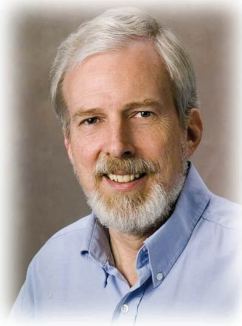


Introduction of Speakers

Plenary Speech—Stuart A. Umpleby (U.S.A.)

Third order cybernetics as the Evolution of Society



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society created by the International Federation for Systems Research (2010)

ABSTRACT

Second order cybernetics, as developed in the US, focused initially on the biology of cognition. A second interpretation was that including the observer in science would also bring in social concerns, since these exist in the minds of observers. Third order cybernetics might be interpreted to mean a concern with the evolution of society, with the interaction between ideas and society and with the invention and dissemination of ideas which, if they became widespread, would aid the development of society. This presentation will consider this interpretation of third order cybernetics by looking at the history of social inventions beginning with agriculture and early legal systems and focusing primarily on institutions and social programs. The book *Why Nations Fail* suggested that there are two processes in creating a successful nation. The first process is the creation of a centralized authority that has the ability to combine resources and use them for group purposes. The second process is the development of institutions and social arrangements that guide the use of resources for the development of society as a whole, not just for the benefit of elites. The book *Social Inventions* offers a list of past social innovations which will be examined for patterns and trends.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

President of the American Society for Cybernetics, January 1980 to December 1982.

Program coordinator for the first Gordon Research Conference on Cybernetics, August 1984.

American coordinator of a series of panels and small conferences on the subject of cybernetics and systems theory involving scientists from the United States and the Soviet Union, 1981 to 1988. These meetings were funded by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Soviet Academy of Sciences.