

Letter 81 — October 15, 2006

Dear Carl, Long time no see (and indeed I didn't) but, now that the bulk of our move is over, finally a clearing in the woods and a chance to sit down and recover our uncoveries. Not, as we see now, that they've ever been completely lost, only the consciousness of them *over looked* as, for instance, has been going on since the beginning of history anyway, in fact constitutes it. But thanks to the experiments, that's all over, gone now for as long as forever is.

In any case, before picking up where we left off with Guenon, not only because, for what it's worth, his work played such an important part in my own personal development, preparing me as it did for the simplicities of Headlessness, but because it represents, indeed may be the classic example of how, absent our precise tools, everyone — and though I've said it before I'll say it again — everyone, even the most brilliant or saintly of us from the big guns on down, must *necessarily* fall short. But before I do, I realize on re-reading my last that I owe Husserl or at least the memory of him a brief apology. Not that I exactly short-changed him as a thinker but nevertheless I may have inadvertently down-played his role (along with Wittgenstein's) as an intellectual precursor, however unwitting, of the experiments, illustrating once again that when these great civilizational sea-changes take place (like the one we're going through at the moment) they come if not in battalions, at least like single spies. Think, for instance, of John the Baptist's job-description for the future though still unknown applicant for high-office or, to go from the sublime to the ridiculous, of our "innocent" commentator's "cockeyed" objections regarding Husserl's "rather extreme views of the transcendental ego" I included in my last letter but which nevertheless bear repeating: how he, "Husserl, said more than once that this ego would remain in existence even if the entire world were destroyed and that this ego is an individual entity distinct from the self which is the object of my empirical self-observations or the observations of the psychologist." All of which, our dubious commentator goes on to say, "sounds very much as if I had two selves, one of them the familiar empirical one, the other a transcendental and generally unknown one which would remain in existence even if my empirical self were destroyed together with the destruction of the world." Pardon me for repeating it but could there be, however wrong-headed the egregious skepticism ("one may well doubt that such a claim is supported by the description of the phenomena"), a more perfect account of what the experiments *essentially* demonstrate, however Husserl and so many others understandably skirt the central issue and the one thing necessary by failing to note the detailed *existential* and infallible guide qualified to point the way home. I know I've used the image before but doesn't it all resemble the classic sad ending so dear to a Dickens or a Chaplin, of the hungry urchin, nosed pressed against the glass peering in at the Self-satisfied diners, just longing to be asked in? And now we have been.

As for Guenon, though approaching this question of the great reversal from a slightly different angle but nevertheless perfectly aware that the "end of our cycle" — the Reign of Quantity he calls it — rather than signify the annihilation of the corporeal world (as has generally been prophesied and feared), suggests instead not only its transmutation but the completion of a development in which (and I paraphrase), "time will be changed back into space and, all succession excluded, everything will appear in perfect simultaneity in a changeless present through the power of the third eye where, the sense of eternity recovered, even death will not attain thereto." As with

Husserl, can you think of a better description of what the experiments not only promise but deliver and deliver like nothing — and I do mean no-thing — ever has before, thus obviating Guenon's claim, for instance (and just about everyone else's) that "everything manifested is itself necessarily a *symbol* in relation to some superior reality," an assertion, if not totally discredited now, certainly superseded by the presence of a "nothingness" not only manifest for the first time ever but consciously manifest and in plain view for all to see. Even more important, for all to *be*. "We shall not cease from exploration/ And the end of all our exploring/ Will be to arrive where we started/ And know the place for the first time." So Eliot — not incidentally an older contemporary of Douglas' — summing up all earlier expectations prior to their fulfillment in the experiments which, for all their absolute silence (indeed, because of it), are now authorized to announce in their native tongue, that is to say in no uncertain terms, the very last "Word": that the past has indeed been only prologue and that if the truth were told and now it can be, "*We have not* ceased from exploration/ and the end of all our exploring/ *Has been* to arrive where we started/ And know the place for the first time." As a result — and can we doubt any longer that this is the *meaning* of history? — what was seen to be "acted out" on a cross once upon a time has now been made available to all and made not only available but undeniably, even inescapably so. And this in order that our so-called "invisible" Self, as demonstrably visible now and palpable as the experiments themselves, may *see* itSelf for the first time and acknowledge Who and What it is.

Letter 82 —November 3, 2006

Dear Carl, I think I have a bit of a problem. Encouraged by your enthusiasm (and surprised by my own as well) I've spent the last couple of weeks looking into Husserl. And when I say "looking" I mean just that. Obviously one doesn't or at least one shouldn't even pretend to scratch the surface of so profound and difficult a thinker in so little time - in true Germanic fashion forty thousand pages alone (alone?) of unpublished material made available since his death and still counting, mind you! - but emboldened by the experiments I'm going to do just that or at least try to. And just to show how unintimidated any of us have to be with those miraculous instruments at our back (and beck too), imitation being the sincerest form of flattery I'm going to attempt my survey in a kind of short-hand, that being as close as language can even hope to come in the "wake" of an all-revealing silence. That said, please make allowance for what follows however disjointed since its format is offered up as no more than a series of notes, a keepsake really and always with the understanding - and though I've said this many times before I still have to remind if only myself - that by definition it's the experiments, not what anyone has to say about them (or even not say), that take absolute precedence (if only by arriving last) over anything that's ever appeared on earth before. And so, for all Husserl's reputation for "greatness" and brilliance, we're able to approach him or anyone else for that matter with the certitude that in the final analysis the "reciprocal interchange of absolute inequality" (Nishitani) makes us all equal.

The first thing we notice is that he continually refers to himself (and justifiably) as a pioneer, an explorer in an absolutely new field of experience he calls, again in true Germanic fashion, "transcendental subjectivity" but, post the experiments, we can immediately and more simply recognize as the first halting steps towards a genuine conscious 1st Person Seeing, or if not a Seeing at least a Looking; in effect, what remains after everything is excluded and we are left alone, that is to say all-one, not

with but *as* no-thing at all. Interestingly enough, in one instance I came across he actually compares himself (and, as we see now, in all modesty) to a Moses who, if forbidden entry himself into the Promised Land is nevertheless about to lead his people right up to if not through its gates. Why he denies himself this privilege other than that he instinctively recognizes the difference between what he calls "intuiting" and what Douglas designates as "really really seeing" he never makes quite clear, though we certainly can. It's the same difference that distinguishes the said Moses from his logical successor, Jesus, and will, in turn, differentiate even that penultimate messenger from the incontestable fulfillment of his mission: a death and resurrection no longer achieved solely and vicariously in the Person of a singular One but available, indeed unavoidable now by All in the definitive Self-recognition of the 1st Person Singular. (I hope to go into this aspect much more thoroughly when I get to the distinction Joachim de Flore, yet another of our precursors, makes between the three essential dispensations of Father (Judaism), Son (Christianity) and Holy Spirit, this last, as we see now, the long-awaited fulfillment, finally achieving literal apotheosis by way of the experiments).

Since my time and energy, not to speak of my inclinations, are in short supply these days, rather than try to wrestle with Husserl's very complicated concepts of "transcendental subjectivity" and "phenomenological reduction" as he calls them, my intention is to cut right to the chase and setting down, not necessarily in order of importance, his essential insights and concepts as they come up, merely note where we agree or disagree, always recognizing, of course, that, not the *testimony*, since by definition they offer none, but the silent *witness* of the experiments represents, so to speak, the last word.

Let's begin with where he's right on and with the recognition of the broader implications of his findings: that "the theory of all possible forms of theories - intentional phenomenology" as he calls it - has for the first time made spirit as spirit the field of systematic scientific experience, thus affecting a total transformation of the task of knowledge." More specifically - and here again he's reasonably close to our position, one might almost say, "too *reasonably* close" - is the distinction he makes between what he refers to as the "universal epoché" (again, absent the "acute" accent on my machine, it should be pronounced epokay) and the "local epoché," the former a condition no longer dependent on "temporal-spatial, extra-mental *assumptions*" and, in contrast to the latter, free of any metaphysic that needs to draw on "extra-scientific sources." What we're in a position to recognize, of course, is that, however inchoately and haltingly, he's nevertheless feeling his way, if only verbally, towards distinguishing between what we immediately see (that is, see without mediation) as the difference between a 1st and 3rd Person perspective and with it the acknowledgement that, thanks to the experiments, a highfalutin metaphysic built on word of mouth, has been rendered obsolete, not just in degree by a stroke of the pen, but in kind, by an act of silence.

So far so good but since we've reached the end of our agreed-on space (one page) and, ready or not, "I've miles to go before I sleep," I'll put off further comment till our next.

Letter 83 — November 11, 2006

Dear Carl, Before picking up where we left off, I think we should remind ourselves or at least I think I should remind me that, as with all my previous comments, my principal concern, indeed, when push comes to shove my only concern (and I know you agree with me on this), is with the experiments. I trust I've made it clear by now and to the point of exasperation that by the very nature of the beast every other consideration, however engaging or instructive, has got to be designated secondary. To have Douglas and be deprived, say, of a Nishitani or an Altizer or, as in this case, a Husserl, would no doubt constitute a loss if only as providing a counter or topic for conversation, but, the shoe on the other foot would leave us, not right back where we started (which as Alpha wouldn't be all that bad) but still stuck somewhere in the middle waiting for the cata-strophe to happen which, of course, as the long-heralded, though not quite in the way expected turning-around, it has. Indeed, given our parlous situation these latter days, literally teetering on the edge, had the turning-around not happened or had we, however inadvertently, not brought it about, that would have been a real disaster. But we have. That said we can return to Husserl (or anyone else for that matter) and give him (or them) his not inconsiderable due, not least in his perceptive distinction between psychology and philosophy which, along with his right-on recognition of reality as a "primordial teleological-tendential structure with a directedness towards disclosure" - the "I was a mystery who wanted to be known" of Sufi repute - may be the most perceptive distinction he makes. As he explains, psychology with all the shortcomings it entails and, as the last stop before arriving at zero, modern to a T, corresponds exactly to what we refer to as the 3rd Person outlook, whereas philosophy, or what passes for it, at least approximates 1st Person insight. I think we'd have to say in this connection that in his search for a "genuine scientific ontology whose certainty succeeds reason, the one and only universal science grounded on pure evidence," it's here that he comes as close as we could possibly expect to the *rationale* of the experiments, but, at the same time, can't help but betray, by their absence, the essential difference between theory (his) and vision (ours) between *eidōs* as he calls it (image or idea) and *factum*. And, as we're in a position to see, it's this that makes all the difference, that, as with all his predecessors (and, again I can't repeat it often enough, I do mean all), where he supposes and even proposes, Douglas, via our ordinary instruments, simply disposes. The fact of the matter of course, the truth of it, is that, pace a Freud or, if you prefer, a Jung or any other commentators in whatever field, we're no longer limited to reinterpreting a recycled mythology or examining a discipline that ever since Socrates and Plato has, rather than the genuine article, offered a love, almost a protestation, of wisdom by way of words. Nor, taking even that not inconsiderable advance a step further, are we required any longer to provide more than lip-service to a theology that prides itself on endorsing a go-between's exemplary crucifixion, or accept its Word for what isolated mystics and Zen acolytes have experienced from time to time but has now been rendered wide open to each and every one of us instantly on contact, not as a reasonable facsimile or subject (or even object) for imitation but as the thing itSelf.

Not surprisingly, then, though no longer totally beholden to the deceptive testimony of the "I" as distinct from the "eye" but, absent the experiments, still subject to the *logic* of his position in preference to the vision of it, Husserl finds himself in the role - as we see, short-sighted to say the least - of repeatedly awarding precedence to the "ascent" rather than to the "transcending" (to use Abe's felicitous phrase) of the "downward path to wisdom." How else account for the confusion of

referring favorably to "the height of abstraction" as distinct from "the depths of concretion," yet at the same time the more than willingness to give devils like Grossteste and Buridan and Roger Bacon at the end of the Middle Ages their due along with those who - like Francis Bacon and Descartes with his search for the only "concrete and stable ego," or a Leibniz and a Hume following after him -delivered the nails to the coffin of transcendence preparatory to a Hegel and Nietzsche hammering them in? "The subjective conscious life in pure immanence is the place where all sense is bestowed and all being is posited and confirmed," he writes. "Thus if we are to clarify what subjectivity can and does accomplish here in its hidden immanence" - hidden? - "we need a systematic and pure self-understanding of the knower, a disclosure of the life of thinking " - thinking? - exclusively by means of inner-experience." Again, as with so many word-men, however maddeningly close they come they still offer no more than the mixture as before, librettos without a score, words without music, without *the Word* made flesh - ours. Is it any wonder that Husserl - and God knows he's not alone - consistently and, as it turns out given *his* perspective, justifiably, awards precedence, not only in time but in the order of cause, to an *a priori* cognition, to knowledge *received before* the Fact rather than, as we're now in a position to see, knowledge *perceived* after It by means of that eighth wonder of the world (fittingly enough delivered on the Eighth Day), the *a posteriori* in the person, the 1st Person of the experiments - the miracle of a future hope finally converted into Presence

Letter 84 — December 3, 2006

This letter was sent to Alan Mann who was compiling this volume of letters to Carl Cooper when side correspondence on the relevance of Husserl to the enquiry arose from some articles in the Nowletter and correspondence between Prof. Fred J. Hanna of Hopkins University and Dave Knowles in Canberra.

Dear Alan, Though I hadn't planned to and indeed, arrogant as it may sound, thought I'd finished with Husserl, I was so taken with Fred Hanna's piece you sent me I just can't resist adding a few more comments in hopes of contributing to our primary purpose which is not so much to stand in judgment of others as take what we can from their, not so much errors, as deficiencies, or better yet insufficiencies, and use them to clarify our own position. First off, and I do thank you for it, Hanna's analysis as far as it goes (and, absent the experiments, he goes as far as he can) is an absolute gem of clarity, making the work of two such difficult and complicated writers as Husserl and Heidegger totally accessible in a way neither of them are, or at least were for me, in their own right. (And we might add, hopefully without sounding too snide, in their own wrong). The problem then becomes, given my limited time and energy, how best to make use of his insights and theirs as they contribute towards our Seeing and, however disparate, still keep them manageable. To that end I've decided to take it step by step, just as he does, and confine any editorial comments to no more than a series of notes.

1) Husserl's topic is "transcendental phenomenology" or, if you prefer, "phenomenological reduction." And please note - and I'm quite serious about this - how as we approach a philosophy grounded in experience, in effect an attempt to disclose the mysteries of a consciousness and being once known more familiarly as God, we're immediately confronted, in true Germanic fashion, with two tongue-twisters for the simple act of hitting bottom. As Hanna kindly notes, "part of the

problem is that both of these philosophers have the reputation" (and we might add, deservedly) "of being especially difficult to read." But, as he also notes quite correctly and to their credit, these are not "inadvertent or closet mystics." I say quite correctly because as Douglas has indicated many times and the experiments testify, like Zen Headlessness is not the pursuit of "ecstasy", of getting out of one's Self, however deserving and revealing a trial run or station on our historic way that may be, but of "enstasy," of rather getting into one's Self. (Assuming, of course, there's a Self to get into, but we can leave that for some other time).

2) As Husserl notes, "inquiring back into the ultimate source of all formations of knowledge...such knowledge brings with it a sense of certainty," a revelation with which, from the testimony (sic!) of the experiments we can certainly agree. And if I've "sic'd!" the word "testimony" there's a method to my madness, calling to mind if only by its derivation our covert dependence on the sanction of speech even where speech is no longer necessary, in fact, as in our case, is shown to be quite superfluous. As Hanna points out, "Knowledge for Husserl was not intellectual but intuitive. Intuition was the guiding principle of his method of inquiry." Which is all very well and certainly suggests the right path but nevertheless brings us to what I suspect is the very crux of the matter, to what we mean by such words as "intuition" and its country-cousin "theory," both of which, the one from Latin, the other from Greek, derive from words which as "looking" or "seeing" may have begun life with the best of intentions but have long since lost their virginity in the service of thinking. Quite simply (and "simply" is what we're all about) I do not say "I intuit" or "I theorize" this paper I'm writing on, I say, "I see it." Just as, for instance, I'm now in a position to dispense with such ambiguous if well-meaning Biblical approximations as Job "seeing God face-to-face" rather than the infinitely more precise face-to-no-face, so too I'm now entitled to claim the invisible has become visible for me in all its invisibility, not because, visionary rather than visual, I feel it or smell it or hear it (as in a voice) or hear about it or even, most intimately of all, eucharist-like taste and swallow it, but because I actually see it. To revert to Husserl's "intemperation" as one commentator teasingly calls it, the "intuition" that, presumably beyond reason, brings with it a "sense of certainty." Of course it does however liable to error. Where he falls short, however - and in this he's not alone - is in his failure to recognize that, in order to qualify beyond question, to be certain rather than just believable, his *a priori* sense of certainty has to be confirmed *a posteriori* by the certainty of sense, the assurance of which we no longer have to accept on faith before the Fact but as patently present after It. Which delinquency, in all fairness, he did recognize with his willing admission, even to his dying day, that he was still attempting to perfect his method and determine its final form. And indeed he was, though whether, given the occupational hazard of being a philosopher and a professional one at that, would have encouraged him to acknowledge that the answer to his, if not prayers, at least meditations, lay not in language but in our simple instruments is up for grabs. Quite the contrary, however, pertains to the less than admirable Heidegger, though even he at the end of his life was forced to admit that "Only a god can save us now." How little he knew, for all his twists and turns, not only who and what but, most important of all, where that god lay "concealed" (so to speak) was made obvious, if by nothing else, his none too salubrious political behavior.

3) Where Husserl's analysis is almost impeccable, however, and almost right on target (and I say "almost" advisedly), at least compared to what was going on around him, is in the distinction he draws between what he refers to as the transcendental and the psychological ego, a distinction we immediately recognize as corresponding to the difference between first and third persons. According to him, lacking any ontological foundation whatsoever the latter, when subject to the "transcendental reduction," can, by means of a personal transformation akin to "religious conversion," be assumed not to exist at all, a conclusion explicitly confirmed by the experiments and this simply on the strength of a finger pointing in the right direction, an intentional gesture whose silence not only spares us the ambiguity of a language that's plagued us from the beginning, in fact constitutes it, but, at the same time, implicitly rescues us from the wilderness of the airy-fairy "speculation" that's sprung up in its trail. "Souls themselves," he correctly notes, "are external to one another only in virtue of their embodiment." Which is only another (and fancier) way of saying (rather than seeing) that in this "reciprocal interchange of absolute inequality" (Nishitani) - properly understood, of course, since, as the experiments demonstrate, if it were not reciprocal it would not only be intolerable (because tyrannical) but mistaken - I, being all One, am you and you, being all One, are me, making, as the Earl of Oxford (Shakespeare) informed us with his customary accuracy, "these odds all even." But it's precisely here in his total commitment to the saying rather than the seeing, to, in effect, the Word, that, like virtually all his predecessors Husserl, too, falls short. As Hanna correctly observes, "It seems that Husserl's transcendent ego" (our first person)"is transcendent in much the same sense as the 'witness consciousness' in Hindu Vedanta." But as, given their primordial teleological structure, the experiments incontrovertibly demonstrate, this is precisely the problem, revealing as it does only half the story if even that. To paraphrase Blake (with, again, a nod to our Earl as well): the expense of immanence, of 1st Person Participant, in a waste of transcendence, of 3rd Person Witness, is Nobodaddy in action, is, by giving the devil more than his due, to turn the world upside-down rather than down-side up which, of course, is precisely what we've been doing since, turned on our ear, we became tuned to it. To act merely as a witness and a transcendent one at that, in effect to look down from above rather than up from below is precisely how You-know-Who, the Immanence of immanence itSelf, does not operate. Nor, by extension, do we, as we see when only by becoming smaller than the smallest thing can we qualify as larger than the largest and so contain it. And to some degree, if only by his use of the term "transcendent reduction," Husserl senses, even "intuits" this. One can only assume that had he come to the end of his search he, too, would have seen it, seen in Djuna Barnes' magnificent words (and I know I've quoted her before and no doubt will again if only because it couldn't be said better), that we've only to let go hell for our fall to be broken by the roof of heaven. And so it's come about.

4) Though given the temptation to explore the ramifications of our findings as regards just about everything (and why not, granted their universality?), I'm nevertheless trying to stay within reasonable bounds, I still can't resist touching on one side-light worth noting since, like virtually everything else that's come down to us by way of tradition, it constitutes one more indication of how shadow and substance invariably move, indeed must move, as apposite opposites. Just as, significantly enough, it's only in our generation that we've been able to see that the invention of the wheel presaged a trip to the moon with all that that portends for better or worse, so the manifestation of the experiments also represents the two-edged sword of history

in its ultimate revelation, the ever-present Presence of Self-fulfillment accompanied as always by its parody and shadow-side (also known as the devil, from *diavolus*, the little god), the ever-present possibility of self-destruction. In this regard, it's interesting, though no accident, to note how these simple instruments also confirm in no uncertain terms the three degrees of a faith no longer required (thanks to the experiments) but nevertheless proposed in the ground-breaking doctrines of Sufism in which, using the symbolism of fire as the medium of exchange, are charted the three stages of realization: 1) the Lore of Certainty, the Saying of it, succeeded by 2) the Eye of Certainty, the Seeing of it (by means of the organ with which God knows his Self), and culminating in 3) the Truth of Certainty, the Being of it, in which like fire, capable of burning everything but itSelf, is concealed the secret of Everlasting Life better known these days, at least up to the uncovering of the experiments, as the Zen doctrine of unborn-ness. In any case, if we're in the business of keeping score, and apparently we are, we'd have to say that if the experiments answer as nothing else ever has to #2, to the Eye of Certainty, and eligibility for entrance into #3, the Truth of Certainty, is, by definition, beyond speech and certainly beyond measure, both Husserl and Heidegger qualify like so many others, forerunners all, for an intermediate position somewhere between #1 and #2, Husserl, by his own admission, having arrived via his "phenomenological" interpretation of history no further than the outskirts of the Promised Land, Heidegger, if only on the strength (or weakness) of his claim to *aletheia*, to "the unconcealedness of what-is-present," a step behind, for all his decorative embroidery and supposedly new mode of "gazing at" the intuitive, the contemplative and the dialectical, limited to what, in reality, turns out to be no better than a thinking about.

5) No doubt we could go on and on, in fact the beauty of coming to an end, to absolute knowledge as Husserl calls it, and then, reborn in the knowledge of itSelf, awakening to the permission it gives us to begin all over again from the one true perspective and so revel in all we know on earth and all we need to know of heaven, is precisely the fulfillment of the promises Douglas makes on pages 224-225 of *The Hierarchy* and since they've both come true, the one as 1st Person Science, the second, following from it as "day from night," 1st Person History, I can never get tired of repeating them:

"To realize this instantaneous Now, to live in the present moment, taking no thought to-morrow or yesterday, must be my first concern. And my second must be to find in this Now all my to-morrows and yesterdays."

And we have. In the words of one of its bright and early if unwitting and courageous pioneers, we've finally arrived at a position in which, justly laying claim to our birthright and at the same time our hard-earned reward - the recognition of our omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence (cf. *The Trial Of The Man Who Said He Was God*) - we can now absolutely demonstrate that "things are not what they seem but only as they are seen." And though certainly not the first to anticipate this conclusion (now certified) Copernicus wasn't the last either. My mouth positively waters at the prospect before us, of what the future holds for those of us who bother their no-heads with such things, matters that once a question of life and death and assigned to forerunners such as a Nargajuna or a Chuang-tzu or Ibn-Arabi were then passed on to the rear guard, to those who, left with nothing and only nothing left to conquer, had no choice but to take the downward path to wisdom, the road that Descartes followed with his first attempt towards an absolutely subjective ground

(now achieved) or a Leibnitz with his suspicion that knowledge of probabilities must precede the knowledge of actualities (now confirmed), or a Hume or a Hegel or whoever, and have now all, all been relegated to the secondary position where they belong as *objects* of knowledge to be enjoyed and honored for what they are, no more and no less, so freeing us to leave the Subject unencumbered to speak for itSelf in the only language it truly understands and someday, now that we've begun, we may too - the language of Silence. Speaking of which, enough...

Letter 85 — December 11, 2006

Dear Carl, Since I've just finished revising for Alan's website a seventy page letter I wrote to Anne way back in 1998, I blush to admit how, in the first flush of enthusiasm (and "flush" is the right word suggesting as it does the appropriate activity when applied to my seventy pages in praise of absolute brevity) I let myself go. In any case, having just finished with the revision but because I still have no idea how to transmit the damn thing on this machine you can imagine how delighted I am to return to what I've come to consider these bulletins, the idea and encouragement for which I owe to you. My God, talk about not suiting the word to the action: all those pages and pretty dense ones at that and all in praise of those miracles of speed and inclusion, the experiments! Well, live and let learn.

Anyway, before starting on Merleau-Ponty - and at your suggestion I've xeroxed *The Phenomenology of Perception* which looks more than interesting - or finally getting to Joachim de Flore, I thought, if only by way of catching my breath, I'd gather up a few odds and ends which, though interesting or pertinent or amusing in their own right, I wasn't able to include in my previous notes. Here's one from the *Babylonian Talmud*:

"Isaiah came and reduced the 365 commandments of the Torah to six: 1) He who walks righteously and 2) speaks uprightly; 3) who despises the gain of oppressions, 4) and shakes his hand from holding bribes, 5) who stops his ear from hearing of blood and 6) shuts his eyes from looking on evil. Micha came and reduced them to three: 1) Do justly 2) Love mercy and 3) walk humbly before God. Isaiah came back again and reduced them to two: 1) Keep justice and 2) Do righteousness. Not to be outdone Amos came and reduced them to a single one: See Me and live."

So there really is nothing new under the sun except - and it's a large exception - the meaning of modernity. As witness the fact we longer merely gaze at the moon from afar - "See me and live" - we actually lay claim to it personally, 1st Personally.

This next is from Masao Abe who, picking up from where Suzuki left off and along with writing many wonderful books in English (and lecturing here in Princeton), was and, if still alive, is the last and in my view the very best of all the interpreters of Zen to the West. I'm thinking not only of his studies of Nishida and Nishitani but particularly of his work on Dogen which I hope to get to some day. It's a masterpiece, the clearest analysis of a very difficult and complex subject I've ever seen.

"God is quite capable to go beyond the sacred realm and work in history at will. But how do people go beyond the realm of history and enter the realm of God?" (How indeed?) "The realm of history is limited by time and space and is defiled by human sinfulness and ignorance. There is no *continuous path* (italics mine) from the realm of history to the realm of God. There is an essential rupture between these two realms, which can be overcome from the side of God..."

And here we have it in a nutshell, not the essential but the existential difference between the view from Alpha (which includes everything up to the experiments) and the view from the experiments themselves, from Omega, as both stare at each other from across a once seemingly unbridgeable Gap. "Overcome from the side of God," as Abe claims? Absolutely right, as the experiments - their very existence - testify. "No continuous path from the realm of history to the realm of God?" Absolutely wrong as their manifestation, again not only by reason of what they "say" but simply on grounds of how they got that way, the very fact that they are, also insists. And herein lies the difference between what Douglas has uncovered and anything, and I do mean any- and-everything that's come before and could even, conceivably, come after, as once again the pro-verbial silence of the fool exposes the secret folly of the wise. And do we, can we come any wiser than an Abe (and not only an Abe but greater even than an Abe) with his incredible subtleties in range and depth but who, for all his brilliance and sensitivity is, by facing the wrong way - and God knows he's not alone here - still dancing around the outskirts of the question instead of entering, no matter how tentatively, into the very heart of the answer. And when you consider that he and Douglas are exact contemporaries you begin to realize what a literal about-face we've been privileged to share in and why I have to insist - and I've already been taken to task for this many times - on the great gulf that separates even Zen, the negation of speech and end of that dispensation from its absolute turn-around, the about-face that constitutes the affirmation of silence and the beginning of ours. No longer is it a question of being a witness to and, more than a witness to, a participant in a difference in degree, but of being invited to share that difference in kind, an offer altogether fitting considering the unexamined places and perilous waters we're in the midst of exploring. Moon-shots, atom-bombs, germ-warfare!

"God is quite capable of going beyond the sacred realms and work in history at will. But how do people go beyond the realm of history and enter the realm of God?" Abe asks. Quite simply as an Eckhart or Rumi saw for themselves but other than to talk about it were, absent the experiments, no better equipped to pass it on than they were of turning on a light-switch with a flip of the wrist in the twinkling of an eye. And that, the presence of an unfolding time in the service of an enfolding space, is the meaning of history. It's as simple as that and, now that we see it, the very gift we've all been given in this our hour of need.

Letter 86 — December 22, 2006

Dear Carl, As I think I mentioned on the phone, I'd forgotten that in letter #20, dated September 5, 2004, I'd made a passing reference to Joachim of Flore, so on the assumption that you've forgotten too and/or don't have a copy handy, I'm going to start out by repeating what I wrote there and then follow up with some further remarks. The more I think about him (and, in light of the experiments, I've been thinking about him a great deal lately), the more I realize how uncannily prescient the

analysis of this obscure twelfth-century monk was and how his prophecies, though not quite condemned by the papacy but nevertheless frowned upon - witness his enforced isolation, almost exile, in the mountains of Calabria - have been more or less fulfilled, again as we've seen so often in the past, if not exactly as predicted, at least close enough for comfort. After all, it's not without reason that, on the strength of his original claim which happens to be ours as well - the possibility of penetrating into the full meaning of history, the arena in which, as we see now, reality's providential purpose can only be revealed at its end - so qualified a resident as Dante could invite him a few generations later to join that small but select band already established in Paradise, a place, considering how far we've come thanks to our democratic aspirations, now thrown open, fittingly enough, to the public at large, in no small part due to pioneers like Joachim. At any rate, here's what I wrote:

"Aside from his tremendous if belated influence on people like Schelling and Hegel, he also deserves acknowledgement as one of the putative pioneers who, in spirit if not in the letter, helped prepare the Ground for, no longer the opinion but, the certainty that the experiments have brought to fruition. I think we should examine his work briefly since we, and as far as I can see, we alone represent for the moment living proof that his prophecies, far out as they once seemed, have actually been realized by means of these simple home-made instruments.

'Jesus crucified, proclaims the spirit in place of himself, that is, his resurrection.' So Schelling commenting on Joachim's text and then goes on to point out that 'It's as though, as the last God, Christ has put an end to an age and after him comes the spirit...the soul that rules over the new world.' All of which is no more than to propose a secularized version of what Joachim had advanced six centuries earlier in his vision of the history of humankind as divided, like Caesar's Gaul (speaking of parodies) into three periods or dispensations: 1) the age of the Law or the Father (the Old Testament); 2) the age of the Gospel or the Son (the New Testament); and 3) the age of the Spirit or the third Empire, the Gospel of the Christ to be superseded by the Gospel of the Spirit which would be final and everlasting. Knowing what we know now because seeing what we see now, can there be any doubt that the *pro-vision* for the third dispensation has finally been met, not, for all the current commotion, by the one commonly expected—drums beating, cymbals (and symbols) clashing in the grand overture to the end of the world—but, on the contrary, by the only one possible: the recognition and acknowledgement of apocalypse now, of the revelation, disclosure, uncovering, unfolding of who and what the 1st Person of the experiments is and where and when it may be truly proclaimed: that, literally coming from and to our senses once and for all, we've finally arrived where we started, where what makes Omega Omega - that is, awareness of Alpha (which Alpha never is which is why it's forever Alpha and always will be world without end) - we're now justified for the first time ever in laying claim, by right of possession, to our place, not so much in the sun but as the sun in us?"

Absent the specifics of the experiments then—and when have they not been absent until now—could anything be more foretelling of what lay in store for us and about to come true? My only problem is how, given my own limitations as well as our limits agreed-on, to compress such a wealth of material into so short a space and so brief a time as to do God's work and convert what on the surface appears to be no better than a narrative of almost universal misery yet turns out to be the primary instrument

towards the uncovering of the good—as we've noted before, history as the "atom bomb-antibiotic" syndrome. To that end I'm going to enlist what, on the surface, will appear to be no better than a series of notes towards some later Prolegomenon as Father Kant might have called it and let it go at that. And since we do have that short space and that brief time, we can do worse than seek a blessing from one Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, a reputedly fanatical (sic!) Franciscan who announced in 1254 that as of now (that is then) both the Old and New Testaments had been utterly abrogated and authority passed to Joachim's Third Testament better known as the Everlasting Gospel which title, taken from a text in Apocalypse reads: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people." And so, as the Bible might say, "It has come to pass." As, indeed, it has.

Letter 87— December 31, 2006

¶Dear Carl, Following up on my last and on grounds you'd either forgotten my brief mention of Joachim of Flore in letter #20, September 5, 2004 (I know I had) or no longer have it, let me continue with another brief excerpt from the same letter which, though it doesn't relate to Joachim directly, nevertheless will determine the parameters we have to observe if we're going to comply with the experiments' unequivocal demands. This quote is from Reinhold Niebuhr: "There are more specific meanings in the Biblical conception of history, as we shall see presently, than merely the idea that history is *potentially* and ultimately one story by reason of being under one *divine* sovereignty. (All italics are mine.) But this Biblical conception which establishes the unity of history by *faith* rather than by *sight*, is a guard against all *premature* efforts to correlate the facts of history into a pattern of *too simple meaning*. It is indeed one of the proofs of the ambiguity of man, as an *observer* of the historical process who transcends but is also involved in the process, that he can not construct systems of meaning for the facts of history, whether of a particular story in it or of the story of man-kind as a whole, without making the temporal locus of his observation into a *falsely absolute vantage point*, or without using a structure of meaning which seems to him to be absolutely valid but which is actually touched by historical relativism."

I know that on the strength of this excerpt alone it must sound like I'm picking on Niebuhr (and God - and not only God now - knows he's not alone) but could we have a more perfect and succinct illustration of how, when put into practice - in this case of interpretation - the experiments turn, if not all hazarded, certainly all received opinion on its head where it belongs? We've only to take one by one his claims I've italicized and turn them upside down (which is why I've italicized them) or at least put them forward a notch, in order to arrive at the simple and God's honest absolute truth. For instance, the idea that history is *potentially* one story, when we see now it *absolutely* is. Or that its unity, presumably established on *faith* rather than *sight* as a guard against a *premature pattern of too simple meaning*, has again been superseded by the fact that we see now and literally see without question that that so-called pattern of "too simple meaning" has also been realized, no longer solely by reason of its *observers* - far from it - but by virtue of its participants or, if you prefer, that one single participant who, in reality, cannot aspire to be simple enough because it already is. As for that "temporal locus of observation, that falsely absolute vantage point," the mouthpiece that passes for the latest as distinct from the last, that, too, has been put in its place, turned on its "ear" so to speak, by that same last that shall be

first. No longer do we have to buy into the notion that assures us that history has only to do with the past, then concedes that, well, maybe to some degree it's conditioned by the hope if not the idea of the future and finally in one true concession and confession - historicism proper - admits as to how it's really no more than a reflection of the present, in effect, of current opinion and so, like everything else, subject to varying winds of doctrine. With the exception, in some degree, of an Augustine or Aquinas or a Dante, or of hints and more than hints from a Joachim or later inherit ors like a Vico or Bossuet and their, as well as our, last best hopes, Hegel and Schelling, nary a word, not to speak of *the* Word regarding the presence of Presence. Once again, enter the experiments and the whole business is settled once and for all.

Noteworthy, too, and indicative of how radical Joachim's claims were and are, is the extent of his break from the Augustinian doctrine that had ruled the roost for some eight hundred years: that, rather than having to await the arrival of some endless future, the end and its meaning were attainable here and now in the progressive revelation of God and its disclosure of a divine purpose no longer hidden but attainable within it. To suggest the ramifications of that one, complete with its misconceptions - the confusion of a "progressive revelation" with its opposite number, the idea of progress, for instance - all we have to do is run down an abbreviated list of some of those who, to one degree or another, have been affected by it and, in turn, have affected us and so, finally, been instrumental in arriving at what we see now as the ultimate dispensation. How about, for starters, a St. Francis or a Dante? Or a Columbus? Yes, our Columbus who went looking and looking consciously for that formerly merely heard-of thing, the land of heart's desire in the flesh just as we have. How about that long list of Germans beginning with Lessing and Herder and running through Hegel and Schelling and Marx and ending with - and maybe even you'll have trouble with this one - Hitler, that same Hitler whom Voegelin correctly tagged as the lineal descendant of Joachite thinking? Just as there's always a necessary connection between substance and shadow, so too there's a necessary connection between the real thing and its ultimate parody, the *deus* and *devilus*. Joachim's Father, Son and Holy Spirit reflected in their individual patrons, Peter, Paul and John; Comte's three stages of history; Lessing's and Schelling's three Revelations, Fate, Nature and Providence; Hegel's thesis, antithesis and synthesis, all expressive of the trinitarian nature of received reality (Nagajuna's Middle Way) and all temporarily derailed, whether by the Third International or the thousand year Third Reich (these last simply the latest parodies of the last and best) until they, too, if in no way exonerated (since evil must come), are at least and at last rendered purposeful by the ultimate Omega perspective finally made available to one and all here and now.

Letter 88 — January 18, 2007

Dear Carl, Since some of the claims I've been making, especially in the last paragraph of my last letter, may appear somewhat "dense" (as they've often been accused of being), given Joachim's central position as regards our thesis - ("the dominant philosophy of history ending in a utopia...have their roots in Joachism" someone has said despite the fact that he's virtually unknown to the average educated layman) - if you'll bear with me I'd like to go over a few points in more detail. And what better place to begin than with the school of thought, if you can call it that, which, though completely foreign to him, significantly enough employs the pretext of history (as we see now the arena in which purpose passes for no purpose) as "a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing?" Which "nothing," that is

to say "no-thing" and the significance thereof, we can reserve for future examination, always bearing in mind that the above-cited observation can be attributed to, not the "only begetter," the Earl of Oxford (mistakenly referred to as William Shakespeare), but to one Macbeth, tyrant of Scotland. Especially interesting to note, however, if only parenthetically, is how, though intimately aligned with a nihilism never so pervasive as it is now — and there's a connection here, too, with the manifestation of the above-mentioned "nothingness" which I hope to go into later — a similar sentiment, and it is a sentiment, keeps popping up in the most unexpected places. Here, for instance, is a quote from that alleged paragon, Goethe, which I just happened to have run across a few months back and which, when I did, I couldn't believe my eyes. "History," he opines, "that most absurd of all things, a web of nonsense for the higher thinker..."; in short, the movement of time, absent its goal which is to have none, experienced as total chaos. Which, in turn, seen from the bottomless pit we happily inhabit (or, better yet, which happily inhabits us), simply illustrates, as an Eckhart or Blake well knew, that when it comes to the truth, especially its supposedly elevated precincts, you can be too smart but you can't be too dumb.

Augustine, of course, is another matter, occupying as he does the pole, or at least one of them, from which Joachim after some eight hundred years, courageously or, if you prefer, impatiently diverged. For Augustine the progressive Self-revelation of God, at least here on earth, ended not in the fullness of time in the sense that the end is the fullness of time, but in the Incarnation and Crucifixion. All that was left for us to do now — and the length of that where and when, that ever-receding "now", was anybody's guess — was to wait. Not so for Joachim nor, understandably, many of his contemporaries for whom the already thousand year delay of the Sabbath Day and, hopefully beyond even that, to the Eighth Great Day of Eternity, was beginning to look a bit much. Not only was the long-awaited conversion of possibility into realization slipping away into an unredeemable past and dragging along with it any hope for what, after all, was Christianity's stock in trade, the meat and drink that distinguished it from anything that had gone before and made salvation not only attainable within history but because of it, it virtually seemed to ignore the place and potential of its Silent Partner, significantly enough referred to as the name-less or, better yet, name-free Third Person of the Trinity, the anonymous Holy Spirit so-called.

Enter Joachim with his, if not assurance, at least instinctive suspicion that if "eschatology" meant what it said - a discourse about last things - and "apocalypse" literally no more (nor less) than the field of God's activity and so the meaningful disclosure of a divine purpose no longer hidden, then it followed we were faced, not with an endless future, but the end of the future. And this not in a "bad," an Augustinian doomsday sense, a not so Divine Comedy as it were, but in the good sense of promise and fulfillment within history. In any case, can there be any doubt as to his enormous influence, whether acknowledged or not (and for the most part it has gone unacknowledged) on all subsequent theory and practice that, beginning with the Franciscans, has affected, not only all Western but now, via its political and scientific dissemination by means of any "ism" you can name, all world-wide thought as well?

Fortunately - and it's just one more illustration that God is no respecter of persons — Joachim, all too human himself, also miscalculated. I say "fortunately" because had

he not we might, conceivably, not have had the experiments. But then, of course, we might not have needed them. In any case, true to the progressive heritage he helped establish and the burgeoning emergence from the "Dark Ages" to which he contributed, like virtually all his predecessors he saw the new movement, this new awakening, as an ascent and so, if you'll forgive the mixed metaphor, fell into what we can only call the "transcendence" trap, the goal to be reached as somehow up there or at least out there with he, she or it, that is to say, you and/or me, the observer *par excellence*, on the outside looking in, instead of seeing it for what it is (or is not), its opposite number (if a zero can be said to have an opposite or be a number at all), the one and only participant looking from the inside out. Granted that over the years, even centuries, the possibility of this condition or something approximating it had been suggested by mystics of all shapes and sizes — I think specifically of Nicholas of Cusa as well as, even today, scholars like Altizer who comes as close as any I know of to describing the state by referring to it as 1st Person subjective immanence, the immanence of immanence as it were, as distinct from 3rd Person objective transcendence — I still can't help being reminded of my father's caustic remark (and I've mentioned this before) when confronted with his son's lofty speculations, that "that and a nickel'll get you a ride on the subway." Well, now in the person of that most singular 1st Person revealed by the experiments, we have that nickel or, given our current inflation, at least its reasonable or maybe not so reasonable equivalent. In any case, heading in the right direction, we now have fare enough to "fare well" as well as "fare forward."

The point, of course, is that, suiting the action to the word, rather than an ascent, our road to ultimate revelation has been demonstrably and necessarily a descent all the way. And why, if only in hindsight, did it have to be a descent? Setting aside all symbolic if not downright sentimental notions as a savior being born in a stable, not to speak of his having to undergo a brief layover in hell, how else turn the tables on the Law and not so much tempt as allow the All, the secular and profane as well as the reputedly holy, to reveal itSelf for what it is, the lowest of the low, a not-god? How else seduce the Unspeakable into speaking the only language we're capable of understanding and so, *transdescending* by its silence the tyranny of transcendence, make the very best of a bad bargain and reveal that, given who we are with all our limitations and pretensions, what appears as profane - outside the precincts of the sacred - is the only and best shape the sacred could assume at the time?

Which, of course, is precisely what's happened and how it happened, not the sole means of redemption of course, but the most conclusive because the most inclusive, that to which, like destiny to providence, all previous approaches appear insufficient. I know I've already noted here and there in these letters some of the milestones that marked this downward path masquerading as a progress from Alpha to Omega but, beginning with Roger Bacon and Grossteste in what is significantly, if portentously, referred to as the "High" Middle Ages, it's worth identifying once again at least some of the players you can't tell apart without a score-card anyway. I think of Descartes, considered in some quarters the villain of the piece, and his search for what was to turn out to be (because it had always been) his only "concrete and stable ego" and so recognizing, even courageously acknowledging, his conscious subjectivity as the first step towards what was to turn out to be (though as yet unknown to him) our conscious Subjectivity. Well, well, well! I think of the application of David Hume's experiential philosophy, not only to the subject of

morality but to the actual moral subject in the flesh as he or she "heads" towards the very Subject itSelf, thus establishing the solid foundation on which by observation and, later, participation, certainty could be grounded once and for all. I think of the old man, Kant, taking the downward path one step further and almost to the end of the road by insisting (because there was no proof, at least not yet) that not only could that conscious Subjectivity, that I AM, not be seen, it could not even be known. Finally, I think of the first hints of a counter-movement led by Fichte and his recognition that our "complete sinfulness was merely a preparation for our final regeneration," which suggestion - and it was no more than that at the time - picked up, as I've already mentioned, by Hegel and Schelling was to lead to all the developments we've already touched on. And now I've come up with a new one I recently rediscovered: Joseph de Maistre. Do you know his work - a brilliant writer and refugee in Czarist Russia from what he at first considered the misguided French Revolution who, though an arch conservative and ultra-Montanist promoting the infallibility of the pope and divine right of kings, nevertheless practically jumped for joy at the coming prospect in the guise of disaster: the recognition that the narrow revelation of Sinai confined to only a single people and the subsequent advent of the Christ, though addressed to all but nevertheless restricted in its universality, was about to be succeeded by the "revelation of the revelation" as he called it, some "enormous religious event, some total unity" about to manifest in order that the same stone the builders rejected could become the corner-stone of the new dispensation? And as if to validate Aquinas' insistence that "God must be proved by the senses like any other concrete thing" was he wrong? "*Nihil est in intellectu quia primus fuerit in sensu*" Nothing exists in the mind that hasn't previously existed in the senses. And if you have doubts about that, how about this one from Ibn Arabi: "the eye is the organ by which God knows himself," from which he concludes "God is never visible except in concrete form." All of which can only lead us to acknowledge the means that got us there, or rather here, and agree with Dante that, "History is the arena in which God works out his purposes." And if you don't believe that just turn to Douglas' ultimate dispensation and simply "Look for your Self" and see all the above immediately on display and, as a result, validated.

Seriously, can there be any doubt that if the Christian revelation as represented by the First Coming vouches for the coherence of history, the Second, exemplified by the experiments, provides us with a demonstration of its full meaning, the providential design recognized if only haltingly by such loving skeptics as Burckhardt and Voegelin who were able to make some sense at least — the first via Renaissance Italy, the second Ancient Athens — of those islands rising up out of a vast sea of dissonance? How much more, then, a Vico who even two centuries earlier had been able to recognize the central role of sacred Judeo-Christian as distinct from what he called profane history but still couldn't grasp its ultimate significance: that, though without question it no longer represented a mere parochial event, its full meaning and world-wide implication signalling the end of cyclical theory was still not entirely evident. But how, absent the experiments, could it be? Who could possibly have seen, and even if he or she had, who could have recognized it was precisely the high aspiration and, given the very nature of reality, its necessary breakdown that was to lead to its subsequent breakthrough and so lend, no, not lend, but give meaning to the presumably random movement that had characterized history up to then but, in effect, was indicating as it unfolded from myth to fact, to the

FACT, not only the promised end finally in view but announcing that end as a beginning?

What's so instructive here is how, as if in compliance with Say's law (Jean Baptiste-Say, the nineteenth century French economist) which had established that bad, that is to say, paper money will always drive out good until the day of reckoning when gold will exact its due (and what better instrument of reckoning than the experiments?), so, too, newly minted Omega as distinct from originally mined Alpha vision - not consciousness alone but consciousness of consciousness - was destined to establish itSelf in person, in its 1st Person, as true currency of the realm. I've already noted Augustine's reservations regarding the possibility of any resolution here on earth and, following Augustine, Voegelin's acute observation as to how Hitler's millennial prophecy derived from Joachitic speculation or at least from its debasement. Is it purely speculative, then, on our part to note that, quite in accordance with the dictum that "God never shuts one door without opening another," the collapse of the Nazi nightmare, of what by general consensus has been, arguably, the evil empire to end all evil empires if only on grounds that its victims were not chosen because of what they said or did or threatened to do, not even because they were in the way or the gods demanded it (these were no Aztecs) but, *for the first time in history*, purely by reason, if you can call it pure and you can call it reason, of their mere existence? Since these things move hand in hand — no atom-bombs without antibiotics, no antibiotics without atom bombs - can it be sheer accident that the demise of this empire of death coincided almost to the day with Douglas' uncovering of — dare I say it? - the secret of creation, that contrary to any previous naïve "millennial" claims but quite in accordance with the nature of birth, death and resurrection, Joachim's "dream" too had to die in order to rise like the phoenix out of its own ashes and so be reborn, not in the way expected, of course, but in the only way possible, in reality? Is there no correlation, deep calling unto deep, between the demands of the *devilus*, the ape of god, and that sacrificial *deus* whose death we celebrate as the not-god, between the possibility of total nihilism, the ultimate parody, measured against the necessity of the nothingness that, in Wallace Stevens' words, both "is and is not?" Can there be any doubt ever again why the misappropriated because mythical notion of *human* 3rd Person perfectibility had to be sacrificed on its own altar in order to clear the way for the only other Way, the Way that turned out to be, essentially, the Way?

I know I've run over the allotted but, sorry about that, so has my cup.

Letter 89 — February 22, 2007

Dear Carl, As I've suggested more than once and at the risk of sounding ridiculously, even obscenely, pretentious and leaving myself even more wide open than usual to the obvious, I think I know how Aquinas felt when, putting down his pen once and for all, he uttered what have come down to us as his famous last words. I'm sure you know them: the "all I've written up to now seems to me no better than straw" or something to that effect. The difference between us, of course (and God knows it's not the only difference), is that he meant it and acted on it, whereas, though I may mean it or think I mean it, it looks as if I still have a few more miles to go (though not too many) before I sleep. For one thing, I think I owe it to this East is East and West is West business we're about by addressing the exchange between Tillich and Abe which is so beautifully illustrative, even revealing, given our perspective. And if I choose

Tillich rather than Altizer, say, as a foil for Abe, it's merely because, given his, Tillich's, Western insistence on the primacy of being vis-à-vis Abe's case for Eastern non-being, it so beautifully exemplifies the difference between them (and us), whereas Altizer might almost be taken (and mistakenly has been) for a Buddhist. But we've already addressed that issue when we noted how Douglas' first attraction was to Zen. The point being, and I can't repeat it often enough, is that our primary concern is not to explore the various and divergent outlooks for their human-interest or scholarly sakes but only as their perspectives lead us to the one and only end as offered most clearly by the experiments. For another, though, tongue in cheek I may claim the reason for being for all arguments is to transcend the transcendent by immanentizing the immanent, I also recognize how silly, even laughable, all attempts to verbalize the truth (including this one) are; in effect, like trying to describe breathing, how impossible it is to speak the unspeakable or as the Hindus say, carry nectar in a sieve. But as the experiments also demonstrate beyond argument (which is precisely the point), to dispense with the "unspeakable" as such is in no way to deny its knowability or attainability which is presumably what we're all about. In effect, to point a finger at one's no-head is neither a metaphor nor a symbol but designed to direct us to all we know on earth and all we need to know of God in His heaven.

That said, we're free to examine their respective positions and determine, not only where they differ from each other but how both, to some degree, diverge from that "third thing," the ultimate revelation provided by the experiments, a revelation that, dispensing with the guise of a prophecy now superfluous because realized, arrives full blown in and through history. And again, to avoid any misunderstanding (and I'm thinking specifically of Anne), I can only repeat that appealing to these simple yet infallible instruments is in no way to suggest that other means may not also serve and, indeed, if only by default, have, since, from the beginning of time, it was all we had anyway. But a signpost however accurate, if only by its necessary appeal to language is not the territory, any more than the Word, any Word, is the Thing itSelf.

In any case, here's Tillich distinguishing between preparatory, that is to say prophetic, and what he refers to as final revelation: "Final revelation is an event which is prepared *by* history and received *in* history but cannot be derived *from* history." Which we *see* now and only now thanks to the testimony of the experiments, though forgivably is nevertheless patently false, just as his claim that "nobody writes history from a place above all places" with its implied and even welcome knock on transcendence, may be so but in no way precludes our uncovering that the corresponding place *below* all places performs double duty just as well, in Fact eminently (and immanently) better. As Abe seems to suggest, offering in words what the experiments demonstrably confirm in kind, though, by its very nature *agape* may appear to originate in a movement from higher to lower, in effect, as, again, we *see* now, it moves in quite the opposite direction. Indeed, how could the revelation of an abysmal not-god be otherwise? Is it any surprise, then, that virtually everyone, even the mystics, have, to some degree, skirted this issue when even the Man himself, though rendering the certainty of the promise, of the end of history as *telos* rather than *finis* and its aim, not the end of time but its transfiguration, was, nevertheless, so understandably vague as to what that end would look like as regards a literal resurrection?

Letter 90 — March 9, 2007

Dear Carl, I'd like to continue a while longer on this Tillich-Abe confrontation, if you can call it that, not that I consider either of them more important than so many others, than a Gebser and Nishitani,, for example, but because each of them

represents in its purest form divergent perspectives now so easily reconciled, in fact settled once and for all by the experiments. No question that from our point of view - that is to say from the point of view emanating from the definitive

"no point of view" - Abe comes closer, any more than it's an accident that Douglas sub-titled /On Having No Head/ "Zen and the Rediscovery of the Obvious." But as in the normal course of discovery we're in the process of uncovering, to be

aware of more than half is not necessarily to know the whole story, no less tell it. And in light of the experiments, that has to be the final knock on Zen: that however admirable years of sitting cross-legged in order to arrive at the negation of speech may be, considering our present situation, not least the requisite speed demanded by our various and not so extraneous extreme possibilities - the threat of extermination, for instance, by either atomic or germ warfare - it's still no match for the effortless affirmation of silence available, courtesy of any experiment, to anyone instantaneously on contact. Aside from other factors (the distinction we've already drawn between an Alpha Buddhist and a Headless Omega perspective), we just don't have the time in every sense of the word for that kind of preparation. But we've already touched on that and will no doubt do so again when we come to examine the paradox to literally end all paradoxes: how the current, if not world-wide acceptance or at least tolerance of Buddhism - "the religion of no-religion" as it's been called at least by the "thinking" classes - is only surpassed by the testimony of the experiments, those tail-end, tongue-tied left overs, the lowest of the low pieced together from the failed Christianity they've come to vindicate.

Before we move on, however, I want to acknowledge how, on one issue at least, I stand corrected. Following

Tillich, mistakenly it turns out, I'd gotten into the habit of unconsciously distinguishing the problematic nature of the 3rd Person perspective, our optical illusion (or "ontic plight" as Abe calls it, rather neatly I think), from its 1st Person counter- part by referring to it as the observer-participant dichotomy, the clearest instance I could think of, at least from the 3rd Person observational standpoint, being the now classic and definitive example provided by Einstein's aptly named theory of /relativity/. I also remember bringing up in an earlier letter an account of a marvelous awakening I'd had in Paris, either

during or just after the War, when I stumbled on Paul Eluard's "there is another world and we're in it" and which, at the time, I thought positively the last word. In fact, continued to do so for almost fifty years until, coming upon the experiments, I discovered that, as with virtually everything else, I'd had it upside-down or inside-out or both: that though I may very well have glommed onto the last Word, the truth of the matter is, and as the experiments incontrovertibly demonstrate in their inimitable silence, there is another world but it's in us. In any case (and it's the primary reason for my indulging in

this apparent digression), though absent the experiments literally at his finger-tips, Abe, quite remarkably I think, picks up on this, on the distinction between Tillich's use of "participation" (with its obvious bias towards "part") and what he, Abe, suspects and Zen suggests is a /total/ identity as it spells out with complete assurance, not only the dissolution of that wishful thinking we refer to as 3rd Person transcendence but the realization through unconditional differentiation of a new and all-out immanence, a condition which, still stuck in the /Son/ of God impersonation, Tillich continues to deny. Nor is it any wonder that this stubborn insistence on a residue "out there" has finally ended, via Blake's Nobodaddy, in the unconditional de-divinization exemplified by the "Death of God" movement or that we're now in a position to substantiate that Abe was quite right, that, in fact, we are now at long last in such /complete/ possession of the Whole, of that one indispensable gauge available to all of us - our bodies - as to confirm he was /absolutely/ right, that if "before the Abraham I AM" of Jesus (which is now demonstrably true), then even more so becomes acceptance of the Fact, also demonstrable, that before I am I am, though not as ordinarily conceived, an am-not. As a result, since to say "no-thing" or even to think it is, as we see, already to reify it, it becomes edifying, not to say prudent to acknowledge who that that "isn't" by a show of silence, or, as we're now entitled to say, /the/ show of silence.

I bring this example up - and of course we could cite many others, probably an infinite amount (in case anyone's wondering what we're going to do with ourselves now that we've gotten to the bottom of things) - as just one more example of how, if we parse closely enough, the experiments are capable of clearing up what once upon a time were considered merely moot. On that basis alone, can there be any doubt as to their ultimate significance?

Letter 91 — March 19, 2007

Dear Carl, A few odds and ends as, quite in accordance with the requirements of prophecy and its accompanying revelation, we wind up our claim that the historic view becomes truly significant only to the degree it points to, indeed arrives at its end, a position first staked out in all its depth by Hegel and now, the so-called secrets of the so-called invisible world exposed for all to see, brought to its apotheosis by the experiments. Nor is it surprising that, given his Alpha orientation, Abe, taking or rather mis-taking Hegel's view of a progress towards the qualitative infinite for an indefinite quantitative endlessness, should balk at this any more than that Tillich, for all his recognition (by means of symbol and metaphor) that "everything temporal has a 'teleological' relation to the eternal but only man is aware of it," should see that rather than a "finale" to history - a claim only appropriate to the experiments - the crucifixion was merely (merely?) "central" to it and that the 3rd Person Jesus hanging on the cross for the sake of the 1st Person Christ was simply acting out, beginning to bring to consciousness if you will, that inescapable experience that whether it knows it or not, every living being has enjoyed (enjoyed?) before and since and will continue to do so world without end with every breath it takes. Indeed, it could be argued (and obviously I'm prepared to do just that) that all else having failed if only out of exhaustion and only the literal sense left standing - that same literal sense that, in Gibbon's terms, is so repugnant to "every principle of faith as

well as reason" but we now see is mother's milk to us – us there was no place left to turn except to that No-thing masquerading as a *nihil*. And lo and behold! There it was staring us in the no-face as it had been all along: meaning, the handmaid of experience, come through the back-door to arrive at its ultimate destination.

Now obviously there are all sorts of connections and correspondences and conclusions we can draw from this certainty, some of which, with Douglas' help, we've already touched on, not least the contradictions inherent in such necessary pairings of shadow and substance as the above-noted nihil and nothingness or, even closer to home, 3rd and 1st Persons. I say "necessary" because, like holding the once-vaunted but now diminished because no longer required mirror up to nature, we simply don't get one without the other. Instead, by persisting to look through a glass darkly and refusing to recognize there's no glass at all – in Gertrude Stein's words, that there's "no there there" – that's precisely what we do get: life as parody, as the now-exploded utopian dream of living happily ever after instead of living happily in it, the correct translation, incidentally, of the original Latin. Quite a difference we can all agree: the vision that not only makes provision for the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth but for nothing *and* the truth as well. Indeed, were we disposed to tell the fairy-tale to end all fairy-tales and so disclose the truth of the matter, of all matter, at least as the experiments see it, we might even be tempted to conclude that the ever-after lives happily in us. Or is that not so much to ask as to answer? "Rilke saw it – "And we, spectators always, everywhere, *looking at, never out of, anything*....Who's turned us around like this?" was how he put it. And turn-about fair play, Douglas, without so much as saying a word, no less *the Word*, responded.

Speaking of which – responding, that is, and what else is there to talk about unless it be the silence of the you-know-what? – it might be helpful to recall that Dante, too, had a word for it, or rather two: Lethe and Eunoe. The first, the traditional river of forgetfulness in which, having successfully navigated both the Inferno and the Purgatorio, he must bathe before, cleansed of all memory of what he's seen and lived through, he's now prepared for baptism into the second and so, by recalling who he really really is, earn admission into Paradiso. And isn't that, in effect, an exact preview spelled out in symbol and metaphor of what happens before our eyes both singly and collectively every day of the week once we enter the experiments: collectively, by means of that unparalleled immersion into the secrets, so-called, of the hell of the past, right down, for the first time in history, to the world-wide unearthing of its every last detail where society and presumably the globe itself will soon resemble one vast gossip-sheet ("gossip" you may recall, deriving from "god-sib," god's sibling - another parody to end all parodies), yet singly so overwhelmed by this accumulation by means of television, movies, newspapers, the internet, as to make a mockery of universal literacy and suggest, like the total recall of the drowning, a preparation for this same parody, the parody that always reflects, that must reflect – how else could it exist – its reality and has now been made plain for all to see? To paraphrase the poet, Stevie Smith: "You thought I was waving but I was really drowning." And so it *seemed* we were - "seem" in relation to "see," like parody to Paradiso, just one more mirror-image of the real thing - until alive to our bellwether for all seasons, we turned and looked the other way.

Letter 92 — May 8, 2007

Dear Alan, Thinking about the "finis-telos" correlation which I touched on in my last has triggered all sorts of connections which with your help I'd like to explore a little, always remembering that our primary purpose, in fact our only real purpose, is not so much to explore or codify or even grade this or that theory which, after all, in light of the real thing, the experiments, can, if not shots in the dark, at best qualify as near hits or, depending on your orientation, near misses. And this is not even to further qualify by pointing out that as distinct from vision, "theory" - the word itself - rather than born directly of "seeing" is already more kin to speculation with all the secondary confusions that that entails, not least the primacy awarded speech over silence.

In any event, what brought this up was my recalling a passing reference I made in my letter before last to Carl, #91 dated March 19 (one which, if I remember correctly, I'd already touched on before), as regards this business so dear to fairy tales of ending with the expression "and so they lived happily ever after." Harmless enough, you might assume. I certainly did since this accepted phrase has been and still is the mother's milk we all up grew on. But as we now see in light of the experiments - and it represents only one more instance of their all-purpose curative powers - it's anything but. In fact, a case can be made and I intend to make it that, if the truth be told, all our troubles, at least in this regard, can be traced to a slight if seemingly innocuous mistake in translation. And if this seems to be reaching a little, is it any more so than attributing our woes (though subsequent salvation) to a snake in the grass tempting us with a bite rather than the whole apple? At any rate, the mistake I'm referring to (and whether, given our natural and, as it turns out now, our providential bias, the miscalculation was deliberate or not I have no idea nor is it really relevant) is the again egregious mistranslation from what in the original Latin, rather than "happily ever after," should read instead "and so they lived happily *in* the ever-after." A harmless omission you might say, this careless overlooking of an ineffectual little "in." I certainly thought so until I discovered the experiments and, not the least of their gifts, realized what a difference a little preposition can make. Witness in the same mode that famous passage in Gibbon, hilarious if it weren't so tragic, where, describing some of the early Christian internecine slaughters, he attributes the deaths of thousands, not to a preposition now but to an even more modest component, a perfectly innocent vowel: whether the Son was to be acknowledged as "homoousia" (spelled double "o"), that is to say identical to the Father, or "homoiousia" (spelled "oi"), that is to say, merely made in His likeness? Can you beat that? Well, considering we're no longer confining ourselves to a local but rather a universal instance, I do believe we can now.

Seriously, the point I'm making here is that not only actions but words, too, have consequences and what in retrospect might seem limited to a merely provincial interpretation, when looked at from the world-wide and more than world-wide, the universal perspective of the experiments assumes a completely different dimension. In a word, as we're equipped to see now and this without question, the difference between living "happily ever after" and its all-purpose counterpart, "living happily *in* the ever-after," is, in effect, no longer merely the difference between night and day, between a fairy-tale, a dream-world limited to a fortunate few versus the true story available to the One in all but, in retrospect, constitutes the difference between time and space and, never made so clear as in the experiments, between the parody and its paradigm. On the one hand, we have the offer of a utopia, of a "nowhere" - the

mirror-image and, as a result, reverse of "no-thing" - ranging anywhere from Islam's Paradise of Pleasure with its prospect of 72 dancing girls reserved for men only to the equally lascivious Marxist version - the strip tease as the withering away of the state - and both culminating in the grand and logical *finale* of your typical Hollywood movie with its so-called "happy ending." And, on the other, we're presented with the possibility via the experiments - via, in effect, crucifixion and resurrection - of starring and more than starring in the real thing: of playing as author, actor and audience all the "parts" rolled into One on the world's stage. In effect, for the first time in history - it may be because it's *essentially* come to an end (history, that is, not the world) - we now have a choice between mere wish-full thinking and the wish full-filled seeing of the experiments. Interestingly enough, what was judged and rightly judged as the total debasement plaguing us - the face-less and name-less impersonality of a mechanical world characterized by modernity's mute masses hitting bottom - can now be recognized and acknowledged as the necessary and silent precursor, the ground for the revelation of its reverse, of a face-free and name-free anonymity now *consciously* available to all. And, as always when dealing with shadow and substance, we just don't get one without the other.

Interestingly enough, too, is the intimate connection we can now discern when we delve a little deeper into the essential difference between shadow-parody and its substance-paradigm. Recognizing that comparisons are odorous and this may represent a digression (though obviously I don't think so) am I reaching too far when I distinguish the phrase "happily ever after" from "happily in the ever-after" as the one, addressed to the realm of psyche - in effect, the best that soul can do (the concept "soul", being one of Douglas' pet peeves, as we see now for good and sufficient reasons) - and the other of pneuma, spirit, as we know from our familiarity with Judeo-Christian as distinct from Greek sources - Paul, for instance - a dimension partisans of the soul for the most part aren't even aware of?

On this score, for a full appreciation of the first and where it's coming from, we can do no better than refer to Erich Neumann's wonderful and I dare say, definitive little study called *Amor and Psyche*. (For some reason he preferred the Latin Amor to its Greek equivalent, Eros, the Greek original, but both obviously a cut above the juvenile-oriented Cupid). Do you know it? As I say, an absolutely seminal book through which, thanks to Drs. Jung and Freud, we're immediately able not only to recognize but understand and acknowledge on the deepest level our debt to myth. Briefly (in case you don't know it and I suggest, if you don't, you look into it, it's short and sweet), it's the story (and I do mean story) of the Princess Psyche, reputed to be the most beautiful girl in the world but who, arousing Aphrodite's (Venus') jealousy, is immediately committed by the goddess to her son, Eros, with strict orders to take care of this interloper, that is to say to get rid of this mortal rival one way or the other. Fortunately for the rest of us he disobeys. Hoist by his own petard, he falls in love with her himself but, though he continues to visit her nightly, mindful of his god-like prerogatives and ordering her never to look on his face, he keeps her in the dark as to his own identity, so fulfilling the dream of every male on earth (and in heaven too) since time began: of having his cake and eating it too, and this without even having to pay the price of admission. Since from her standpoint, however, this is an understandably untenable situation she reasonably enough disobeys. Consumed by her perfectly natural, that is to say feminine, curiosity as to who this mysterious lover-boy is, she leans over one night while he's sleeping only to have a drop of wax

from her candle wake him. Furious at not only being disobeyed but recognized, he runs off in a huff leaving her absolutely devastated which, as it happens, turns out to be (it always does) the one thing necessary. No need to go into too much detail from here on in. Suffice it that spurred on by her love and passion and need for him and instructed, not only by the birds and bees come to her rescue but by Pan, the Old Man, and, interestingly enough, Ganymede the Messenger, not only the first human to be raised to Olympus but as Jove's catamite a homosexual as well (and, as a result, also no threat), she strives to "grow up" and perform the tasks that would make her "worthy" of him and so win him. But when, though she gamely succeeds in performing each of them (and so hone her wifely-attractions), that still fails to move him she falls into a deep sleep. Meanwhile back at the ranch, what with Eros on strike (Love itSelf love-sick) and all hell breaking loose - birds no longer singing, bells no longer ringing - to make a short story even shorter, Aphrodite, forced to relent if only in the interest of her son's sanity not to speak of the prospect of a world coming to an end through sheer attrition, agrees to allow Psyche into the fold, that is to say, be received as a member in good standing in the pantheon that had up to now been reserved for gods only. And so, love conquering all, a marriage is arranged in heaven leaving the couple free to live "happily ever after." Which, as one wag, no doubt speaking from bitter experience, put it, is why Plato chose to refer to myths like these as "*likely* stories" or, speaking even more cynically, Oscar Wilde suggested that "the good ending happily and the bad unhappily is what fiction" (that is to say, myth) "means."

Not so when we *descend* into history, however, and if I've underscored "descend" it's deliberate. Because it is a descent and, as we see now, a providential one, this downward path from myth into history, from transcendence into immanence. And if, setting aside similarities - symbolic hangovers like the luxury of a virgin birth, for instance - I don't go into the details of the crucifixion and resurrection of that one Man, it's only because we're so familiar with his, and as it turns out (though it's taken some doing), our story. What does concern us though and, on the contrary, constitutes its meaning in light of the experiments is that, at least at this stage in our development 1) though realization is still confined to one person, that is to say, to that 3rd person known as Jesus of Nazareth 2) it nevertheless holds out the *hope* that at least someday in the future if we're good little boys and girls, we, too, will somehow be transformed into the life of the party. That is if, contrary to Psyche's deep sleep, we can so flippantly compare a real death for the wages of sin to the price of admission to a ball. What concerns us here, however, and again I won't go into it too deeply since I've already touched on it in previous letters is how when even the *belief* that initiated the whole conscious process just about two thousand years ago also began to wear thin and we stumbled into nihilism, quite in accordance with the movement of parody to paradigm, the reservoir of nothingness, made palpable now, came to our rescue with its invitation to live and move and have our being no longer in a fairy-tale but in an actual ever-after. Which, as we can now testify, splendid as it was and is, still merely announces a step in the right direction and, like mysticism the experiments, not only heralds what it sees and says but also knows now and shows that, in effect, the best is no longer yet to come but right here "facing" us "head-on" so to speak. Briefly, if the price to pay for living happily ever after is no more than a little sleep and to live happily in the ever-after is merely to die, how much simpler, in fact how much more rewarding and time-saving in both senses of the word would it be to dispense with the not-yet altogether as essentially irrelevant.

In a word never to be born at all, a suggestion - and in the beginning it was no more than that - first hinted at by Sophocles, then, though unbeknownst to them, literally turned on its ear a thousand years later and half the globe away by the Zen acolytes until it was finally brought to heel, that is to say to total consciousness right here in our own back-yard courtesy of the experiments.

I know I've more or less exceeded our agreed-on limits but since I do want to explore this as thoroughly as possible given our limitations of space and I've made some rather extravagant claims, please bear with me as we go into it a little more thoroughly. The reference to Sophocles, for instance, provides a beautiful example of how, the world being what it is, parody, attempting to feel its way through, always *appears* to mistakenly announce itself before paradigm. How else can we interpret what is perhaps the best-known, yet in its almost universal "wrong-headed" application (as we see now and only now), the famous about-face from the Oedipus cycle that begins "Not to be born surpasses thought and speech" and goes on to advise that "the next best thing by far, when one has been born, is to go back as swiftly as possible to where we come from" and which, though not intended as such, appears under the guise of its *absolutely mistaken* pessimism to be the greatest parody of them all rather than, as we see now when properly interpreted because properly seen, a precise prescription for liberation here and now. Quite simply if, following the Zen people, it's better to recognize that who you really really are has never been born at all because as Douglas is fond of pointing out and the experiments of demonstrating that who you really really are never has been, then there's an end to it - and a beginning. In any case, it represents just one more instance of how an experiment, any experiment, will reveal itSelf to be no respecter of persons except its Own, however first-rate, even spectacular, he or she may appear to be as third-person poet, playwright, philosopher, sage, seer and yes, even avatar.

Not so, of course, as again following Douglas we arrive at the heart of Zen, so far as I know the first "organized" attempt to recognize that since the not-yet is already-here only we don't *see* it, why not, following Sophocles' suggestion however misplaced, go back to where we came from, if not in the first at least in the last place and so in the name of the not-god *consciously* recover at Omega in the name of a new name-freeness the name-less anonymity we knew without knowing at Alpha? Which, of course, though this transition from *Eros* to *Agape*, from learning to live happily ever after to the promise of living happily ever after in it, has taken some doing (the "doing" we refer to as history), it appears as literally "nothing" compared to the ultimate acknowledgement that, come full circle (the world being round), we've finally arrived at the place we never left to begin with. Is it any wonder, then, that the secondary issues, the ones we're about, assume an almost automatic clarity as we trace the outward movement from Athens to Jerusalem, say, to a seemingly fortuitous arrival at Kyoto, not only as an example of global discovery and exploitation (which, of course, it was) but, quite in accord with Hegel's notion of the "cunning of history", as an instance of cosmic exploration and uncovering as well, of trade following the flag in the service of a paradigm which, like the hound of heaven, appears to be hot on the heels of its own parody? And, tragedy or comedy be damned, this is not even to speak of that third thing (and there's always a third thing): the "divinity that shapes our ends," the Comedy realized. On that score, I may have mentioned this before but the following brilliant prophecy of Altizer is certainly appropriate here and worth repeating now that it's come true: that genuine Christian theology can and will only

be reborn by way of Buddhism, his fool-proof description, however it falls short as prescription, for precisely what, thanks to Douglas, has actually happened.

And as we know now - and who in a better position to?- depending on the position of the sun, the parody as either shadow or forerunner also has its uses, as witness this from one of the greatest masters of parody who ever lived, Oscar Wilde again: "The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it." And now, thanks to the pristine and certifiable testimony of the experiments, we're finally in a position to, in *the* position to. So - in order of appearance - let us give thanks: to Oscar, to Douglas and to-the-you-know-and/or-don't-know-who who shall no longer remain name-less but from now on in forever name-free.