

8 July 2004

Dear George,

Here are a few more comments arising from my reading of the Letters to Carl. Some of these them overlap material covered by my last but I put them together at the same time as I originally intended them to be the one message.

I found your use of Gebser's model to illustrate some of your points very helpful as I had a brush with his Ever Present Origin a couple of years ago, as I probably mentioned before, and found what I thought were very obvious connections to Douglas's work. I found his use of the words 'Waring' and 'Verition' very headless and his use of 'presentation' which, as far as I am able to tell he wasn't sure how to make happen a clear pointer to the coming, or just arrived, work of Douglas.

I suppose the main question is whether or not I'm following you, which is the subject of the separate document, a diagrammatic attempt to encapsulate my response to several readings of the letters. (My notes on Letters to Carl)

Here are a few more items that I noted on my journey through the letters.

I am still not sure I understand what exactly you meant by 1st Person History and 1st Person Science. 3rd person history and science fine but I'm having difficulty in connecting 'Science' and 'History' to the first person perspective. As I see 1st Personhood it includes what I call 3rd person history and science but are you saying it has a science and history of its own? That is, other than as the context in which 3rd person history and science arise? I have been reading you as saying the first person perspective is the 'end' of history in the sense of both its conclusion and its purpose.

Examples:

Letter 5 - The affirmation of silence does take precedence over the negation of speech if only because it includes it, just as, paradoxically - and it's the meaning of modernity - when it comes to saving time, the sense of an ending takes precedence over the babble of beginnings that got us there.

Letter 8 - by pursuing history to the bitter end in order to announce as well as render, and in no uncertain terms, the affirmation of silence.

Letter 16 - those affirmations of silence, the experiments, not only bespeak a difference in degree from anything that's gone before but a difference in kind, as different as death from resurrection where, not incidentally, Omega begins.

Letter 6. Because it's not what Douglas says or does or what you or I say or do but what the experiments say or, better yet, render in silence that differentiates them from everything that's gone before. And differentiates them to such a degree as to constitute at Omega what Alpha is only able to foresee: the ultimate reversal in kind, the world and everything in it turned upside down and so made right side up. Is it an accident that as with the interplay of lens, retina and light, the very mechanics of the act of seeing while mirroring its own reflection - the way of the world - also reveals the way of deity to those with a single eye trained to and on it? And is it possible that, in turn, this suggests a connection between the way of the world as brought to a head by 1st

Person History and the way of deity as confirmed by 1st Person Science? Well, we shall see.

Is the foregoing what you mean by 1st Person Science?

I suppose my problem is calling the silence 'science'. Why not, if that is what reveals the true state of things? If that is what is intended, my question is resolved but I sense I am missing something of your intention here?

Letter 5. A couple of points. I read this as though Zen was haring back to the starting line with the rest of Buddhism whereas, I think, on my somewhat limited knowledge of it, it should be credited with at least staying put. I have been well disposed to Zen because I always felt it to be saying in response to 'thou art that' – 'there is just this'. And, of course, my interest in Zen led me back to my beginnings (and endings) by way of Traherne and on to Douglas when I read Blyth's Zen in English Literature & the Oriental Classics.

I am very taken with your note about the second coming in the same paragraph.

Letter 7 – Certainty.

We have spoken of certainty before. You and Douglas both talk of absolute certainty. Perhaps I don't have enough of it! Where does the certainty reside? At 3rd person level? Surely, 1st Personhood has no need for it. When you use the word, are you referring to the clarity of the experiments, the transparency? I have difficulty with 'certainty' because I feel that whenever it is allowed, space must also be made for 'uncertainty' in the belief they come as a pair.

I can see I'll have to find out about Voegelin but I'll wait until I've completed my Altizer assignment. The following is an amazing statement (Letter 7)

.....for Voegelin the essential meaning of history does not derive from a survey or assessment of a series of events, however significant, but rather from the revelation of the Presence to whom it belongs.

That lies at the heart of my integration/disintegration, seeing it to be so then being caught up again in the historical treadmill.

That was a very interesting gem you gave us with *mystes* 'closed lips'.

Letter 10 carries a couple of pointers to my condition. The 'remember to remember' message and Dogen's 'practice as realization and vice versa' very apt.

So much for the bits and pieces. I also appreciated your email dealing what Altizer is saying – *'in effect, or better yet, rescuing, is the real Christian tradition'*....and your further comments on the subject which will provide very useful background. I'll print out and use as a bookmark as I read my bargain Ebay purchase.

These notes result from my interest in trying to get a grip on your presentation of these matters. I think they make an enormous contribution to whatever follows the experiments. How so? Well, in my view, by defining the role of the experiments in

the scheme (or non-scheme of things) and thereby creating a wider understanding of their significance. To stick at the experiments isn't sufficient. The metaphor that springs to mind is that the experiments are like a door. The door to the secret garden if you like but the purpose of a door is to provide entrance and to stick around, opening and closing it, painting it or polishing the knob seems to be missing the point.

What I would like to do is to put your Letters to Carl on the website as single document and maybe follow up with my last message to you and your further comments as a separate document. I would also see the latter as a commentary of a length which I could also comfortably include in the Newsletter with a reference to the larger document on the website. I would make sure you had a chance to check the final version before printing.

Well, I can't say how grateful I am for the opportunity to participate in this exercise.
Alan

August 2004

Dear Alan,

I'll try to respond to your points one by one and in order.

Now for the meat: (your paragraph in the middle of page 2 beginning "I am still not sure I understand what exactly you meant by 1st Person History and 1st Person Science...I'm having difficulty connecting 'Science' and 'History' to the first person perspective."). I can understand why the notion of 1st Person History may seem a little strange at first, but after all isn't what we call 1st Person Science what Headlessness is all about? I take it as a given: the truth of certainty or certainty of truth as arrived at not simply by means of 3rd Person observation (which, it turns out, is not so simple at all and quite subject to error), but by means of 1st Person participation as its container which is not. It's my understanding that this is what Einstein's Theory of Relativity was "heading" for, at least took the first steps towards, but as we see now in light of the experiments never quite made it. And why? Because it forgot to turn around. It continued and continues to the end (as do all 3rd Person sciences) to look out there instead of in here and so persists in subscribing to a 3rd Person perspective. No wonder that, despite clocking a moving object's true speed by recognizing the observer's own motion as a factor in the equation - hence its "relativity" - it still never succeeds in "squaring the circle", is still essentially - or maybe inessentially - dependent by definition on a 3rd Person point of view. 1st Person Science, on the contrary, represents - no, doesn't represent - renders the complete about-face, the turn-around that encompasses the "whole" picture. And I say "renders" rather than "represents" because, neither arbitrary nor hypothetical - an "as if" in the service of a "what if"- but absolute to the nth degree, it's not a picture or a mirror at all but actually the way things are. No wonder till the day he died (and only a few blocks from where I'm writing, incidentally), the old man - Einstein - was dissatisfied with what he'd wrought - and taught. And, although it sounds virtually sacrilegious around here I, for one, believe him. He had every reason to be. He knew or at least sensed that, despite popular belief, he hadn't exhausted all the possibilities, no less the All-Possible, but, on the contrary, that something was missing from the "perfect" equation which, it so happened, wasn't to end up perfect at all, at least in our mistaken sense of the Word, only perfectly asymmetrical, just as it had begun. That uncovering - that the missing something, the ground and basis for absolutely

everything, was to turn out to be absolutely no-thing – was to be left to Douglas.

1st Person History is something else again and, as I've tried to clarify in previous letters, specifically takes its cue from Douglas' quote on pages 224-5 of *The Hierarchy*, especially the party of the second part: "My second (concern) must be to find in this Now all my to-morrows and yesterdays." An observation which I took and still take as an invitation to explore, I won't say my field of expertise but, one I feel quite at home in and never more so than as a participant in the party of the first part, 1st Person Science. And as far as I can see, it's the one area that, having said all there is to say about the first, he hasn't thoroughly wrung dry. Nor could he even if he tried. Nor, for that matter – and that's the beauty of the inexhaustible fountain which goes on for as long as forever is – could anyone else. You ask: "As I see 1st Personhood it includes what I call 3rd Person history and science but are you saying it has a science and history of its own?" I am most certainly saying that, putting into words what the experiments have no need to express in the medium of language since, as the source of all 'mediums' they constitute its expression par excellence. And God knows I'm not the first to make that claim. After all, isn't that, from first to last, what the Bible is all about and, as I've also pointed out, what, for our purposes, Hegel picked up on almost two-hundred years ago now? The great, the magnificent Hegel who, for all his shortcomings, was not only the first but the foremost modern to recognize or at least put into words in its entirety that, after all is said and done, the whole thrust and meaning of the agony of history was and is precisely this: to reveal the nature and reality of Absolute Spirit in the flesh and not just Jesus' flesh or the saints' and sages' flesh but yours and mine as well. Which mission, beginning at Alpha but now accomplished by those instruments of Omega, the experiments, is, as I see it, now our task to announce and disseminate as best we can.

From which, in answer to the various points you raise, it's my conviction that everything else follows. For instance, you ask on page 3, "Where does certainty reside? At 3rd person level?" Obviously not. "Surely, 1st Personhood has no need for it." Well, if it doesn't I suggest it's out of true modesty or, better yet, humility. Why should it "need," no less boast, not only of what it already has but what it already is, that is to say, certainty? Frankly, I must admit to being a little hesitant, finally, about getting into discussions like these, even with myself, especially with myself. Not to compare great with small – nevertheless, I'm immediately reminded of the Buddha's absolute prohibition against them and, as I've since learned, for good cause. Of course, short of the Buddha we can always revert to Blake's "If the sun and moon would doubt they'd immediately go out." And if that doesn't work – and it doesn't always – we can always fall back as a last resort on that least likely candidate for Self-disclosure, language itself. As you legitimately note, "I have difficulty with 'certainty' because I feel that whenever it is allowed, space must also be made for 'uncertainty' in the belief they come as a pair." And, of course, you're absolutely right as far as you go. But the problem is – and as Hegel remarked before us – the triadic structure of manifested reality, in other words, of the world, insists that we go all the way. And if language in its duality insists, as it does, that for every "certainty" there's an "uncertainty," just as for every "hot" there's a "cold" and for every "big" a "little" and so on literally ad infinitum., then that's where the absolute certainty we're looking for, and looking for it because we are It, must reside – underlying the assumption. And sure enough, there it is, in the recognition that, without equivocation, all things are absolutely relative, a declaration of unalloyed, unvarying certainty if there ever was

one, along with its accompanying suspicion that, smaller than the smallest thing and so, of necessity, all-forgiving, nevertheless It will not be mocked nor its "head" be turned by honorifics like Great and Good, no less with name-calling however well-intentioned.

In answer to the other points you raise - all of them legitimate, incidentally – we could go on and on. In fact, essentially speaking, that's all that's left for us to do now that – and I dare say it – all underlying issues definitively settled, we're free at long last to operate, at least hypothetically, with that benevolence without purpose so long prophesied yet so little realized, where, for the first time in history, insight and outlook, making in all One, move hand in hand. You admit, for instance, to being amazed by my passing remark that "for Voegelin the essential meaning of history does not derive from a survey or assessment of a series of events, however significant, but rather from the revelation of the Presence to whom it belongs," when, as I've tried to show, even so brilliant an expositor as Voegelin himself, along with those who concern themselves with such matters, at best represents only the half of it, if that, when measured against the experiments. And that includes just about everybody past and present who's put in his or her two cents on the subject, not to say the Subject. For instance, for the first time in history we're now in a position to verify the claims of those Christian apologists, like an Augustine or his later neglected offshoots, Orisius and Bossuet, and see that if they were quite justified in their teleological, purposive approach to history – a shocking enough admission these days but eminently warranted by the Fact that the experiments exist at all – they were right for the wrong reasons: that not until the dream of transcendence itSelf had been transcended, literally ground into the dust of inconsequence and neglect and death by crucifixion, could the immanence of immanence come into its own and be revealed, not only for one and all to see but for one and all to be.

And, of course, though this is not the place for it since I've already gone on long enough, this kind of analysis can be extended to virtually any topic you might care to name. (Though I'm certainly no astro-physicist - my concerns for the moment quite limited to looking the other way – nevertheless I'm quite sure that Seeing can more than cover, that is to say contain, such recent notions as "string theory" and so on). At any rate, to repeat what you write on page 2: "...I'm having difficulty in connecting 'Science' and 'History' to the first person perspective." O.K., if that's the way you see it. Then let's give them both free rein to set themselves up out there like everything else, in this case as a duality corresponding to space and time, and while you're simultaneously looking out at them turn your attention inwards to locate where they're coming from. Speaking for mySelf, all I see is that third "thing" again, what until only yesterday was known as the "fifth element" (a concept which even a Newton valiantly but unsuccessfully fought to retain) but was or rather is, in reality, absolutely no-thing at all: the ether, as it was once familiarly called and which, despite all the pretentious New Age flummery and embroidery and obfuscation and, yes, sheer phoniness surrounding it, will, God willing, soon return from the place it never left, only this time in good odor thanks to the experiments. As well it might. But with this difference. As you noted in your acknowledgement of my definition of "mystes" as merely signifying "closed lips" and as Hegel with his original wild-eyed claim it took a wide-eyed world to confirm also understood as no one else had before him, there's absolutely no-thing "mysterious" about any of this, at least in the sense that it cannot be known, only in the sense that it cannot be spoken since to speak it would

be, like the sword of Solomon hovering over the disputed infant, to cut it in two, to divide it. Just so, there's absolutely nothing mysterious or unusual or even remarkable about passing for etherial, that is, "angelic." In fact, as Douglas explores in the last part of the Hierarchy, it's as natural as the air we breathe – more so since, like the day/night construction that spells Day, in good Platonic fashion it takes precedence over it, if not in value certainly in terms of cause.

I guess that should do it for the moment.