

# FOREWORD

Who am I? What kind of a universe am I in? How do I relate to it? Where is the ultimate authority? Each of us has asked such questions. We may be forgiven for being confused by the replies coming from society around us. The different world religious traditions appear to be giving discrepant answers; meanwhile, modern science would depose them all and proffer its own secular findings. Each of us bets his or her life on some set of answers, because the questions are too important to do otherwise. But we get precious little help from society's anointed cognitive authorities.

One of the chief reasons for this paradox is the nature of the questions, and the nature of our coming into this world. As Wordsworth put it, "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting." From infancy, we fill our little heads with answers to these root questions according to the society in which we are nurtured. With the trustful openness of childhood, we accept these answers much as the susceptible subject accepts the suggestions of a hypnotist. In fact, the dynamic is exactly the same; each of us is, literally, hypnotized from infancy by the culture in which we grow up. We tend to see the world as we have been culturally taught to see it.

But the big questions of life point to a wisdom which can not be captured in logical phrases or scientific formulas; not even in myths and stories. It must be experienced. The best that can be done from outside is to help lead us to that experience.

That is the virtue of Anton Grosz's approach. He does not claim that any words of his-or of anyone else-could bring you enlightenment. Nevertheless, words can be useful. The author's words in this book can be useful, because they can persuade you to undertake some experiments, as a result of which you will perceive the world, and

yourself, differently. You, then, will be unable to convince the next person of your new reality. But that's life.

As Dr. Grosz says, a new kind of awareness is spreading around the globe. The individual brains remain the same, but some of the inner blinders are being taken off. More and more people are discovering that reality is not the way they taught us in science class. You may experience that your inner wisdom is far more vast than you had previously realized, and that the power of your own mind to affect the world around you is potentially far more, and in a different direction, than one would guess from the latest scientific theories. You may even experience phenomena that both science and "common sense" would tell you couldn't happen.

Now that may be disturbing to some. In our time, we put great stock in the findings of empirical science. And no wonder, for they test out so impressively in the power they give, through the technologies they spawn, to predict and control and manipulate our physical surroundings. When these findings are extrapolated to a "scientific worldview," it carries great weight. Those who have absorbed well the lessons of the modern world feel much comforted when their own deepest insights appear to be reinforced by the latest developments in quantum physics or chaos theory. But we may be a bit too complacent about the ability of science to deal with the "big questions."

Western science is presently in an unrecognized crisis. It is important to understand this in order to grasp the full significance of the spreading, changing awareness. This largely unheralded movement is challenging the collective beliefs of the modern world at the most fundamental level.

Most of us tend to be quite confident that modern Western culture is superior to all others in that it has replaced their myths with the certainties of science. But modern science is an artifact of Western culture. It evolved as it did because of the emphasis

that society placed on prediction, control, and manipulation of the physical environment. We are led to assume that science can lead us toward the ultimate explanations for phenomena. However, the very conviction that everything can be ultimately explained through inviolable scientific laws rules out consciousness (mind, spirit) as a *causal reality*. At the same time, everything in our personal experience affirms the importance of our ability to choose, and our deep inner guidance toward the better choice. This poses a fundamental dilemma. Either we must deny our own innate wisdom because “science knows better,” or we have to face the fundamental inability of science in its present form to give us an adequate cosmology to live by and to guide our society by.

In the historical exclusion from the physical and biological sciences of any concept of consciousness as causal (by an implicit ontological assumption), a basic and limiting bias was introduced. It is a bias that forces the biologists to seek mechanistic explanations, even in situations where they seem obviously inadequate. (An example is the typical insistence that all the information and motive force to guide ontogeny from fertilized egg to adult organism must reside in some “program” in the DNA.) It is a bias that even makes uncertain the extent to which quantum theory and other recondite advances in the physical sciences can be relied upon as the basis for a cosmology. (To be sure, quantum physics does show the ultimate inconsistency of nomothetic science in that it discloses the observation’s dependence on the consciousness of the observer. But that tells us little about the nature of a universe in which consciousness exists as a significant causal factor and-if our deep inner intuition is not seriously deceiving us-ultimate creative impetus.)

If our official, science-validated picture of ourselves-in-the-universe is in error, then it is not surprising that the society which is based on that picture is increasingly running into trouble. Well, you begin to see that Anton Grosz is not inviting us to participate in some innocuous parlor games. He is inviting us to become part of a revolution.

The French philosopher Henri Bergson had proposed, in his “philosophy of process,” an epistemological assumption which would open the door to an extended scientific inquiry-one that would avoid many of the present contradictions, and be compatible with our inner experience. Mainstream Western science assumes that we have basically one kind of probe into the universe through which to obtain verifiable knowledge-namely, the physical senses (and their technological extensions). Bergson said no, there are two; the second is the deep intuition.

Perhaps we will, some day, have a science capable of informing us regarding the nature of consciousness and inner experience as fully as it does about the world seen through our sensory experience. If so, the training of a scientist may well involve something like the exercises which we are invited to participate in, in the following pages.

So have fun with your exploration. But know, too, that this may be the first step in the most important journey of your life.

Willis W. Harman  
President, Institute of Noetic Sciences  
Sausalito, California  
February 1996