

human consciousness and the transformation of societies--were different parts of the same puzzle.

By the mid-1980s, he observes, the term "radicalization" has been mostly substituted by "changing consciousness" and many of the movements that surfaced during the 1960s became, in his view, more clearly recognized to be different drops in a single wave of transformative change. Like fellow contemporary social observers Ferguson (1980) and Roszak (1969, 1975), Dr. Harman recognizes this as a fundamental *cultural* change, a change in consciousness or in belief systems, which is seen as the necessary *vehicle* towards the transition into what he calls the "post modern age". He describes such a cultural transformation as a "contagion of re-perception", manifested in a search for wholeness, a search for community and relationship, a search for identity, a search for meaning, and, a sense of empowerment¹⁸. This, in his view, had originally started among middle class people but it is becoming increasingly widespread to all the sectors of the population in the last twenty or thirty years in the USA, northern Europe, Canada, Australia and also in the Eastern European countries, and--to a lesser extent-- in the Third World as well (in the smaller "alternative development" group).

For many people Dr. Harman observes, the new picture of reality is so obvious that it is difficult to understand why these others cannot catch up. But, generally, he explains, for most of the orthodox academic world...

...it is very hard... hard to access the insight that their overall view of the world and reality embodies just the sort of illusion that one accepts when a hypnotist gives one a suggestion. One sees a reality and then that reality *is*. We have all been hypnotized by the culture we grew up in, whether this is called science or whatever and, collectively, we corroborate for one another the reality we see. Once you understand this, you can never take your "reality" quite so seriously. It's always a tentative thing because you sense there is a deeper part of you that really knows what reality is. You may not always be directly in touch with that reality but, nonetheless, you can't be fooled the way you once were...

The emerging picture of reality has to do, in Willis Harman's view, with the beginning of a convergence between the various sciences of human consciousness and a developing awareness of the most important choices confronting modern society.

Dr. Harman argues that this contemporary transformation is comparable in scope and impact to the emergence of the scientific revolution in the 16th and 17th centuries in western Europe-- when there was also a growing discontent with the way the world and reality were "officially" defined and described (by the priesthood, then, as by the conventional scientific establishment today). He articulates his view of the present-day stage of decline of industrial society in close resonance with those of Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin, British historian Arnold Toynbee and, more recently, Lewis Mumford.¹⁹

The point where human consciousness and societal transformation seem to meet, in Dr. Harman's view, is precisely the personal breakthrough into untapped personal and collective potential--for this breakthrough is crucial to the realization of the interconnectedness of life, of one's essential belonging, and of the causal role of consciousness. These insights will facilitate a more accurate perception of reality, encourage the training of the will and attention, and increase capacity for communication and cooperation, and a responsible sense of caring and sharing. Both his work and the work of the Institute of Noetic Sciences began to focus, therefore, on this meeting point between human consciousness and social transformation.

In the early 1970s Dr. Harman met Apollo 14 astronaut Edgar Mitchell, when Mitchell was in the process of leaving NASA and setting up IONS. In 1977 Willis Harman became its President.

After twenty years of stumbling upon, seeking to explain, and slowly understanding the importance of this area of knowledge, the opportunity to work with the great pioneers of consciousness research was irresistible.²⁰

The Institute brought together forward-looking funding sources and leading edge researchers who were all validating in different ways that the "hidden mind" is significantly more proficient than we have been taught to believe--particularly with regard to its intuitive and creative potentials. During the first decade of the Institute's endeavors, general interest in the scientific exploration of consciousness steadily increased, and now a variety of consciousness studies are being conducted by eminent scientists at some of the most prestigious universities and research institutions.

Through the 1970s the various sciences of human consciousness began to converge. Scientists of considerable stature such as neuroscientist, Roger Sperry; physicist, David Bohm; neurophysiologist, Sir John Eccles; psychiatrist Stanislav Grof; immunologist, Jonas Salk and biologist, Rupert Sheldrake are postulating in their own disciplines that consciousness is a causal reality and that this thinking is fundamental to understanding not only social behavior but also physiological, chemical, and physical phenomena.²¹ A growing number of scientists are incorporating, in their own diverse fields of study, nonphysical aspects of reality--such as intuitive cognition or altered-states-of-consciousness events--that must be taken into account (and scientifically investigated) because they are part of human experience.

There is growing evidence that suggests that the very foundations of science--of physics, biology, the neurosciences, systems theory, and many other fields are being reexamined and redefined. Some scientists are describing this transformative process as the development of a "new scientific paradigm;"²² but there seems to be some debate as to whether this is a sufficiently precise or adequate term, considering that, in its current popularization, it seems to have become an over-generalized catchword.

Currently, there is a volume of literature referring to this "new" or "extended" or "expanded" science." In any case, there appears to be a growing consensus among these contemporary investigators that the nature of reality, of the physical world itself, is closer to the intuitive-experiential perception of it than has been acknowledged by conventional science and that, in fact, consciousness is a causal factor (even at a molecular level) in what is "real"--that all life (from the smallest atom to the widest galaxy) is interconnected, alive, and imbued with consciousness. Significantly, these "newly emerging" insights in contemporary consciousness research are consistent with concepts common to the ancient esoteric cosmologies of many ancient and perennial traditions and cultures of the world.

As a research foundation, IONS provides seed grants for leading-edge scientific and scholarly research, with the belief that results from these pilot studies will encourage other funding sources to generate larger research projects. Major programs include:

Inner mechanisms of the healing response, which focuses on discovering and defining how healing really works (whether we possess an as yet undiscovered healing system which operates in a manner similar to other psychophysiological-functioning systems of the body, such as the nervous system, the immune system and the endocrine system) and on understanding the body/mind relationship. Program areas here include the study of systems of linkage between the mind, the brain and the immune system and their role in self-healing (psychoneuroimmunology), spontaneous remissions, spiritual healing, and bio-energy or energy medicine.

Another major focus is on the study of Exceptional Abilities, concerned with the inner and outer limits of human ability and the "trainability" of such human-capacity potentials as photographic memory, remote viewing, telepathy, and healing and long-distance healing. This also includes the study of exceptional achievement such as creative genius or heroic-traits demonstrations such as altruism. The study of altruism

and the identification, and reward of community members who are exemplary altruists is an outstanding project of IONS.

Global Mind Change. Directed by President Willis Harman, this program focuses on the emerging "global mind-change" that Dr. Harman sees, and is based on the postulate that this change is induced by complex global problems as well as by an emerging vision of a positive future. This emerging change involves reassessment of our understanding of the human mind (or the human spirit), of our ecological relationship with the planet, of the role of business, industry, and technology in helping to create a meaningful and sustainable future, and of the prospect for peace. Dr. Harman's work in these areas is extensive and truly impressive. Furthermore, he has been very active in the area of "citizen diplomacy" with the former USSR and with other countries in the cause of promoting more peaceful relationships.

This "global mind-change" constitutes a challenge to the dominant positivistic, reductionistic and materialistic scientific paradigm as it attempts to reconcile the schisms between science/technology and religion (spirituality values, ethics and human experience). It implies the need for a new synthesis which will require the *objective* use of our best scientific research tools combined with the *subjective* use of our intuitive faculty, which in Mitchell's view....

... really comes down to is this: Seek to understand the processes that brought us into being. And learn to live in harmony with these processes of Nature.

The transition towards the emerging global order that Dr. Harman sees as imminent is far from easy in human terms; he therefore encourages fostering any educational and mutual support mechanisms that may alleviate the anxiety and fears involved in it.

IONS is significantly involved with the founding of the World Business Academy (WBA, 1987)--an international network of business executives and entrepreneurs who feel a personal commitment to helping create a positive global future, and who see business as having a constructive role in that endeavor. The specific purpose of the Academy is to provide a forum for continuing dialogue on these issues through written publications, face-to-face meetings (both regional and global), and electronic communications.

Furthermore, Dr. Harman travels widely and conducts and participates in numerous workshops on organizational management based upon consciousness-and-values priorities. He is also a consultant to the business community, where he sees significant signs of transformation taking place even in the giant corporations. Thus the outreach and the influence of both this organization and this individual are enormous and extremely encouraging.

Dr. Harman foresees a future in which big corporations and institutions become less hierarchical (as people insist on changes in control structures and on more autonomy) and in which institutions and corporations accept a greater share of social and environmental responsibility.

IONS is also an educational institution and, as such, it organizes lectures, sponsors conferences, and publishes books, research reports and monographs by leading scientists, philosophers and scholars. IONS publishes books on a vast variety of topics pertinent to its interests, such as "In the Footsteps of Gandhi: Conversations with Spiritual Social Activists"; "Creative Work: The Constructive Role of Business in a Transforming Society"; "The Feminine Face of God: The Unfolding of the Sacred in Women" and many others. IONS also publishes a quarterly Review and quarterly Bulletin for its membership. IONS thus supports and stimulates individuals and organizations interested in discovering and legitimizing new belief systems which

embrace human potential for healing, creativity, and wholeness. Nearly 50 Noetic Sciences Study Groups are now active, and the number is growing every month.

Finally, IONS functions also as a membership organization offering opportunities for individuals to blend knowledge of scientific and scholarly research with their own experiences. Through its various membership activities, IONS is attempting to legitimize and support a vision of a humane, sustainable and peaceful world. According to an IONS 1992 membership research,²³ there were nearly 30,000 Institute members (growing from about 5,000 in 1984) by the close of 1992. The membership records showed a mature, well-educated, affluent membership interested in personal growth, healing, and spiritual issues. 60% were female, and 76% were aged 35 to 65. Nearly all attended or had attended college, and many held advanced degrees. The membership covered a broad spectrum of professions including business, psychology and counseling, and health care or healing-arts practices. Members' annual incomes were well above national averages. IONS network of member groups expanded to include 62 groups in 29 states and the district of Columbia. A lending library of video tapes and other resources for member groups was begun, and also the development of study guides and other educational materials.²⁴

Commentary:

Dr. Harman's path towards the discovery of what he calls his own deep sense of inner knowing and the resulting shift towards committed worldly activism--even though highly idiosyncratic--is also representative of the global mind change that is the focus of this work. Numerous other scientists and academicians have found themselves in similar situations--particularly those among the articulators of the emerging humanistic and transpersonal pursuits (from the 1960s on) who had become

disenchanted with the dominant restrictive, distorting, out-of-context scientific picture of reality.

As an "insider" he offers an incisive commentary on the great power and prestige of conventional science as a highly influential social institution in modern society. Dr. Harman is explicit about the fact that such power and prestige still constitutes an influence more visible and active than that of philosophy or theology or any of their systems, because of the close links between our modern social institutions, our scientific enterprises and activities and economic and military interests.²⁵ Many of my interviewees attended to the issues of science and technology giving valid critiques and analysis--and challenging the old, conventional concept that science is "an undisputed social good."²⁶

With his diverse and comprehensive research, particularly in the emerging modern sciences, his futurist activities, and his extensive international networking, Dr. Willis Harman is a truly-dedicated and effective activist for social change on an international scale.

His social vision places great emphasis on the legitimation that *people grant* to social institutions for their effective functioning and stability. The basic premiss of such a view seems to be as follows: Because our world is a totality of interconnected and interdependent life, imbued with consciousness, dynamically evolving, and constantly interacting, a transformation founded upon the development of human consciousness and intuitive awareness is crucial to the future of all life on Earth. This transformation must come by sheer moral will: It will not come by conquest and it cannot be pushed or forced by physical or economic power. He is therefore encouraged when observing the widespread "contagion of re-perception" that is increasingly penetrating the mainstream and the public at large-- not unlike a "cultural drift". This is seen as conducive to the decline of those old institutions which no longer work within a global context and the emergence of the new.

From our vantage point today, there seems to be indeed no doubt that people who participated in the various "consciousness movements" of the recent past, may have originally come from a variety of groups with a variety of labels (feminists, ecology, peace, diet, nutrition and optimal health movement, civil rights, etc) yet they are experiencing and expressing different aspects of the same *sociological gestalt*.

In a way, the historical unfolding of this *sociological gestalt* can be likened to the metaphor of an octopus coming to the water surface from the depths of the ocean. Not only does one arm fail to recognize the others, but also those who have observed the octopus have generally failed to recognize it as such. It is as though even social observers could see only one arm rising from the water- some one arm and some another, depending on where they looked- and could recognize the sociological gestalt only when they could see, below the surface, the body of the octopus to which all the arms are connected.

But the arms themselves are becoming increasingly aware of one another. The concepts and even the activities of these various groups are beginning to converge in a way that incorporates the insights fostered by each of these approaches. This convergence, in its integration of insights, suggests the organic interconnectedness of all those aspects of human experience. It suggest cooperation and empowerment--as with the concept that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Furthermore, it highlights the clear value-direction of such an overall perspective towards an expanding universalistic view, called by insiders "unity within diversity."

Yet- a *word of caution* is necessary here. The active sector of this transformative movement is the white middle or upper-middle-class "baby boomers" population who were involved or more directly impacted by the 1960s counterculture. And it is mostly within this "consistent minority" that this convergence is taking place in a conscious and intentional fashion. Certainly among these socially-active groups there is awareness of and empathy for various aspects of inequality,

intolerance, discrimination, and segregation-- a significant self-awareness among the "privileged" ones. At the same time, the considerable access to social power and influence within this sector may enhance its transformative potential.

Unfortunately--though not surprisingly-- this transformation has not managed yet to break through the boundaries and barriers of race and class that remain fundamental in our capitalist society. In the workshops, seminars, conferences, and project meetings--and, for the most part, organizational memberships--that I have observed and reported, dark skins and black faces are conspicuously absent--as are other ethnic minorities or underprivileged individuals or groups. Even presentations by black leaders, Indians, and other traditional spokespersons often have exclusively white audiences. (as discussed in the chapter on Luisah Teish.)

Until a convergence of this nature can be achieved, at least to some significant degree--and I question when, and even whether, this might occur--there is no way apparent to me that human life, or the environment, or even the planet can be sustained in the way envisioned by the planetary activists studied in this work. This will require, in my opinion, giving a higher priority to the intricacies of social justice, and a deep incorporation of a critique of capitalism. Willis Harman's own work with corporations can be seen as an attempt to do this.

¹ From the interview.

² Dr. Harman is also a Board member of numerous contemporary organizations, many of them planetary. To my surprise, many of them were described in or related to this work, thus further suggesting Dr. Harman's key leading role among the networks described here, and in mainstream centers of power as well. Dr Harman calls himself a "high level drifter", in lieu of his various professional and occupational shifts through his productive worklife. To me it is obviously the life of a searcher, a true scientist who really wants to know the principles of life and of the universe in order to apply them for that which is best for all of life.

³ George Leonard, *Look* correspondent and senior editor of the magazine's West Coast operations in 1962 (who also coined the term "human potential movement" and eventually became one of its articulators), recalls a similar incident that started him on his own path of transformation. In his first visit to the Esalen Institute in 1965, Leonard participated (as part

of his research for an article on the human potential movement) in an experimental session on "sensory awakening" with Bernie Gunther. When encouraged to describe his feelings in the first pronoun (rather than the professional third he was accustomed to using) Leonard realized that he had been avoiding responsibility for what he felt--abstracting what was personal and unique and, in effect, depersonalizing himself and his experience--and found a totally new sense of powerful subjectivity. As a result, he began a systematic study of human potential as a participant-observer of diverse transformative disciplines, which he incorporated into his ongoing concerns with social issues. Eventually, he developed a unique form of meditation-in-action based on the martial arts and various movement exercises. He now holds a third-degree black belt in aikido and is a past President of the Association of Humanistic Psychology.

⁴ see Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy. Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s*. (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc, 1980).

⁵ Huxley's first experimentation with mescaline took place in May, 7, 1953. On that date he met Osmond, a young English psychiatrist who was then doing research on mescaline as a treatment-agent in cases of alcoholism in the mental hospital he was working at, in Saskatchewan. Osmond coined the term "psychedelic" (i.e., mind-manifesting) in 1954 to describe such drugs as mescaline and LSD. Familiar with his work and eager to personally experiment with him, Huxley tried mescaline himself. Fields, Rick, "Flashback and Fast Forward, Psychedelics in the 80s", *New Age Magazine*, vol 8, # 12 (July 1983), pp. 36-43.

⁶ Huxley wrote about his impressive self-healing in his book, *The Art of Seeing*, which was a crucial factor in his turning from an atheist to a follower of Eastern disciplines. Doug Boyd, personal communication.

⁷ Willis Harman, Ph.D. and Howard Rheingold, *Higher Creativity. Liberating the Unconscious for Breakthrough Insights*. An Institute of Noetic Sciences Book. (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc., 1984), p. xiv.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. xi-xii, 1984. So salient an experience it still is that Dr. Harman opens with that story the introduction to this book.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. xiv-xv.

¹⁰ Doug Boyd indeed compares the flights to space to a technological reproduction of the sense of perspective that yogis were claiming through the centuries. The effects of such a widening of perspective in terms of the consciousness of the subjects is indeed very similar.

¹¹ The concrete process of such an experience is not clearly understood but, according to all people who report it, it seems to point out to a recognition of an aspect of subjective consciousness that is truly impactful and transformational in one's understanding of the mere basis of reality. See Kenneth Ring and his various pioneering books in the emerging discipline of Thanatology (or Death Studies).

¹² "According to mystics, when one comes to truly know oneself, the pull of the material body and ego personality become greatly decreased and one finds that the deepest motivation is to participate fully, with conscious awareness, in the evolutionary process and the fulfillment of humankind. To put it another way, one becomes aware that what appeared to be driving motivations were mainly illusory ego needs and that the desires of the true Self are one's real

needs-- this sounds a lot like the phenomenon we have termed "higher creativity." " W. Harman, 1984, p.135.

13 The books for the seminar proposed ambitious speculations for the human species and were mostly on psychology but mixed with philosophy, evolutionary theory and Eastern and Western religions; for ex., it included Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being*, which also referred to the fear we have not only of the dark or sinister aspect of human nature but also of the "Godlike" and suggested human stages of self actualization that were added to the Freudian, or Behavioristic, static and restricted notions of adulthood and maturity. Walter Truett Anderson (1983), *The Upstart Spring. Esalen and the American Awakening*. (Reading, Massachusetts, and others: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1983). pp. 68, 70.

14 Truett Anderson, *op. cit.*, says that Dr. Harman-- under the auspices of the International Foundation for Advanced Study (which he established together with Myron Stolaroff)-- was involved in legal LSD research, administering it to people in various fields and monitoring them to see whether it affected their creativity and efficiency (p. 142). Dr. Harman truly researched the topic of *creativity* extensively over the years, from numerous, experiential and theoretical angles; he also wrote numerous articles and finally a book on the topic.

15 Humanistic Psychology had started out to be a purely intellectual movement with political and social overtones, but it was basically an effort to break the ascendancy of Freudian and Behaviorist theories in the world of psychology and to substitute a more expansive vision of human nature; it gathered together a small group of psychologists from various dissident schools-- Jungians, Reichians, existentialists, neo Freudian, Adlerians, Rankians, gestalt psychologists and others like Herbert Marcuse, J.L. Moreno, Thomas Szasz, and Norman O. Brown-- into this new organization. Before it became an organized movement it had been a loose aggregation of splinter groups, united mainly in their shared opposition to the Freudian and Behavioral establishments. Maslow was a central figure in its formation and he coined the term of "Third Force" by which it was referred, in order to mark its difference from the other two dominant trends in psychology at the time.

This movement was chiefly but not exclusively psychological. The original board of editors of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* included psychologists--like James F.T. Bugental, Rollo May, Abraham Maslow, and Carl Rogers-- and humanists like Aldous Huxley, Arthur Koestler, Lewis Mumford and Michael Polanyi.

Even though originally conceived as an intellectual society, by 1968 it did seem that humanistic psychologists were those people "who did groups", and Esalen Institute and Humanistic Psychology were considered interchangeable terms. (Truett Anderson, 1983, pp. 184-185).

16 This was the first non-technological futures forecasting of this sort sponsored by the U.S. government. Harman, 1984.

17 Harman, 1988, p. 117.

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 118-122.

19 Sorokin Pitirim, *The Crisis of Our Age*. (E.P. Dutton, 1941.); Lewis Mumford, *The Transformations of Man*. (Harper Brothers, 1956).

20 Harman Willis and Howard Rheingold, "Introduction: The Cat Who Wasn't There", *Higher Creativity. Liberating the Unconscious for Breakthrough Insights*. An Institute of Noetic Sciences Book. (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc., 1984). pp. xxi.

21 Willis Harman, "Towards an Extended Science", *Noetic Sciences Review*, Summer 1987, p.9.

22 See Stanislav Grof, *Beyond the Brain. Birth, Death and Transcendence in Psychotherapy*. (State University of New York Press, 1985) and Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point. Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*. (Toronto, New York, London, Sydney, Auckland: Bantam Books, 1983).

23 *Institute of Noetic Sciences Bulletin*, Winter 1992-93- VII/4, Institute News, "Highlights from member research", p. 4.

24 *IONS Annual Report 1991*, p. 23.

25 Harman, 1987, op. cit., p. 13.

26 Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture. Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*. (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books. Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969).