

## 5 QUESTIONS . . .

The growth of our knowledge through the dynamics of the question/answer approach restricts us to moving into the future by looking into McLuhan's rear view mirror. But it is too soon for most of us to abandon questions and questioning as our process of increasing understanding. Therefore, without apology (after all, I am only sixty), I offer five questions which I would like to see explored (and even explore myself):

- What is the optimum size of a system in terms of its function, environment, and gestalt context—or whatever other parameters are required for the proper formulation of the question? (A general system question)
- What are the generalized laws of 'addition' in the aggregation of systems? How do the characteristics of components combine to give the characteristics of the whole? Can emergence be accounted for through certain types of combinatorial aggregation? In other words, if reductionism works, how? (A general system question)
- Isaac Asimov says, "Magic does not work, but belief in magic does" (e.g., placebos). While belief as opinion may be but illusion, and belief as hope can possibly have internal effectiveness, to what extent is belief as faith effective? In other words, what systems are alterable per what levels of belief? And to what extent does or can thought alter the material universe?
- Under what circumstances is it wise to think about the unthinkable (in Herman Kahn's sense), and under what circumstances is this best not done? (This question is related to the preceding one, but thinking and believing must be held to be different.)
- What are the alternative dynamics to question/answer for the acquisition of understanding? (A paradox)

All experience teaches us that no one  
has yet asked too much.

Sir Fred Hoyle