

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Willis Harman

My name is Mary deSouza. It is my privilege to introduce Dr. Willis Harman to you. Dr. Harman is the president of the Institute of Noetic Sciences. This institute has conducted research, dialogue, and communications on issues concerning the human mind and consciousness and the evolution of human kind. Prior to being in this position, he was, for 16 years, a Senior Social Scientist at SRI International of Menlo Park, California, where he was on long-term strategic planning and policy analysis for a broad spectrum of organizations - government, private, and voluntary. He is also emeritus professor of Engineering -Economic Systems at Stanford University and a member of the Board of Regents of the University of California.

He has authored many books including: *An Incomplete Guide to the Future* and *Global Mind Change: The promise of the Last Years of the Twentieth Century* and co-authored *Changing Images of Man, Higher Creativity; Liberating the Unconscious Mind for Breakthrough Insights*, and *Paths to Peace: An Exploration of the Feasibility of Sustainable Peace*.

We are privileged to have you here this morning. Most important, I think, is the fact that you are recognized across the globe as one of the practical visionaries of our times. Dr. Harman will set the thematic context for our deliberations. I see this as the second in a series of three openings for our program. We had a welcoming reception yesterday, the thematic opening this morning with Dr. Harman, and later today, we will have the formal opening to this program which we are calling Our Common Future.

I give you Dr. Willis Harman. Thank you.

Thank you and welcome to Our Common Future. You understand that is not the official welcome - I can't do that. That comes later. But it is a heart-felt welcome because I've come to know this organization over the last eight years or so and I'm very inspired by the work that ICA is doing.

I don't think anyone here has any question about our dealing with one common future on one planet and everything interacting with everything else. We don't have any illusions about the economy being separate from the arms race, being separate from the environment, or development or the national security issue, or education. Everything connects to everything else. That is a common place observation. We just saw some examples of things we have to think about for the future. One of the things we have to recognize is that there are deeper level forces that are operating that are not dealt with if we simply plant trees to replace the ones that were cut down. It is part of our common mind set that cutting down trees is good for the economy and planting trees is a drain on the economy. Consuming more and more things that we don't need is good for the economy - educating our children is a drain on the economy. It is at that level of confused thinking that we have to deal. The actions that are required are not enough. A change of mind has to go with those actions and that means a change in the whole system. So in the days to come, we are going to be sharing with one

another what it really means to look at this interacting system as a unity and to recognize that it is not only an interconnected system but it is also a self organizing, living system with certain characteristics. If we do our projects and plan our policies not taking those characteristics into account, then we will get the kinds of results we have gotten in the past - frustration and disappointment.

① One of the characteristics of the system is that there are not simple cause and effect relationships. If I go over here and push on this table and I cause it to move across the platform, we all understand that. There is a cause, namely me, and an effect; that of the table moving. The systems don't behave that way. For example, I'm a living system. I get some sort of illness or disease and one of the observations we typically make is that that disease is caused by some bacteria or some virus. So I take an antibiotic to eliminate the cause of the illness. But then we have come to recognize that that doesn't really solve the problems because it may well be that my own beliefs and attitudes are such that in my work life and my family life, I engender a situation of stress. I feel stress in my body. That interferes with the functioning of the body's immune system and as a result, the virus or bacteria can cause an illness which they couldn't if my immune system were functioning properly. So it turns out that the cause of the illness, in a sense, was not the virus or the bacteria, but rather my beliefs and attitudes - it was the state of my mind. Similarly, if we look carefully at the total global system and what has to happen there, we will see, I believe, that the causes that are apparent are not the real causes and that ultimately, the real cause is the state of our minds. That, of course, means that the task is quite a different one from the task we often set out to undertake.

② Another characteristic of self organizing systems, systems with a lot of feedback, is that they invariably resist change. That's their nature. They have stability. Any change is a threat to that stability. If you push on a system in any particular place, it will resist that attempt to change it. And so we shouldn't be surprised if our policies to clean up the environment don't result in the effects we expect them to have. Or if our policies with regard to development don't bring the results we might have anticipated. That's in the basic nature of complex systems with feedback. It happens whether they are dead systems or living systems. That's part of the nature of things. That doesn't mean that systems don't change. Systems do evolve. Systems do seem to have some sort of goal directed change. But the simple cause-effect relationships don't hold.

So then, how do we go about changing a system as complex as a society or the task that faces us? How do we go about contributing to the constructive change of global society? Now much of the change in history has come about because of a very particular, very specific change of mind on the part of vast numbers of people. This change of mind is from victim to adversary, from perceiving something as a misfortune to perceiving it as an injustice. If, for example, we have an entire population that is enslaved. It may be enslaved because of the power of a political leader. It may be enslaved by their belief system - the belief that they are unable to change things. In other words, life is full of misfortunes. It's very regrettable, but there is nothing that can

be done about it. That's the state of mind of a victim and we all probably have a certain amount of familiarity with that.

Now when the perception changes from victim to adversary, misfortunes becomes injustices! These are things that can be changed and they must be changed. Then you have a revolution of one sort or another. Or you have a revolutionary force. You have the kind of social force that can bring about a change. And time again in history, we have had these major changes where people decided we don't have to put up with being dominated by an authoritarian religious structure. Or we don't have to put up with being dominated by an authoritarian government. These things can be and must be changed.

So it is with a global society. If we have enough people deciding that the things that are happening on the globe are not misfortunes - they're intolerable! They have to be changed. Then we have the social force to do something. Now it is clear enough what to do if you have an enslaved population and they begin to change consciousness, to awaken, and decide to free themselves. It seems apparent what kinds of actions might result in that liberation. It's much less clear when you say we have to free ourselves from what we are doing to the environment., to the upper atmosphere that is changing the climate, or to the global arms race that has gotten totally out of control. The actions, by no means, are clear.

It turns out that if you look carefully at personal change, then you can get a clue at what we have to do with regard to the global change. In the areas of psychotherapy, personal change, and personal growth, you can observe people in three phases. And this is very important. One is the victim phase. Life is doing things to me; other people are doing things to me; and I'm powerless to change that. From the victim phase, there is no place to go unless you change your consciousness. When consciousness changes, these things can be changed. I have the power to change them. Then that sort of change begins to happen. But when we pose ourselves as adversaries, me or us against them, labor against management, people against corporations, etc., the result is not necessarily the most constructive action either. We know that from our experience. So there is a third phase. There is a third phase which is not the adversary phase that says "Yes, we are empowered to change things." But we are empowered to change things in a way that is very different from creating a revolution. This kind of constructive, creative change is sharing a vision of something we all want and then seeing that that vision is realized. ★

Here we come into another characteristic of systems that are made up of real, live human beings. They're different from other kinds of systems - even ecological systems. We are capable of creating a vision, of holding a vision. Furthermore, it turns out that by holding that vision, by affirming the possibility of it, we begin to behave differently. Actions begin to take place that create the realization of that vision. That is a far greater power than we ordinarily recognize. It certainly is a far greater power than they ever taught us in school. We are just beginning to recognize the power of changing our minds in terms of effecting something out there. I'll come back to that because it is such a powerful point.

The main thing I want to share with you is something about the magnitude of this task that we face. It can indeed be brought about by sharing a created vision and by doing our own little pieces in our own little neighborhoods. All are a part of the whole because of that shared vision, because of our having moved into that third phase of development - from the victim consciousness to the adversary consciousness to the creative consciousness. But we cannot just naively hold a vision. We are not going to solve the problem of the global arms race by simply speaking loving words to one another and holding hands around the globe. There is a tremendous momentum in the whole system that creates the arms race. The origin of that momentum is in deeply held beliefs that we all participate in. We all tend to buy into the society's belief system.

I So I want to talk with you briefly about four aspects of the task that I think are particularly important and are important to understand clearly. These four aspects are: redefining development, redefining the economy, redefining security, and finally, redefining science. Each of these is such a large task that we can only hint at where we need to look to come to some appreciation of it. But in our talks together, perhaps we can elaborate on all of these.

A Development, of course, after World War II was defined in a very simple way by many people around the globe. We have such a thing as modern society. United States was pretty modern; Western Europe was becoming more modern; and Japan was becoming more modern and development was becoming modern as fast as you can. Now that picture of development is part of our dim past because around the 1960's we ceased to believe in that. But we did believe in development aid of some sort. Schumaker defined development as taking money away from the poor in the rich countries and giving it to the rich in the poor countries. And that's probably about all our development aid came to. The real aim of development, of course, is the development of people, of communities, and of societies. It is not at all clear that that is accomplished by bringing industries and consumer society down from the North and distributing across the South and helping them to become like us at the very time when we are beginning to lose faith in our own sense of direction. Those of us in the rich countries are beginning to wonder where that all goes. What is the meaning of modernization? What is the meaning of trans-modernization if that is what it must be? So that is part of the development dilemma. It is rather sobering to realize that policy is being made in Washington and London and Moscow and Beijing and all over the world that affects the future state of the globe. If you go around to these places and get yourself involved in conversations about where this is all going, you discover for yourself a shocking fact. Policy is being made every day that effects the future of the globe and nowhere in any of those policy making capitals is there any vision of a viable global future that we are really moving toward. Now there are wishes. There are wishes that we would clean up the environment despite the fact that all the economic incentives make that bad business. There are wishes that somehow all the starvation, hunger, and malnutrition in the world would cease. But there is no idea how in the world that that is going to be accomplished. There are wishes about how people around the world would feel empowered to change their conditions. But, at the same

time, this is one of the most threatening things to the North that one could imagine. What would happen if that impoverished majority of the earth really began to feel empowered? There are wishes and there is ambivalence but there is no picture, no image of a viable global future that guides the decisions made in Washington, or Wall Street, or anywhere else. If you are not convinced of that, there are all sorts of things you can do to satisfy yourself that that is really a true statement. For example, the depth of change required to have a viable global future is more than what is comfortable for many people to think about. But we are here precisely to think about that. ★

B Redefining the economy. Why is redefining the economy so necessary? We have a world economy and in some respects, by some measures, it seems to work very well. In certain societies, the so called newly industrializing countries seem to do very well buying into that world economy and becoming a part of it. There are other cultures that just don't fit. They don't fit and the price of fitting in would be to abandon their own culture and import an alien, so-called modern culture. There is a lot of ambivalence about whether that is really a very good thing to do.

If you step back and look at the world economy, it does produce a tremendous amount of goods and services. It is geared up to produce more. It also produces a shortage of resources in many respects. It produces the diminishing and elimination of all sorts of animal and plant species around the globe. It also produces climate change and environmental damage. Most of all, it produces marginal people which we call unemployed and under-employed. It also creates marginal cultures - the ones that don't fit into the big world economic juggernaut. So they get run over.

All around the world, we are asking, and we have to ask, is that the world economy in its present form? And I'm not talking about capitalist versus socialist. Capitalist and socialist are just two forms of the same western paradigm. They produce essentially the same effects with some minor variations. We are talking about something much more fundamental than the familiar left-right issue. We have to ask ourselves whether that whole industrialized society setup is compatible with a global future at all.

One of the things we are not encouraged to ask is what really is the meaning of modern society? What is modern society all about? What is its central project so to speak? If you look at Europe in middle ages, the central project had something to do with people's religious outlook and fitting into that. It had something to do with symbols, and rituals, and creating cathedrals. There was a whole fabric of meaning which was characteristic of that society. If you look for the fabric of meaning in modern society, and you try to infer this from what people seem to judge as important and what seems to guide our national policies, the central meaning would turn out to be something like material progress, economic growth, and economic production. Economic production and economic growth are the central product of our society. We behave that way, so it must be so.

Now what is the sense of a society with economic production at the heart of it when economic production is something that we can do easily by using only a fraction of the population available. That is the situation we have moved ourselves to. John Manyard Keynes saw this coming well over a half century ago. He said sooner or later we are

going to have the economic production problem solved, we can do it easily, we will have the technology to do it, and we won't need too many human beings. He also said that we all look forward to that situation with dread. Those were his words "We all look forward to that happy future with dread because we clearly do not know what to do with the people."

Now that really is an insane question in a way. What does the society do with its people when it doesn't need them anymore? The very fact that you framed the question that way shows that there is something wrong with our thinking. The fundamental question for modern society, and modern society is developing too as well as the South, is: "What is the central meaning after it is no longer reasonable for it to be economic production?" Now probably, it turns out to be something like being a learning society; learning communities; learning institutions; learning defined in the broadest possible sense. Learning everything about what is meaningful to human beings in a meaningful universe. But, if that is to be the future, that implies a profound change in our institutions, in our economic and other incentive patterns. So we are left with this question and it is the fundamental question in a way. What is the central meaning of a society that has had economic production as its central meaning? What is the future when it no longer makes sense for economic production and consumption to be that sort of central task?

C. Now thirdly, we have to redefine what we mean by national security. That is so obvious, it doesn't take a lot of discussion. In the name of national security, nations all around the globe have resulted in one product above all - insecurity. The plain fact of the matter which we will not face is that you can no longer obtain national security through military strength of any sort because of the technological advances and because of the changing mores that make modern warfare essentially the elimination of civilian populations.

I doubt that anyone in this room is old enough to really remember how after World War I, there was a great shock that went around the world because something like 10 to 20% of the deaths in World War I were civilians. War was supposed to be something fought by armies. By the time we got to World War II, it was roughly half the deaths and by the time we got to Viet Nam, over 90% of the deaths were civilians. So the whole meaning of war has changed. Furthermore, we have astounding technological advances in this art of mass killing of people. So you can't get national security through military strength. Yet every nation in the world is trying to do it. You cannot have national security without global security.

Global security means, and it can't be anything less than this, it has to mean that practically all individuals on the globe feel that there are a certain set of rights that they have that are assured. If they weren't assured, they wouldn't feel secure. Those rights are not just the right to food, clothing and shelter. But the right to dignity and a meaningful role in society and the right to solidarity within their own group and the right of their own group or society to exist. So if we were to define security in some meaningful way, we would do something very, very different from what the major nations in the world are now doing in the name of national security. That involves a

total rethinking and that rethinking is terribly threatening. Terribly threatening to every nation in the earth. So a part of the task before us is to raise those questions and to do that rethinking.


D Now we come to that which is most threatening of all - the redefining of science. Every society that has ever existed anywhere on the globe down through the ages has had some set of answers to the great questions. Who are we? What is my relationship to my brother? What kind of universe are we in? What is it that is meaningful, ultimately meaningful? Every society has answered those questions and having answered them, they decide without really deciding that you really don't need to raise those questions. You don't need to think about them very much because we already know the answers. Those are the answers of our culture. We teach them in our schools so that the next generation will know the answers. They are tactically held and we don't have to do very much about it. So traditional societies have had one set of answers to those questions. Europe in the middle ages had their answers to those sets of questions and modern society has a set of answers. Our set of answers are very largely embodied in the disciplines we call economics and science. There are a set of assumptions there and we have bought into those assumptions more and more as the years go on. This is not to say that people in their private lives and in their families don't operate with a different set of values. They don't operate primarily as though they were economic units. They don't operate as though they were in a materialistic universe which science tells us we are in. But none-the-less, the powerful institutions in society make decisions that affect our lives and the state of the planet, and affect the future of the planet. Those decisions are made on the basis of our orthodox validated knowledge system which we call science (including economics).

So we have some beliefs about the behavior of individuals. These beliefs have to do with our economic behavior and our psychological behavior. They are built into the decision making apparatus of our society. The plain fact of the matter is, that when we stand back and look at all of that, it doesn't work. It doesn't work for individuals nor does it work for the other creatures on the planet, and it doesn't work for the ecology, the environment, the planet, or the future.


It is at that very basic level of the fundamental assumptions underlying the whole system that we have to look for change. If the task were to set out to manipulate people's beliefs systems to bring about that reassessment of assumptions, that would be a pretty hopeless task. Besides which, it probably really wouldn't work. Because when you set out to manipulate somebody else doing something or into believing something, it never has worked and there is no reason to expect it to work very well. On the other hand, if we look around and we see that people everywhere are spontaneously challenging the old assumptions, and saying at least partially, what it is they desire in the new assumptions, what it is they think might work, - if that is going on everywhere, then there is a lot more reason to hope because we are part of a great system change.

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It doesn't seem to be any limit to its ability to answer difficult questions or solve difficult problems. The more trust I put in it, the better it seems to work until some people get to the point saying maybe I should entrust my whole life to that part of my mind since it seems to be the most competent. So we begin to suspect that out of conscious awareness is something very valuable. It's not just a rubbish heap of animal impulses and other repressed materials, but the source of creativity and intuition in the ascetic sense and spiritual sense. So maybe it is time to go exploring there.

There were some experiments with hypnosis that show that the person is fooled by the hypnotist's suggestions, and sees things that are not there or fails to see things that are there, or doesn't have ordinary strength because they are convinced that that strength is absent. Similarly, one can walk on burning coals and not burn your feet. In all sorts of ways, we come to recognize that the power of the suggestion can totally change the way we perceive environment around us. At the same time, there seems to be a part of the mind that sits back there and isn't fooled. In one of these experiments, the subject has the left hand in some crushed ice and is told that that there won't be any pain felt and there isn't any. At the same time, the right hand is asked to do some automatic writing. So the left hand is in the crushed ice; the person is claiming to feel no pain; and the right hand is writing: "Ouch - it hurts!" That part of the mind has come to be known as the Hidden Observer. The Hidden Observer is not fooled by the hypnotist and presumably is not fooled by the suggestions given to each of us by that master hypnotist - our own culture. We all are hypnotized to see reality in a certain way according to the way our culture taught us. 

We go on to some other research with multiple personalities. It turns out that in these unfortunate people, each of whom has a body not run by one personality as you and I feel we operate with, but rather with up to 15 or 20 personalities coming in at different times to run the body. Each of these personalities has a different life history because they were in the body at different times. But there is one personality that is very different from all the rest. It is wiser than the others and it seems to have very positive attitudes about everything - always cheerful. It has come to be known as the Inner Self-helper. The Inner Self-helper is very different from the others in that it claims never to have been born and never to die. Its story is, that at death all the rest of the personalities disintegrate, the physical body decays, but it claims "I remain". You can see that western science is being pushed into some very uncomfortable places - but some very constructive places as well.

Now I want to leap ahead because there isn't enough time to discuss any more of this. I want to suggest the importance of all of this. I want to suggest that a tremendous transformation took place from middle ages to modern times because of what I call the scientific heresy. We find that we are now involved in another heresy. It goes just as deep. It goes to the same metaphysical principles that tacitly held the metaphysical assumptions underlying society. Which is to say that the global system state of affairs, the system characteristics, after this transformation is going to be as different from modern times as modern times are from the middle ages. It is that profound a 

transformation that we are all involved with assuming that this is the level at which things are changing.

Let me try to suggest how deep this level really is. A Nobel laureate named Roger Sperry (he got his Nobel prize in 1981 for his work on the right-left brain characteristics) has been publishing papers on what he calls the consciousness revolution in science. There are really two kinds of causality in our experience. One is the causality that we study in science - the reductionistic kinds of explanations. If you want to really understand me, you need to know about my DNA, my stimulus-response characteristics, my conditioning, etc. That kind of explanation is the kind that science has dealt with. But we all understand a different kind of causality. When we decide to do something, something happens in the consciousness, and then we go out and do something in the environment. Sperry's point is that we will never have an adequate science until we include rather than excluding the human consciousness in all of its dimensions. That is a more radical change than anything since the scientific revolution itself.

Another Nobel laureate named George Wauld (who got his prize in the late '60s for his work in the biological sciences) published just this year a paper in which he says, "All my professional life, I have been puzzled by a question which has gotten more acute as I have gotten older. That is, how is it that the universe is so friendly to the development of life? When you assemble all the evidence, it is as though the universe were determined to evolve life. It cannot be explained as some sort of accident without any general force in that direction. I've come to believe that I know the answer to that question. Consciousness did not evolve after 15 billion years. The reason that the universe was so friendly toward life is that consciousness was there all the time. It did not wait for the evolution of the brain cells to take place."

Now, that is rank heresy I think you will have to admit. Science and spirit somehow coming together seems what we are involved with here and that's what is going to propel all the rest of these changes. That and the general awakening of people that we are not victims. That we create our own future and present in ways that we were unaware of because our science told us it wasn't so. It turns out that indeed, it is so. To summarize, the direction of the evolution science or perhaps revolution would be a better term in this case. Our whole scientific structure at this point is really based on the premise that what is fundamentally real is what physicists study. What is fundamentally real is matter and energy. What is fundamentally real is that material world and out of that somehow evolves consciousness, values, meanings and everything that makes human life meaningful and precious.

The emerging picture just turns that on its head and says that what is really fundamental is consciousness, universal mind, universal spirit, and out of that evolves everything in the material world. That is why the power of the vision is what it is because that is where the material world came from in the first place. Now you can imagine that that is radical enough and it is not going to sell very well in a hurry. None-the-less, that is not only what is being whispered but published as well and being taught and spoken about openly. That's the exciting thing about looking at this thing as

a whole system. Each of us is involved with some little piece of it. But the thing that holds it all together is that it does exist in that universal mind and anytime one of us just changes our mind, it affects the whole system even though we haven't gotten around to acting on it.

So something like that is the picture of where we are and what the great hope is for the future and what we are going to be talking about for the next few days. Thank you.