

Acknowledgments

“Essential Perplexities” in its original and longer form was delivered as an inaugural lecture at the University of Oxford, on 12 May 1977, and was published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1978.

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The frontispiece depicts a nonperiodic tessellation and is the invention of Roger Penrose, F.R.S., Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics in the University of Oxford. I am most grateful to Prof. Penrose for permission to reproduce it and for his kindness in composing the following description:

This pattern is made up of just two simple matching marked diamond shapes. It can be continued indefinitely to cover the entire plane, exhibiting an endless variety and an increasing complexity as it unfolds outwards. Yet, despite the simplicity of the two basic shapes, there is no repetitive way of covering the plane with them.

The pertinence of this figure to the present book is that a restricted repertory of basic and relatively simple cultural

constituents can be seen as making up the endless variety and complexity of singular forms of civilization.

Dr. Michael Sheppard drew the figure, and I am warmly obliged to him for his careful skill.

