First, a few personal remarks.
In the final decade of the 20th century I had the rare opportunity to teach a course of my own making. It was supposed to be a course in the history of physics for non-science students, but by that time I had acquired certain philosophical convictions about physics, about science in general; and also certain skepticism about the practicality, or even the desirability, of Modern Civilization. These convictions were at odds with the doctrines with which I had been inculcated as a teenager, and later as a physicist. My own outlook can be best described as generalist—I respond to inputs across the entire spectrum of human experience. I confess to having a special affection for the later writings of Aldous Huxley.

So, at long last I had the opportunity to say that in which I really believed, and better, to discuss these forbidden subjects in class. I simply couldn’t pass up the chance. In order that its syllabus might sail past the eyes of the people on the relevant committees, I disguised the course as an irreverent survey of the history of science leading up to, and including, the development of the Quantum Theory.

The centerpiece of the course was a discussion of a crucial experiment that had been performed at the University of Paris in the late 1970’s, to verify whether or not what is called Bell’s Theorem is indeed obeyed in Nature. This topic sounded innocuous enough, but I knew full well that it had (and has) a significance that undermines centuries of western philosophy. It was a kind of Trojan horse.

Why? At some point in his life Albert Einstein had written the following words, expressing that which seems to agree with day-to-day experience:

“The belief in an external world, independent of the perceiving subject, is the basis of all natural science.”

But the results of the Paris experiments had indicated clearly that this statement was wrong! And since that time, many similar experiments have shown consistently that the results obtained in Paris are correct, and that Einstein was still wrong!

What Einstein had so eloquently written was just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. For decades I had been exposed to a world where materialist reductionism was a central article of religion; where humans are mere “gypsies marooned on the edge of a universe oblivious to their presence”—the stuff I used to see in 1950’s science fiction. Adherence to these doctrines was, and still is, a fig leaf of intellectual respectability among those who work in science. You might ask: “Do you mean that materialist reductionism is really a kind of religious fundamentalism?” And I will nod vigorously: “Yes, with all my heart. And I have come here to advocate heresy!”

The result of my effort was a book, used as a text, entitled: “The Conscious Universe.” I had but a few months’ time before classes started, and had never before attempted a thing like this. So I worked at breakneck speed. Those were heady times, and the new course was a roaring success.
Years passed, and I retired from my professorship; but one day, quite by accident, I discovered that the book had retained a kind of “underground cult following.” So I was persuaded to clean up the many typographical errors and put the material ‘on line.’ Probably, I should have dragged the book out of mothballs, and “let it fly, warts and all.” After all, no less a writer than Walt Whitman, (influenced by a line in the Hebrew Bible), counseled that the best policy upon finishing a work is to turn one’s back and walk away. But I couldn’t bring myself to do this. As a result the reader will find that there have been certain additions and subtractions. I hope that I will be forgiven. So, I made some alterations:

1. I eliminated all the Review Questions from the ends of the chapters. Why? Because there will be no more examinations. This is not a textbook any more; it is an inducement to heresy.
2. In the later chapters there are no endnotes. I have come to doubt whether anyone reads those things.
3. I have tried to tone down the academic prose. It was a kind of cover-up, in case one of my colleagues should be tempted to read the book.
4. The earlier chapters still have a touch of academia to them. Sorry about that.

The main thrust in this book is to try to convince you that the society in which we live is absurd, that it is a ‘Wasteland,’ in the sense that T.S. Eliot meant, when he wrote that poem. During the ‘60s a film appeared, called ‘The Graduate.’ If poetry doesn’t appeal to you, you might want to start by renting the cassette.

In answer to the question: “Do you still hold the same opinions that you held at the time you were working on the original edition of the book?” I answer: “Yes, I remain unredeemable in that regard.” But the style I had felt to be appropriate for a college textbook is no longer really appropriate, (if it ever was). It was part of my ‘persona’ while I was playing the role of ‘professor;’ (and I was getting tired of it). One of the chapters, (number 13 in the original addition) has been ‘demoted’ to the status of Appendix F, for those who are interested in so-called: ‘particle physics.’ Further, in the chapters dealing with Psi, I am relying on the hope that you will purchase and read a number of the books by great people like Dean Radin and Russell Targ. There is too much precious material there for me even to attempt to cover. Besides, it would probably be illegal!

Between the original book and this one lie the events of 11 September 2001, together with its aftermath: the abrupt decline of America as a constitutional republic, the return of this country to its pre-New Deal ‘default setting,’ the decline of the University to the status of a sports program attached to a ‘business college,’ and the looming prospect of economic collapse. All of these events have the character of omens, showing that Aldous Huxley, my spirit guide, was right.