



CONTENTS

Christogenesis	Alan Mann	1
More on 'More on Gebser'	Steve Hanran	2
A Letter from Joan Tollifson	Joan Tollifson	5
Violet—A Story	Margot Mann	7
The Sayings of K	Alan Mann	8
Vulnerability	Dave Knowles	10
Pure Awareness	Brentyn Ramm	11
Traherne Links	Paul S. Fiddes & Jules Evans	11
Elizabethan Romance	Peter Lim	11

Christogenesis

Thanks to David Oliphant I became aware of the Center for Christogenesis. It is a USA based organisation coordinated by Ilia Delio. The introductory note on the website at <https://christogenesis.org/> reads:

The Center for Christogenesis is a spiritual organization that serves an axial role in our time, bridging faith, science, culture, and community. The Center builds on the ideas of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and seeks to actualize his vision of emerging wholeness for a new vitality of the spirit. Our founder, Ilia Delio, OSF, offers an exploration of the divine as an awareness of God's loving, dynamic presence. This is a holistic vision—integrating spirituality, science, and contemplation—and open to all faith traditions. We seek to extend this vision to all those looking for an innovative spiritual life and a renewed role of religion in the 21st century.

On reading my first article by Ilia on the Center for Christogenesis web page:

- I came upon the Unitarian Universalists for the first time and found them to my taste. The wikipedia entry reads: Unitarian Universalism (UU) is a liberal religion characterized by a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning". Unitarian Universalists assert no

creed, but instead are unified by their shared search for spiritual growth, guided by a dynamic, "living tradition".

- One of the insights mentioned echoed the Blake quotation I posted recently, when asked what he thought of Christ he replied, "He is the only God sir, and so am I and so are you".
- Talking about God is tricky because it is a proxy for talking about ourselves
- We have not stripped the world of God; we have taken God out of the world and made God an object rather than the radical subject of all reality.
- We insist on divine reality as a power beyond us, but the new Christian myth says otherwise: Christ attests that God would not be fully God without becoming human. . another ourself. . . Transcendence no longer hangs over us; rather we are its privileged bearers.
- Learning to see that which we encounter may be the most important religious experience of our age.

I thought that learning to see differently, in a way that reveals truth, might be the key. Becoming free of the filters of self, memory, imagination, etc. She reminds me of Rami Shapiro's poem 'I am a window for the light...'

David Oliphant's own website is his Wisdom Blog at:

<https://www.opensanctuarytilba.org/wisdom-blog>

Alan Mann

More on 'More on Gebser 'from Stephen Haran

(Steve sent the following as an extension of his 'More on Gebser' article which was the opening piece in the last NOWletter, No. 239).

Hello Alan, Hello Margot, Below is a receiving my mind gave me recently, regarding the feeling nature. When I receive these sort of more precise thoughts I am learning to just act like a secretary and take dictation. This short piece has that sort of character.

In my mind it speaks to a level deeper than before as it introduces the unity and conception of the human being as an **organism**. This allows all parts of the whole person to be contained in a living thing that expresses itself on many different levels.

Gebser-wise it allows that conception of Self, Person and Mind to be immediately absorbed into the unconscious understanding, bringing the archaic structure of consciousness into unity with present time structures but this time as its foundation.

Allowing your mind to have that archaic level added to its internal structure immediately dissolves contradictions that existed above it with that conception absent or denied. As a conception it is intimately connected to the conception of a feeling nature in the human animal, the human being, the human species, **homo sapiens**. It allows you to live in a more living flesh and blood conception of yourself.

Enough of me. Here it is, originally sent to Saniel & Linda of Waking Down in Mutuality on 15 August.

(Steve wrote to Waking Down in Mutuality, his message below, (also known as WDM, Waking Down) and Trillium Awakening, are a set of spiritual teachings and a community that seek to support the integration of spiritual awakening into ordinary human life. Operated by Saniel Bonder and Linda Groves. See: https://sanielandlinda.com/waking_down.html

(Steve's message is followed by their reply. Alan).

Steve's message:

Hello Linda and Saniel,

Below is my first self transformation summary for your consideration.

Thesis 1

The primary internal contradiction to be resolved is the true relationship between the feeling nature, the mind and the self.

Individual Self Realisation

That the Feeling Nature is the true Source and Substance of my Human Organism.

First Task

To turn the mind's attention to the feeling nature and learn of its situation, and to help and enable it to find its expressions.

Second Task

Identify restrictions and prohibitions in place in your mind in regard to the feeling nature.

Self Commentary

These you must deal with yourself. You have at your resources the totality of human knowledge and civilisation. You will work it out.

When the feeling nature is restored to its proper place in human functioning it will find its own place, position and expression within the organism as a whole.

Self Realisations

Recognising the human being as organism, in nature and in life, allows us to see the central importance and function of the feeling nature and its place in the life of the organism as a whole.

The organism is a living thing, in itself, and in all its parts, natures and expressions.

Reading: For Your Own Good, Alice Miller

Alice Miller (1923-2010)

The central importance of Alice Miller is that she has seen clearly the relationship between the attack on feeling in the human being, in child raising practices in Europe, and Germany in particular, the splitting off of the rage of the tormented and beaten vulnerable being, the idealisation of the attacker and the acceptance of their values, and the inevitable projection of that rage in society, politics and governance.

The mind of Alice Miller was shaped in pre-war Poland, then Germany, then occupied Poland as a sixteen year old Jewess who effectively escaped the Warsaw ghetto and changed her identity to Polish within Poland, was discovered as a Jewess by a German Gestapo officer, was blackmailed by him, and survived the war in German-occupied Poland from 1939 to 1945 after which she emigrated to Switzerland.

Therefore, her social analysis of Nazism and the role played within it by the Jewish race is not an intellectual effect but a live understanding of how the human psyche and mind work as a whole. In the most extreme of circumstances she was able to see clearly and directly the relationship between the feeling nature of the human being and the consequences of its repression, annihilation in this instance.

At the same time she shows how authority and governance are directly related to parenting styles and methods, the process of idealisation of the One (the father) and its absolute power, and the fury and blindness of projected repressed and suppressed feeling. She is able to look at all this clearly and objectively and see the truth revealed there.

Works

The Drama of the Gifted Child
 For Your Own Good
 Thou Shall Not Be Aware
 Breaking Down the Walls of Silence

Commentary

The True “Drama of the Gifted Child” - Martin Miller (son)

Postscript - here is the *Waking Down in Mutuality* reply:

Dear Stephen, In his foreword to *The Knee of Listening*, the early autobiography and radical spiritual teachings of Franklin Jones (later Adi Da Samraj), Alan Watts made a statement that it took me many years to appreciate:

“As I read Franklin Jones...he has simply realised that he himself as he is, like a star, like a dolphin, like an iris, is a perfect manifestation of the eternal energy of the universe, and thus is no longer disposed to be in conflict with himself.”

When I first came across that statement, in my early 20s, I had a concept of spiritual realisation that elevated it above irises, dolphins, stars, and even the energy of the universe. Watts’s

language seemed to reduce what is utterly transcendental to what is merely worldly, even material.

Much later, as I began to live what feels to be a natural, bodily realisation of boundless spirit, Watts's words made ever so much more sense.

Each person who realises themselves as they are in such a way comes to a similar peace. It's not just peace of mind. It's a peace, the peace, of Being. Which we could also spell with a capital "B."

They similarly find that they are fundamentally no longer disposed to be in conflict with themselves. Their psycho-physical organisms are released from their core-essence to be as they naturally are. It's a visceral nirvana, a sensate transcendence, lived as human animals.

This doesn't mean there is no pain, no reactivity, no confusion, no suffering. It doesn't mean there is no ego, no conceptual mind, no attachment and aversion, no wilful effort, no success and failure, no guilt or regret.

It simply means that these too, and all other realities peculiar to us as human, mammalian primates, are allowed to manifest as they will. What we stop adding to our existence and experience is reactive, self-conflictual suffering.

Relaxing into that peace of being is what we do in our Heart of Peace Meditations. Come join us this Saturday for an hour of falling out of the disposition to be in conflict with ourselves. And let's intend that peace of being—Being—to radiate to everyone everywhere, from the mysterious core-essence that is "the one great HEART we all share."

Stephen Haran

[A Letter from Joan Tollifson](#)

(The following is a reprint of a recent circular letter from Joan to her email list. I think it is the best summary of what this enquiry is about that I have read. At the same time, and as she points out, we cannot be content with explanation but discover the means of translating explanation into direct experience. Alan)

Hello Friends Around the World,
Somewhere recently, I heard or read the phrase, "compulsion to closure." I can't recall
how it was used by whoever said it, but it feels like a great description of our human
difficulty in tolerating unresolvability and uncertainty, and our compulsive desire to pin
things down, get a grip, secure a foothold, nail down the right answer, figure everything
out, and know The Final Truth with doubtless certainty. This compulsion has obvious
survival benefits in practical matters, but when it translates over into other realms, it
easily becomes a problem.

This compulsion to arrive at the Final Truth is, of course, foiled again and again by life
itself, which simply doesn't seem to stay put in any of the neat and tidy little boxes into
which we try to put it. And so, for as long as we are trying to find this kind of certainty,

it is pretty much guaranteed that uncertainty and doubt will always be nipping at our heels.

That nipping produces a kind of anxiety in us, an uneasiness, which sets us up to be easily attracted to people and systems that offer seemingly comprehensive answers that explain how the universe works and that promise us the kind of safety, security and certainty for which we long. But for many of us, these answers never really satisfy us. And paradoxically, when we stop searching for certainty and focus instead on the immediacy of present experiencing, without trying to grasp or understand it, this anxiety vanishes. We don't actually need any Final Truth.

Science handles human curiosity and the desire for answers in an excellent way, while belief-based religion and spirituality are prone to handling it in the worst possible way. The scientific method is based on testing things out, actually trying to *disprove* rather than *prove* a hypothesis—and if it holds up to all that scrutiny, then it becomes a working theory, like the theory of evolution, but even then, theories are always open to being proven wrong. (Of course, science—like all human endeavors—can be corrupted by such things as greed, ambition and politics, but eventually, these errors are uncovered and corrected by the very nature of the scientific method—and remember not to conflate science with technology.)

Religion, on the other hand, *when it is based on belief*, regards its ideas as Truths that cannot be questioned. In many cases, these Truths are believed to have been revealed by God. They are considered infallible and of divine origin. This leads easily to dogmatism, fundamentalism, fanaticism, magical thinking, gullibility, exploitation, holy wars, crusades, witch burnings, and generally lots of suffering.

But at its best, religion is not about belief. It is about direct experiencing and a devotion to the aliveness of this moment, here and now. It involves a direct exploration of this living actuality. My friend and teacher Toni Packer always stressed that she was not an authority, that anything she said could be questioned or taken further, that we should test it out for ourselves. She was always willing to look at a question freshly, to start from scratch. She was open to seeing something new, to changing her mind. She was like a scientist in her approach, but she was also religious in the sense that her exploration was not the objective (dualistic, subject/object) kind that science engages in, but rather, it was a nondual subjective (contemplative, meditative) exploration of our firsthand experiencing.

This living actuality can never be pinned down or grasped. It is moving and changing—never the same way for even an instant. And yet, in another sense it is immovably always right here, right now in this ever-present immediacy or presence that we can never actually leave. This one bottomless moment is infinite and eternal, without beginning or end, without edges or limits. It has no inside and outside. It is undivided and indivisible. There is infinite diversity and variation, and yet it all shows up as one seamless whole. There are apparent polarities, but they only appear relative to each other, and they can never actually be pulled apart.

Reality is simple. It is right here. Present experiencing, just as it is. The morning breeze, THIS cup of tea, the beloved dog trotting toward me, the green leaves, the blossoming flowers, the galaxies dying and being born millions of light years away—this whole amazing magic show. And yet, we can never really pin it down, get hold of it, or explain it in any final way. We ARE it. This indivisible present happening is both obvious and inconceivable. It never resolves into any final shape, it never departs from this present immediacy, and we are never separate from it.

So is it possible to be okay with not having any Final Truth? Can we live with the openness of not knowing, of groundlessness? Can we be at home with the absence of closure, and with the fluidity and multiplicity of dimensions in which life is presenting itself moment by moment? Actually, we have no choice. But in not resisting this, it may turn out to be enjoyable and miraculous, even when it apparently isn't.

Happy Autumn to Everyone (or Spring if you're on the other side of the blue ball)...Love,

Joan

Violet, a story by Margot Mann

Violet blew her nose. Covid was really knocking her around. She swallowed carefully. Throat still sore. At this rate she would never get to Sonya's wedding. She blew her nose again and wiped away a small tear. How could she have caught the virus when she was so careful to use a mask when she went to the supermarket. Molly, her next-door neighbour, never seemed to take any precautions and had so far escaped the pandemic.

She wondered how Sonya was managing her wedding arrangements. Now that all restrictions had been lifted at last, the wedding could go ahead without being affected by health regulations. Violet could glimpse her matron-of-honour outfit through the open door, a simple dark blue slim-fitting dress with a cropped jacket. Sonya had told her to go ahead and wear whatever she liked but now the outfit seemed too severe for an early afternoon ceremony. Violet sighed. She wished she had never agreed to be one of the bridal attendants but Sonya had insisted, saying of course she wanted her sister in the bridal party. Stepsister, Violet muttered. She and Sonya had never been close since her mother had married Sonya's father several years ago.

The long-range weather forecast predicted rain for the wedding day. Weather was so unpredictable these days. It had been such a wet spring and now they were saying it was going to be a wet summer. Some people thought it was lucky if it rained on your wedding day. Violet thought about luck for a while. She had never been lucky, she reflected, and she didn't really like Sonya very much. How could she get married when Putin might start a world war over Ukraine any minute. She had even said as much to Sonya who hadn't bothered to reply, partly because she was planning food for the reception. Typical Sonya, always looking on the bright side despite

compelling evidence to the contrary. She would be sorry if Ben was called up to fight in a world war. Not that Ben himself seemed to be alarmed at the prospect. He just laughed when she suggested the possibility and went on sorting out fishing lines for his honeymoon holiday. She didn't like Ben very much either. When he cut his foot badly on an oyster shell, he just bandaged it up, said "she'll be right," and it healed well. Violet had warned him at the time that it could easily become infected and had suggested he go to the doctor, but typical Ben, he just laughed it off. Lucky healing genes, Veronica thought sourly.

She made herself a warm drink and sipped it carefully. Perhaps her throat was beginning to heal. You couldn't be too careful with your health, so many people she knew seemed to have long covid. She was shocked when her RAT showed positive, just her luck. She must have caught it from that woman on the bus who told her she had had covid three times. Violet particularly remembered the woman because she wasn't wearing a mask. Sonja and Ben had both had covid recently. Needless to say, just a mild dose for both of them..

Her mobile rang at that moment. It was Sonya asking how she was feeling and was her throat any better. Violet replied that her throat was really sore and she was feeling terrible. "I don't think I'll make it to the wedding, to be honest," she added, "and in any case I'm not happy with my outfit, it makes me look fat." The sound of amused laughter trickled through the phone. "Come on Vi," Sonya said, "Your outfit looked perfect when you tried it on the other day, and you know Ben and I really want you to be in the wedding party on our happy day. Besides, if you pull out now it might bring us bad luck."

Margot Mann

The Sayings of K from Alan Mann

I have had a longtime interest in Krishnamurti and whilst I have been disappointed by his inability to walk his own talk on occasions, I think he was extremely clear about what is really necessary. There are a number of his sayings which have stuck in my mind, and which often surface in discussing matters of interest to NOWletter readers. I made the list below following a recent email exchange with friends who share my interest in the Krishnamurti story.

The Aphorisms—August 2022

1. The Observer is the Observed.

This is the most commonly quoted. I take it to mean that from the perspective of experience, as opposed to what I know about what I appear to be experiencing, there is no separation. The observer is included in the 'observing'.

2. Consciousness is its content.

A variation on item 1. Consciousness and what it is conscious of are not separate. They are two ways of looking at the same phenomena, the third person and first-person perspectives.

3. You are the world.

This is a variation on the observer is the observed, where the observer is seen to be immersed in the occasion.

4. Is there a field which is uncontaminated by the known?

The question implies that the answer must be 'yes there is'. And off I run in search of this mysterious knowledge-free zone. Only to discover that in seeking to find whatever it might be I am heading in the wrong direction.

5. You want to go South whilst still heading North.

The notion that what I seek is lacking where I happen to be, leads me off in all directions, gurus, religions, etc. Whereas it is a matter of right here not elsewhere.

6. What is, is sacred.

This is it, is what is implied. Rather scary until I realise that it is the 'this is it' - rightly apprehended'.

7. There is no continuity to understanding.

It can't be bottled. Knowledge-free experiencing can be explained but can not be captured in concept. Ever-fresh or just more conceptualising.

8. The first step is the last step.

The individual must actively make the first move towards opening to the undivided but then it is over to the undivided. The notion that agency lies ultimately with the 'not me' is hard to digest. Interesting to compare with Dogen's backward step.

9. The word is not the thing.

The necessary distinction is to see the occasion as it is, not to qualify it with labelling, naming, describing, etc. In other words, I must resist the urge to contaminate 'this' with words. The present exercise notwithstanding.

10. Analysis is paralysis.

A variation of 9. I can become absorbed in what I have to say about it to the extent of completely foregoing the actualisation of it. My comfort zone is knowing, into which I inattentively default.

Alan Mann

Vulnerability from Dave Knowles

Dear Alan & David, This is partly continuing the intriguing 3-way discussion we've had on waring and related things but also relates to the main topic of conversation on our Men's Group Zoom today which was "Vulnerability" and was inspired by some of us watching:

A TED presentation made by Barbara Brene and found at: [Brené Brown: The power of vulnerability | TED Talk](#) (or by Google search if, like for me, the talk would not load & start from this hyperlink).

My particular vulnerability, which may have become glimpsed during our interactions, is my inability to catch the Right hemisphere view (due to my stroke in 2002) which underlies the phenomenological & hermeneutic views and a lot of the things we talk about. I had a last try by persisting with and finishing reading:

- Owen Barfield- Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry
- Henri Bortoft- Taking Appearance Seriously: The Dynamic Way of Seeing in Goethe and European Thought

... and the latter in particular pointed out what is needed: the ability to 'go upstream' and catch the experience of having the experience or catching the understanding in process of understanding.

Bortoft had a way of expression that made no sense at first but then revealed a glimmer of what he was driving at, an example:

"This takes us to the heart of phenomenology: the phenomenon is not only something which appears, but which appears **as appearing**. So, the phenomenon is not merely the appearance we usually think — but the *appear*ance**" (page 166)

(I replied to Dave that I thought Bortoft should have said "So, the phenomenon is not merely the appearance we usually think — but the *appearancing*"

[where I've used **-** to indicate **italic**]. To the basic LH this makes no sense but to the reader trying to regain a RH view offers a clue as to why phenomenology was such a frustrating discipline to grasp, especially with a damaged RH.

Further on p. 166: "When we shift 'upstream' from appearance to *appear*ance**, we leave behind the subject-object separation, and all the problems of epistemology that come with this and enter into a non-dual condition in which what manifests **is** what is, without any mediation by intervening entities of some kind (images, representations) in consciousness."

I trust now you can both see my particular vulnerability and the dangers it presents to me; being taken as the possessor of a split personality (LH & RH or Jekyll & Hyde) and being found out as pretending to understand a stance I can no longer truly appreciate. OK - I am found out - and moreover this does not reduce my interest in the RH view which I will continue to strive for! Thanks for listening! Cheers,

Dave Knowles

How to Recognise Pure Awareness from Brentyn Ramm

Brentyn writes to advise us about an article that has just been published - How to recognise pure awareness. (I have inserted here the opening paragraph—Alan).

I am aware of the room, these words, my bodily sensations, feelings, thoughts. These are objects of awareness. But what is this awareness? Awareness is one of the greatest mysteries we face. Why should it exist at all?

I will refer to the experience of 'awareness itself' as a *pure awareness* experience. Most people, aside from those familiar with spiritual traditions such as Buddhism, have never heard of pure awareness, let alone believe that there is such a phenomenon. They think that consciousness is just the qualities of experience such as seeing the pinkness of the water lily and smelling its sweet fragrance. According to many meditative traditions this is to miss the essence of consciousness. It is to focus on the contents of awareness, while overlooking awareness itself. There is growing interest amongst philosophers and scientists in pure awareness experiences reported by contemplatives. A recent example is a study by Alex Gamma and Thomas Metzinger which surveyed the characteristics of pure awareness experiences in 1,400 meditators.¹

<https://daily-philosophy.com/brentyn-ramm-pure-awareness/>

Brentyn Ramm

Traherne Links

A couple of links to Traherne studies I have recently discovered.

The Poetics of Desire in Thomas Traherne and C. S. Lewis

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ecbTvgY80&ab_channel=WadeCenter

Philosophy or Life the website of Jules Evans

Why I love Thomas Traherne

<https://www.philosophyforlife.org/blog/thomas-traherne>

Elizabethan Romance by Peter Lim

Our friend Dr. Peter Lim is revealed to have yet another string to his bow, in addition to author, musician etc, he is also a composer.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSYpqLpNeUM&lc=UgykesEyc0A7G5R3Uux4AaABA&ab_channel=towlim