make no mistake about it, one way or the other, as the relatively new kid on the block, indeed, the necessarily last to be first, history *has*, as the experiments if nothing else demonstrate, done its work. And to some degree, though absent these incredibly simple instruments, these stop-watches on eternity, Altizer obviously can't quite put his finger on it, he senses this, he knows something is up: that just as in the headless rock-art of the Magdalenian hunters 15, 000 years ago "the very presence of primordial deity foreclosed the possibility of the presence of the human face" (which face, in fact, didn't even begin to put in an appearance until some ten or eleven thousand years later when - surprise, surprise - history proper is said to have begun), so the present thrust towards its reversal, towards a universal anonymity, a genuinely name-free, face-free immanence as distinct from its name-less, face-less because transcendent parody, may, nevertheless, however unwittingly and even unconsciously, presage for the first time ever a preview of things to come. After all - and I do mean "after" and I do mean "all" - stranger things, like the notion of history itself or the very real recognition of "one world," have happened. But more on this as we go along.

#### **Letter 55 - January 1, 2006**

Dear Carl, One of the advantages of having come to an end and, thanks to the experiments, knowing it, is that one can begin anywhere and speak with authority about all those goings-on reputed to have happened in the middle, a middle pre-determined by the necessary, never-ending crucifixion and resurrection indigenous to every breath we take, which breath together with its repetition - its death and rebirth - not only enacts but, it now appears, also provides its own meaning. And to some degree Altizer, given his essentially Christian orientation, is onto this. Witness the following taken from Chapter One of his *History as Apocalypse* where he discusses the significance of the transition from the seminal faceless and eyeless sculpture of the archaic period to the better known exemplars of Greek art of the sixth century B.C.:

"...these eyes release a new vision, a vision which simply and purely sees... a vision in which the seer is the center of the world... a visual revolution, one that is no doubt born with Homer and therefore initially realized through voice...but what is about to explode before us is body itself...the realization of the birth of vision, of a pure vision, a vision which is a totally *immanent* vision (italics mine)... Thus the birth of vision is the birth of body...the full actual-ization of body...In the grace of this moment of vision, the life of the Great Goddess is incarnate not only in the bodies of these goddesses, but in our bodies, too - an

incarnation awakening our bodies...to an incarnate perception...that can fully occur in the immediacy of pure perception"

and so on.

I don't mean to appear ungenerous or even ungracious and maybe my reaction is conditioned to some extent by the fact that, for want of anything better, this kind of substitute, however passionate and committed as far as it goes, passed for mother's milk to me, but I can't help being reminded of the poet Roy Campbell's swipe at the prevailing tone of the verse of his (and my) day - of Spender's and Auden's and that bunch: "They use the snaffle and the curb all right;/ But where's the bloody horse?" Or as my father who, having been forced to go to work following the eighth grade, used to respond to some of the more fanciful opinions of his not quite wayward son, "That and a nickel'll get you a ride on the subway." In any case, though, as I say, I don't mean to be unkind (even to myself), nevertheless I think we can agree that absent the infinite exactitude of the experiments - "the minute particulars," Blake might have characterized them as distinct from the "General Good, the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite and flatterer" - Campbell's critique could well be levelled at virtually the whole theological, philosophical and literary canon that's come down to us through the ages, what the Germans used to call its *schwärmerai*, "the let 'em eat cake" syndrome when our plea all along has been for bread.

Am I being too harsh on what, after all, is Altizer's perfectly justified intellectual appraisal of a real and decidedly palpable phenomenon? If I am it's only because it reminds me of an incident, a kind of modern morality tale I witnessed played-out some sixty years ago now, and since I think it's pertinent and, I would argue, quite relevant to what we're talking about, if you'll forgive me I simply must share it with you. It was right after the war - my war - and I was living on the fifth floor of a cold-water walk-up in Greenwich Village just off Washington Square park to which, like most of my fellow inhabitants, I used to repair on nice days, for, as we used to say in the army, rest and recuperation. It was a lovely place then, still peaceful and quiet; the north side bounded by the houses dating from the leisurely Henry James era along with the Washington Memorial Arch itself, the east and south by N.Y.U. and, to round it all off (circling the square if not squaring the circle), the recently constructed apartment-buildings, one of which was inhabited by, among others of the rich and famous, Mrs. Roosevelt whom we could see virtually every day as she dispensed the largesse of her friendly smile while walking her even more well-known, indeed world-famous dog, the scotty Falla, also formerly of the White House. For the rest, there were young mothers and/or nannies with their charges and old men playing *boci* or chess and checkers and the students, of course, along with the artists and writers and other assorted bohemians who could still afford to live in the neighborhood: the early Beats and pioneer Abstract Expressionists (I wish I'd bought more of their work; I'd be rich today). For instance, on any given day I might see the poet E.E. Cummings sunning himself on a bench or even on occasion a really mad and wild-looking Djuna Barnes (who, it was obvious from her constant blinking, really didn't care for the light) but did write one great novel. It was quite a place to live in if you were young.

And then, of course, there were the Goths as we called them, the young Italian kids - anywhere from eighteen to twenty-five - the aborigines dressed in their trade-mark lumber-jackets who essentially did the heavy lifting and whose parents and

grandparents coming from the old country in search of the American dream, still spoke with accents as they performed a good deal of the services and now owned not only most of the tenements in the neighborhood but virtually all the little shops and restaurants and deli's. My landlady, for instance, a Mrs. Previtali, ran one of the best bakeries in town right under my very nose. As for the kids, though they may have talked tough, except for the occasionally wayward and loose cannons or just plain evil ones who ended up in Sing-Sing or the Chair, for the most part they turned out no better nor worse than any one else: decent, hard-working law-abiding citizens. Which is not to say the young bucks couldn't be a mild pain once in a while as witness the following encounter. I was sitting minding my own business when a couple of them came along and, squeezing behind a park bench onto a small patch of grass, began tossing a rubber ball around. And tossing, not throwing, is the word for it. It was no big deal. It wasn't a big ball, not even a heavy ball, just a little rubber ball which, of course, as balls will do, occasionally got out of hand and bounced onto the sidewalk. At which, one of the boys would hop over a bench and, retrieving it, start all over again, all this, of course, accompanied by the usual patter. It was the kind of thing that if you found it annoying you could have picked yourself up and moved a few yards away with no trouble at all. The park wasn't that crowded in those days and certainly there were no infants around in baby carriages or old folk for whom it might have constituted a hazard. There was, however, a young college student at the other end of the bench I was sitting on and though I hate to resort to stereotypes or pretend to - witness my description of the Goths - there's no question he looked like your typical N.Y.U. student of the day: serious-looking with thick glasses and sporting a heavy brief-bag obviously loaded with books, one of which he was trying to read when, for the second or third time, the ball bounced either near or onto his lap.

Here begins the drama and the whole point of the story - and it is a story and a true story if there ever was one.

As the student reached down and picked up the ball, one of the Goths came over to him and, holding out his hand, waited for it to be returned. When this didn't happen, when, in fact, the student just sat there and, you might say, rather than merely hold onto the ball seemed actually to be defiantly guarding it, the Goth, like a puppy being played with and not yet realizing that this was getting serious - that it was not so much a ball that was in contention now but a bone - almost smiled. "Gimme da ball," he said good-naturedly. "No," the student replied firmly. You could tell by his tone he was quite serious. You could also see by the look on his face that the Goth still couldn't quite believe it. "Whaddya mean no?" he said in some wonderment, turning in disbelief to his buddy who'd come up to join him. "Gimme da ball," he repeated, his voice rising. "No," the student insisted. "This is a park for everybody. People have a right to sit here undisturbed. And besides," he continued, holding up the ball, "this is dangerous." Now I can't swear after all these years that those were his exact words but they're close enough to the gist and you certainly get the tone. What I can swear to, however, is what immediately followed. Without saying another word, though I do remember him glancing momentarily at his buddy - I can only assume for an approval that apparently was immediately forthcoming - the Goth reached down and, with one deft motion, grabbed the student firmly by the wrist and with the other extracted the ball.



Now if that were all this would merely be the description of yet another metropolitan encounter, one of your "doesn't it happen to everybody?" kind of daily occurrence that so marks modern urban life as the most natural thing in the world. But, as it happened, it turned into something much more than that, at least for me. Why else would I remember it so vividly after all these years ? Because as the two Goths were leaving - and I recall they did leave though not without the mandatory and threatening standing over their victim much like, as Konrad Lorenz describes it, the victorious wolf will, quivering and shaking, stand over his conquered rival, before, constrained by God knows how many hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of years, of built-in safeguards against killing his own kind (would those restrictions have extended to us) he'll urinate on his victim and then move on, presumably to get the girl -; as I say, I remember the outspoken one saying as he stuck his mug - and it was a mug - in the student's face: "Ya know de trouble wid you. Ya fight wid your mout(h) and not your hands."

Given who I am or, looking back, I can only assume I was in the process of becoming - a kind of amalgam of the two - you could have knocked me over with a library card. Talk of intimations of Plato or the Gospel, not to speak of the Gita or Machiavelli or even a Winston Churchill with his "better to jaw jaw than war war" (though, when pressed, he, too, was forced to make his exceptions) and all this in the shadow of an august university no less. As our acute young Goth instinctively intimated, laying it out as it's existed from the beginning, do we fight with our mouths and/or hands, or do we, by extension, turn ourselves upside down and revert, if not to our origins, at least to, presumably, our Origin, to, deeper than the Word because, delivered in silence and so more inclusive, the third thing, the Deed? Is there a way to fight with our hands without striking a blow, what, in deference to William James' essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War" (sport, business and so on) we might call its Speculative Equivalent? And, if so, will it come about, as the prophet Isaiah hoped, by divine intervention, by the lion become a vegetarian lying down with the lamb - or, more likely, by a reverse twist, by the lamb, living paw to mouth anyway, lying down with the lion and, a procedure commonly known as sacrifice, giving in one fell blow, not only the devil his due, but the gods, too - a sacrifice which, however vicariously, is taking place anyway whether we know it or not or like it or not? As Blake would have it in one of the more perceptive observations in the canon: "The cut worm forgives the plow," to which we might add, since, according to the Gita, the whole kit and kaboodle is all food anyway, "and the fish-hook too." In any case, will this largess, if it does come about on a universal scale, extend to "wanton boys who kill us (like flies) for their sport?" As we've discussed before, not bloody likely when you consider that even a Father Abraham could, after some haggling, extract no better than a reluctant assurance, if not an absolute guarantee from the Man presumed upstairs, that in a pinch a quorum of ten *might* do - just about the number, give or take, we manage to muster at our average gathering. Still, if there's no easy answer to this there is a simple one, one that if it cannot be solved may, nevertheless, be dissolved. But that will have to come from at least something resembling the experiments with their demonstrations of a voluble silence combined with answerable hands that demand our compliance in everything we do and the absence of which exacts its price which, of course, we may, at least judging by our behavior, be willing to pay, in fact, one way or the other, must pay: that if this pretension to a head we call human and the demonstrable absence of one we now see constitutes divinity are to be reconciled, it will, like a river emanating from its source, have to spring from

somewhere in the neighborhood of its first sighted and habitable land, the heart, and work its way *down*. Is this, speaking of parodies, what we mean by a "fall," a fall *into* grace, a place where, according to Djuna Barnes, if we "let go hell our fall will be broken by the roof of heaven," or where, the sound of silence sanctioning its message loud and clear, God will be seen to have "no hands but mine " as St. Teresa of Avila would have it? And now we have it, too, in a way even she never could, instantly on contact, immediately accessible to all and beyond even the need for verbal transmission since, impersonal and anonymous, we now *see* it's who we are anyway.

But I've detoured on this main road long enough in celebration of the New Year. So back to Altizer.

### **Letter 56 - January 6, 2006**

Dear Carl, In retrospect I apologize for my last which, I see now, not only disregarded our agreement to limit these exchanges to a page or, at most, a slight spill-over when necessary, but on re-reading seems to me not only all too personal, perhaps, but not as clear as it might be. Other than to blame it on the holiday spirit, I really don't know what got into me. In any case, as penance and in keeping with my New Year resolution to limit my remarks as much as is practicable to the allotted space, I've decided to let Altizer and others speak for themselves and, to paraphrase Ben Franklin, acknowledge that where we don't hang together, we must, perforce, hang or, at least, hang out separately.

Which said, how can I resist commenting on his (Altizer's) for the most part masterful, treatment of the material in his *History as Apocalypse*, from the recognition and, where not exactly recognized, the intimation that the passage from pre-history to post-history (where we are now), from the face-less through the naming of face to the final liberation of being face-free, consists of a voyage from a center of consciousness presumably located within the body to its reverse, to the awareness of the body as existing within a center of consciousness (otherwise known as God), the kind of thing the French poet, Paul Eluard, also touched upon to some degree (and forgive me if I've already quoted this though it certainly bears repeating); that "there is another world and we are in it?" Where, of course, absent the experiments, he misses like just about everyone else and tells only half the story - and again forgive me if I've already cited this - is in the ultimate realization that there is, indeed, another world but it's *demonstrably* in us. All of which can only combine to explain why, though it certainly had or even continues to have its place, the whole shootin' match of faith-based knowledge, however quaintly, even aesthetically pleasing and reminiscent of the good old days, can no longer shed sufficient light for our needs any more than that other holdover from a superseded era, candlelight can.

No accident then that, to give only one example, early on in his discussion of the *Oedipus at Colonnus*, he (Altizer), for all his insightful comments but, nevertheless, absent the closure the experiments represent, is unable to zero in for the kill so to speak, any more than, in the name of Oedipus or even the chorus, Sophocles himself could but, mirroring the prevailing limits of the time, was condemned to dance, not only around the problem but its solution as well. But I'll let all of them - Altizer and Sophocles (and Oedipus and the chorus too) - speak for themselves. Here, summing it up in a nutshell is the chorus: Not to be born surpasses thought and speech. The second best is to have seen the light And then to go back quickly whence we came.

Could, in light of the experiments' absolute and universal confirmation of what, up to now, has been no better than a relatively recent and parochial Zen claim (and moot at that) - could, in effect, anything be clearer than that "not to be born not only surpasses thought and speech" but, whether we like it or not or are aware of it or not, is our natural condition, the very air we breathe and, other than represented by its conscious acknowledgement, not so much a consummation devoutly to be wished but the very ground of our commencement? Could, in light of the experiments, anything be clearer than that, both individually and collectively, we've had it upside down from virtually the beginning but now, thanks to them, are literally in a *position* to set things right-side up by, finding, as Zen enjoins us to do, not only the face we had before we were born but, by merely turning our attention around, play the last trump as prophesied and, in the twinkling of an eye, instantly convert what was formerly experienced as the half-truth of Sophoclean, indeed of all, tragedy into the whole truth of the divine comedy it is?

Is the so-called secret really and truly all too simple for words?

### **Letter 57 - January 11, 2006**

Dear Carl, Just finished talking to you on the phone and it's given me a real lift since, as I explained or tried to, if I'm suffering from anything it's from this absolute wealth of suggestion and material (and I do mean absolute and I do mean wealth) just from going over my jottings on Altizer alone which, given their nature, almost defy any kind of ordering or systematic arrangement. For instance, what am I to make of the following which, more than just a passing observation on his part however accurate, reveals how intimately connected all the material is that's led us to this pretty pass? I'm referring to the fact - and it is a fact and, thanks to the experiments, as distinct from Altizer's conjectures, now a demonstrable one - that, as Aquinas was the first to suspect, far from supernatural, the revealed with its total and primary dependence on the senses, is perfectly natural, a notion that, picked up a few generations later by the Englishman Ockham in the name of a pure nominalism - the revealed as natural, the natural as revealed - has, despite many protests and much carrying-on, not only been passed on to us but, thanks to another Englishman of our deliverance and acquaintance, been refined to the point where, beyond argument, beyond even the gospel truth, it's finally prevailed. And prevailed by virtue of the absolute certainty both intrinsic and extrinsic to these simple, anonymous exercises whereby we're now in a position, *the* position to claim that it's not what I say or you say or even what Douglas says that determines the truth of any matter or even of matter itself, but what they - the experiments - say and this precisely because they say it in the only medium capable of telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth: the pure immediacy of the actual, factual language of silence that, in Wallace Stevens' phrase, bespeaks "the no-thing that is and the no-thing that is not," beyond the bug-bear of the Word with all its built-in contra-dictions.

That said - and it's as simple as that - we're free to proceed with our analysis safe in the knowledge that what's not in line with the above-said but, nevertheless, unspoken truth is, to whatever degree, simply out of line with it and that in this game of cowboys and Indians we play with ourselves - "so and so or such and such went that a'way" - is only helpful and, indeed, true, if it "heads" us in the right direction and the ultimate realization that every act we make, every gesture we take, every word, every thought is merely the repetition - interior or exterior - of a crucifixion and resurrection

no longer mythical or historical - in a word no longer symbolic - but in every sense as real and constant as the very air we breathe. As Altizer conveniently and justly characterizes it, it is *the* one eschatological event and, paradoxically enough, has been, world without end, from the beginning. And since what lies within his recognition also happens to be the very backbone of our thesis, it might be worth examining, not so much where we agree as where we differ and, if not differ, demur as demur we must if only because it is now we who are not only in possession of but possessed by the ultimate imprimatur - the experiments - and he isn't any more than a supreme and unsurpassed and unsurpassable figure like a Dante was when he claimed for the *Commedia*, justifiably at the time, the ultimate integration of *imagination* and thinking when all the while it was the thing itSelf - *vision* , not imagination, not thought - that was waiting in the wings to be uncovered. Put as plainly as possible what it all comes down to is this: what Altizer and greater than Altizer *envision* we're now in a position to see and see that things are not other than what they are. As a result we no longer have to "evoke that original divine sacrifice which is the *mythical* (sic!) origin of the world" (italics mine) since, thanks to our pilgrimage from myth to Fact via history, we see and see by means of our bodies that, in reality, other than to frame and make it palatable given our condition at the time, there's nothing mythical about it. Contrary to his hope as well as claim that "the power of *ritual* language is inseparable from its own enactment," we're finally in a position to see that the literal reward for hitting bottom is that we no longer have to accept any substitutes, symbolic or otherwise, however "divine" their pretensions. To paraphrase the Milton of *Paradise Lost* (II, 145) we're now in a position to verify that it's not God who has to lower himself to our level, but we who must lower ourselves to his, to the condition, as Douglas describes it, of a "not-god." And can this no longer conjectural "sacrifice" be depicted, no less enacted, more graphically and with more certainty and assurance than through the experiments? To explore, then, the nature of this sacrifice which constitutes the very essence of the experiments must be our next project.

### **Letter 58 January 21, 2006**

Dear Carl, I suppose if we had to resort to words (and we do) we could sum up the essential "teaching" of the experiments, of the paper-bag, for instance, and what it has to "say" about sacrifice, with these simple lines from Blake's *Milton* and let it go at that: "Such are the Laws of Eternity that each shall mutually Annihilate/ himself for others good," the only difference being that Blake's observation, presumably one man's opinion however desirable, is still open to discussion, I suppose even to dispute, whereas the experiment, indeed any experiment, with its universal indicative - what is - joined to the absolute imperative of what should and must be - and this beyond language, beyond even a question of choice - is not. On a more complex though no less acute level it's what Nishitani suggests when he refers to the "reciprocal interchange of absolute inequality" as the inescapable condition, conscious or not or even like it or not, that pertains to any and every conceivable encounter, whether of man meeting dog or, handily enough for our purposes, of dog spelled backward (at least in English) meeting man.

All this ties in nicely with Altizer's thesis as far as it goes, but as we've seen before and will see again and not only as regards Altizer, the problem still remains that, absent the experiments he's still operating in the human, the all-too-human bang and/or whimper school in which we've enrolled ourselves since Day One: the

fundamentalist temptation of either going too far or, at the other end of the spectrum, not going far enough, that is to say all the way. The future is still relegated to, if not a never-never land, at best a not-yet waiting to be discovered instead of being recognized for what it is and always has been, an already-here waiting, indeed dying, to be uncovered.

"Man is born a Spectre or Satan & is altogether an Evil, & requires a New Selfhood continually & must continually be changed into his direct Contrary."

So Blake again and here's Altizer's not so surprising comment on what, essentially, is, as we see now, if not a detailed *pre* scriptum designed to induce a heavenly state of health - that's reserved for the experiments - at least an accurate *de* scriptum of this New and hoped-for Selfhood. "But only in the apocalyptic situation of the end of the world does either the possibility or the necessity of our continual transformation and transfiguration into our direct contrary become manifest and real." Indeed it does which, stripped of its accrued *qua* ominous connotation ("apocalypse" signifying in Greek no more than "revelatus" in Latin: our "revelation," that which can be seen), can only lead us to recognize that, setting aside the presumably long-awaited and, in some quarters at least, long-welcomed cataclysm that, it's supposed, will bring it about, turns out to be no more (and no less) than a simple turn-around, the literal about-face required to provide the perspective as seen by a conscious 1st as distinct from a necessarily unconscious 3rd Person. Quite fitting, too, that, if history has taught us anything and it's taught us a great deal if only by way of culminating in the experiments, it's that an "immanent" god - in effect, a not-god - would not, indeed, given its own first-personal situation as lowest of the low and smaller than the smallest thing, could not stoop to so unseemly or even so unsightly a ruse as to exercise a supposedly transcendent prerogative. As for "the end of the world," though that, too, as predicted as well as prophesied is also most certainly waiting in the wings for its cue, if past is still prologue in this game of turn-about fair-play, it will first have to be preceded by its own second act, the one we're living through now, the end of which, though it may be mistaken for, even conceived of as *the* end, the end of *the* world, signifies, in reality, no more than the end of *a* world, the world *we've* made. No surprise then that like virtually everyone else's, Altizer's analysis, though provocative enough, even incisive - why else would we be talking about it? - is, nevertheless, slightly off-center even when it ends up right for largely the wrong reasons. Quite simply, his misses, like those of so many others, like those of virtually *all* others, can only be attributed to his not having the experiments.

The result: the literal contra-dictions, the mixed signals we're sent when those delivered by vision are, sight-unseen, rudely interrupted by those delivered by voice. But we can address that question in our next.

### **Letter 59 - January 30, 2006**

Dear Carl, I'm in something of a dilemma. Encouraged by my reading of Altizer I want to address a question he touches on and that's certainly central to Seeing, this whole business of distinguishing between Voice and Vision. Or, putting first things first, should it read Vision and Voice? In any case, I've so much material or, at least, tell myself I do, that though I know or think I know it's all going to end in the experiments, I'm not at all sure, not so much where it begins as where I should. Should I take my cue from the Welsh David Jones (a wonderful but neglected writer

from an older generation, the one that bordered on Eliot and Joyce and Proust) who claimed that all story - and that would certainly include history - was nothing but a variation on the theme of "It was a dark and stormy night and in order to pass the time we decided to tell ourselves a story that began 'It was a dark and stormy night...?' " Is the road we've taken from an at first inchoate Alpha to rumors of Omega and beyond any less circular?

What strikes me at first sight or at least at first thought is how , though representing opposite sides of the same coin, the two components nevertheless relate and are finally reconciled by the twin aspects of the experiments: Vision to 1st Person Science and, broadly speaking, Voice to 1st Person History, the equation corresponding at the same time to the distinction Douglas makes in *The Hierarchy* and which, though I know I've referred to it more than once, still bears repeating. "To realize this instantaneous Now, to live in the present moment, taking no thought for tomorrow or yesterday, must be my first concern." (1st Person Science) "And my second must be to find in this Now all my tomorrows and yesterdays," this last an obvious invitation to explore 1st Person History.

I suppose the most evident distinction we can make between the two, at least to begin with, is to recognize that Vision, the pure unmediated immediacy of the silence that, as Mohammed would have it, is "nearer to us than our own jugular," represents a presence which, like the child within us (to which it's not unrelated), should be, indeed, can only be seen but not heard, whereas Voice, even when it seems to come from Nowhere, especially when it seems to come from Nowhere, is always other, distant, foreign and so, as with a parent, subject to the idolatry of the transcendent temptation. I don't think we can repeat often enough or loudly enough that just as "Je est un autre" as Rimbaud would have it, the snake also knew that the Voice - that is to say, concave, receptive, suggestible ear, not convex outgoing and searching eye - lies at the root of all our evil and is never so clearly and definitively articulated as when, announced by the justly famous "I AM," it offers the first step towards that which will not only separate my Me from mySelf and I but, by raising it to the eminence of a Word, announce to all the world my necessary separation from, indeed, the temporary termination of my original Self-hood. Though certainly apparent to the likes of a Paul and Augustine, I don't think we recognize often enough, not so much the enormity of but the enormous step that that declaration of independence, the "today I am a man," represented until tempered - or should we say "refined?" - signed, sealed and delivered in and by the fires of hell it found itself equipped to return to its senses and literally not so much trace but scratch and grope its way forward back to where it came from. But with this difference. As Eliot would have it, now it knew the place for the first time.

And to some degree - at least as much as is *humanly* possible absent the experiments and as thoroughly as any I know of - Altizer is on to this and recognizes that it, too, the Self-annihilation typified by modern history with its concentration camps and atomic bombs and chemical warfare, itself a product of the negation created by the birth of self-hood, is itself, in good Hegelian fashion, about to be negated, though how the means towards that reversal are about to come about, indeed, has already taken place in his own back-yard, he's as ignorant as virtually everyone else. Quite simply, ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny, what is experienced in infancy as look-see before necessarily succumbing to the blandishments of a hear-say

made necessary by a so-called "mature" imagination has now come full circle as the visible become proudly audible for the first five or six thousand years of its existence and calling itself civilization has now reached a dead end. Witness the inundation of an uneasy and exhausted speech as it tries to straddle the great divide by enrolling its own visible echo - writing - to explore and mine the original and silent mother lode. I know I've used this example before but, without going into the content but merely noting the container, we've only to compare the subtlety, the intricacy of our own Declaration of a mere two centuries ago to the current U.N. Charter which, like measuring a Mozart aria alongside a well-meaning, even a contented grunt, can only reveal what a mighty fall there's been, yet, at the same time - an antidote to pessimism - reveal, as with Eden, what falls are for, if only by pointing to the experiments? As Milton well knew and not only Milton, God never shuts one door without opening another, and what appear at first as disasters, whether of angels hurled from heaven or humans banished from paradise or, come to think of it, crucifixions here on earth, are not without their saving graces. Is it too much to claim, that like the drowning about to be saved even as all history passes before their eyes, this parody of total recall is about to lead them to the real thing?

#### **Letter 60 - February 12, 2006**

Dear Carl, To pick up where we left off with the notion that the seeming drying up of historical consciousness - to employ an over-used Marxist term - an element in which, paradoxically, we seem to be drowning, may not necessarily be a bad thing, any more than our current incapacity or even desire to build a fire by rubbing two sticks together or predict the weather by means of a finger in the wind necessarily indicates, rather than loss, simply supersession and a recognition that our present needs are being met elsewhere. Indeed, isn't the gradual relaxation of the need for a genuine historical consciousness implicit in the very existence of the experiments indicative that, the last to be first, history, by forcing us back to where we started, that is, to our senses, has done its work? Certainly Hegel whose prophetic theology was, according to Altizer, justifiably grounded in the apocalyptic certainty that, rather than the world it was merely history that was coming to an end, that history in which Spirit, realizing itSelf as absolute freedom and the very essence of reality (and this on far less evidence than our own), was, contrary to the common expectation, about to reveal itself as the very embodiment of the Kingdom of God presided over by its temporal ruler, the putative Queen of Heaven herSelf. In which case, don't the experiments, translated back into their original, offer even greater assurance than any fancy symbolism or speculation, however pure, can provide?

All this, given his - Altizer's - limited tools among which we might number the precedence he awards traditional Intellect over the evidence of the unfashionable Senses, or a now outmoded because no longer useful because unnecessary hypothetical *a priori* over the sure, indeed certain evidence of the *a posteriori* - discussions, like the very usefulness of history itself, now ended forever - all this Altizer touches upon and treats as well as he can. But since, absent the experiments, his method is necessarily incomplete, so are his conclusions. For instance, here he is at the end of a very difficult passage in which, in effect, he sums up his position and which, at the same time, we can only note as its limitations:

"Unlike the chaos of an actual primordial mythology" - the chaos from which, presumably, we've originally emerged - "the chaos released by this discordance" -

that is, our modernity - "embodies in itself a certitude of its own actuality. Once it has been *heard*, it can never be forgotten, and once it has been fully heard, no pure harmony is ever *hearable again*." (Italics mine)

Indeed it isn't, assuming it ever was - hearable, that is - nor need it be since, as the experiments demonstrate without question, it's as seeable now as it's ever been. And it's precisely here that our position is summed up in a nutshell, the priority of Vision - Godspcak - over Voice - Mantalk - and the very real fact that, as Aquinas noted, the senses, properly interpreted, are every bit as adequate and even more certain than the Intellect and its mouthpiece, despite or maybe because of its pretensions, could ever be. Why bother to go through the motion, not to speak of the com-motion, of in one ear and out the other, when a single eye will demonstrably permit us voyage to that place where duality, like time itself, must have a stop?

Which, without opening me too obviously to the invited or even uninvited wise-crack, suggests it may be time for me, too, to have mine - my stop - at least for the moment. I mean how often must it be repeated without sounding like a Johnny-One-Note that the Word, the famous I AM, no longer audible in Babel or merely audible by way of its presence in a series of reasonable facsimiles - Scriptures East and West, Gitas, Bibles, Korans and so on - now reveals all history as consisting of a long voyage home to a center of consciousness once mistakenly assumed to be situated within a body but which body can now be seen, not only for what it is but, by an absolute reversal, who and where it is: the prized stand-in for and expressed echo of an original silence finally made visible?

P.S. Today is Douglas' ninety-seventh birthday.

#### **Letter 61 - February 14, 2006**

Dear Carl, I've just had a nice exchange with Alan Mann in Australia who publishes his Nowletter on the Internet ten times annually and who's been kind enough to include some of my things over the years, the latest being letter #37 which I sent you this past June 6, the one that begins with that marvelous and perfectly appropriate passage Hans Jonas wrote about Philo Judaeus which you may or may not recall. If you don't and no longer have a copy let me know and I'll forward you another. Or you can just tune in by bringing up Alan's website, [www.capacitie.com](http://www.capacitie.com) ("capacitie" being an affectionate reference and homage to his favorite, Thomas Traherne) and, zeroing in on the section devoted to Douglas, locate that particular letter. Incidentally, although I'm almost certain I must have told you, at Alan's request I've been sending him copies of our correspondence which he apparently wants to publish in one form or another and, indeed, has been re-printing for the sake of those who are interested: namely, at latest count, his wife, himself and, between you, me and the lamp-post, that no longer mythical if somewhat sub-rosa presence familiarly known as No-one. Aside from us, then - making in all four - and the fact, as I think we've discussed more than once, that I find being over-looked in this context almost encouraging in a perverse sort of way since it leaves up for grabs the possibility that what we have to say, rather than not good enough, is, on the contrary, too good, if not for this world, at least for some appraisals of it, you might just want to browse through some of the material he manages to fish up, if not quite from the deep, at least near enough the bottom to make it worth our dropping down a line once in a while to come up with what we can find.



In any case, what's triggered all this and temporarily interrupted my ongoing analysis of Altizer is that first paragraph of Hans Jonas' treatment of Philo which, frankly, I won't say I'd forgotten but merely overlooked until, reminded, I realized once again how incredibly prescient it is. As I pointed out then and can only repeat, with the exception of his (and Philo's) understandable if no longer necessary commitment to the combined use of "symbolic" and "allegorical" which we're now in a position to do without and the use of "highest" when, in no uncertain terms, we mean "lowest," the passage offers an almost perfect hypothetical presentation of the problem that the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus presumably "solves" but the experiments essentially and existentially settle once and for all. But I don't know what I'm being so coy about. Since anything worth having, except for maybe life itself, is worth repeating, why don't I just jot down the original passage and save you the trouble of having to look it up:

"A telling symbol...unwittingly supplied by an allegory which he (Philo) evolves from the etymology of the name 'Israel'...The name is taken to mean 'He who sees God,' and Jacob's acquiring this name is said to represent the God-seeker's progress from the stage of hearing to that of seeing, made possible by the miraculous conversion of ears to eyes !!!!!" (How can I refrain from setting up exclamation points to that one?) ..."The allegory falls into the general pattern of Philo's views on 'knowing God.' These rest on the Platonic supposition that the most genuine relation to being is intuition, beholding. This eminence of sight, when extended into the religious sphere, determines also the highest' (sic!) 'and most authentic relation to God...To this Philo indeed assigns a nature, which makes vision, i.e. intellectual contemplation and not audition, its genuine criterion. Referring to the phrase in Exodus, 'All the people saw the voice' (20:18), he comments: 'Highly significant, for human voice is to be heard but God's voice is in truth to be seen.' Why? Because that which God speaks is not words but works, which the eye discriminates better than the ear."

Aside from that rather suspicious co-mingling of "intellectual contemplation" with vision - the kind of dubious shot-gun wedding mystics are tempted to enter into and which Jonas almost immediately annuls when he presumably recognizes, along with Philo (indeed, as we mentioned in an earlier letter, along with Jonathan Edwards as well), that only "simple seeing," works, not words will do - could we ask for a more precise and literal pre-view than that for which we can now provide the definitive account? And yet, and yet, I have to use the word or, better yet, the almost-phrase "pre-view" advisedly, since, though Jonas agrees with Augustine that ultimate satisfaction rests in Presence and recognizes along with Philo that the "new type called Israel" will manifest as the "seeing one" and though he verbally acknowledges that seeing "fulfills and redeems its symbolic intention" whereas hearing is merely "pro-visional" (for the sake of seeing), absent the experiments he still persists and must persist in referring to that conversion from ears to eye as "symbolic" instead of the reality it is and so can only conclude that though "myth taken literally is crudest objectification and taken allegorically is sophisticated objectification, taken symbolically it is the glass through which we see darkly," as if, as certified by St. Paul, the matter ended there along with the subject, not to speak of the Subject. And, with the rare exception - a Meister Eckhart here, a Rumi there and, at the other end of the earth, the fifth patriarch who, in good Zen fashion, insisted that not only could we see through that glass darkly we could see through it clearly because, in fact, there

was no glass there to see through at all - it has, until Douglas came along and put the finishing touch, the imprimatur, on the whole business.

