

# CREATING PORTRAITS OF THE CULTURES OF COUNTRIES IN THE HOLISTIC SENSE TO ENHANCE WELL-BEING AND COME TO GRIPS WITH THE WORLD'S MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS

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As culture and cultures play a more prominent role in the world due to the great cultural awakening going on in many countries today, treating organizations as cultures, and many other factors, it is possible to experience a real “paradise on earth” as well as come to grips with some of the world’s most difficult problems by creating portraits of countries’ cultures as wholes and ways of life using some of their most characteristic parts as symbols.

It is one thing to do this when community, town, city, rural, regional, and national cultures are defined in partial terms as “the arts, humanities, heritage of history, and cultural industries,” much as they are by most people and organizations working in these fields, governments, foundations, corporations, educational institutions, and people and countries in general. This is because most of these activities are concrete, visible, and tangible in nature. Paintings, architectural creations, monuments, and historical sites can be seen, plays, dances, operas, films, and videos watched, music listened to, humane deeds admired, books read, food and culinary delights enjoyed, and many other activities experienced through a variety of technological techniques and digital devices.

However, when cultures are defined in holistic terms as “complex wholes” and the “total ways of life of people and countries” - much as they are by many anthropologists, cultural scholars, historians, and now countless organizations in the world - a very complicated problem arises. (1) How is it possible to *know* and *understand* cultures in this all-encompassing sense when they can’t be *seen* and are made up of millions of different parts such as activities, events, people, institutions, groups, races, values, customs, traditions, worldviews, and so forth? Moreover, and much more importantly, how is it possible to *determine* how all these millions of parts are woven together to create wholes and ways of life and are constantly evolving, changing, and mutating over time and are all-inclusive, organic, and dynamic in nature? This means that people and countries must learn to *sense* and *feel* how cultures are put together and manifest themselves in the world using “symbols” to deal with this quintessential but very challenging problem.

Fortunately, a well-known cultural scholar, Giles Gunn, provided us with a very clever and highly creative way of dealing with this parts-whole dilemma when he proposed

that we focus our attention on the dynamic interplay that is constantly going on between “the parts of any whole” and “the whole itself” as the *ensemble* of all the many parts:

We cannot understand the parts of anything without some sense of the whole to which they belong, just as we cannot comprehend the whole to which they belong until we have grasped the parts that make it up. Thus, we are constantly obliged to move back and forth in our effort to understand something “*between the whole conceived through the parts which actualize it and the parts conceived through the whole which motivates them*” in an effort “to turn them, by a sort of intellectual perpetual motion, into explication of one another.” (2).

According to Robert Redfield, another cultural scholar who spent the bulk of his life studying human wholes in general and cultural wholes in particular, the next step in this “*parts-whole process*” and “*symbolic phenomenon*” is to become familiar with people who devote their lives and work to communicating knowledge, information, meaning, and insights into cultures as wholes and ways of life, rather than people who spend their lives and work studying the parts of cultures and the relationships between these parts:

Still farther from where we just now stand are those who study the relations of parts to parts, of elements abstracted out from the whole in strict and limited relationship to each other generally described...

*Over there, on the other side, are all those who strive to present the concrete reality of each human whole as each, in itself, is.* They are a various group. Included are novelists, philosophers, historians, philosophers of history, literary people, critics of literature and of art, historians of art, and writers of personal reminiscence. These people describe human wholes - personalities, civilizations, epochs, literatures, local cultures - each in its uniqueness. (3)

As far as the character of cultures as wholes and ways of life is concerned, here is what Redfield had to say about this essential matter, and especially the ability of artists to enable us to create all-inclusive and encompassing *portraits* of cultures by selecting or creating parts that are most symbolic of these cultures as wholes and overall ways of life:

The characterisations of the artist ... are of course not precise at all; but very much of the whole is communicated to us. *We might call them all portraits. They communicate the nature of the whole by attending to the uniqueness of each part, by choosing from among the parts certain of them for emphasis, and by modifying them and rearranging them in ways that satisfy the “feeling of the portrayer.”* (4)

Of all the parts of cultures that are available to us, the arts in general and artists and arts organizations in particular play an indispensable role in this holistic process by providing many of the symbols that are necessary to unlock the secrets of cultures in the all-encompassing sense at all the different geographical levels. This is because artists and arts organizations use the most characteristic parts of cultures as symbols to convey crucial information about these cultures. Since artistic works, like culture and cultures, are also wholes made up of many parts, artists and arts organizations understand this process and possess the knowledge, expertise, and sensorial skills - as well as expressive abilities and communicative capabilities - that are needed to sense and feel how cultures are put together and function as dynamic and organic wholes and total ways of life made up of millions of parts and communicate this to other people through their artistic works and achievements.

They do this largely through their ability to select or create parts such as specific activities, events, historic sites, metaphors, myths, legends, rituals, signs, and especially *symbols* that “*stand for the whole*” and convey an incredible amount of information and understanding about the character of cultures as wholes and ways of life. This helps us to come to grips with the problem identified and emphasized by Edward T. Hall in his book *Beyond Culture* when he said, “A given culture cannot be understood simply in terms of contents or parts. One has to know how the whole system (culture) is put together, how the major systems and dynamisms function, and how they are inter-related.” (5)

While there has been a great deal of controversy, misunderstanding, and debate over which of these two quintessential definitions of culture - the partial one or the holistic one - should prevail and be carried into the future, it is evident as a result of the great cultural awakening and many other developments taking place in the world today that there is really only one way to perceive and define culture going forward into the future and that is the holistic definition as a complex whole and total way of life of people and countries. Since culture and cultures in this holistic sense cannot be seen, touched, or handled as indicated earlier, this means that the arts, humanities, heritage of history, cultural industries, and certain types of recreational activities such as sports are not only included in the holistic definition of culture as ends in themselves and means to other ends, but also provide the *gateways* that are necessary to open the doors to culture and cultures in the all-encompassing sense due to their symbolic significance. This explains the intimate connection that exists between these two fundamentally connected and interrelated ways of seeing, defining, and dealing with culture in general and cultures in particular in the years, decades, and centuries ahead.

The old adage “a picture is worth a thousand words” is a cliché, but it speaks volumes about the ability of artists to create the symbols that are required to come to grips with this problem, and, in so doing, pass on an incredible amount of information and numerous insights into the holistic character of cultures that can’t be communicated in any other way at all, or can’t be communicated nearly as effectively using any other device.

## USING THE PARTS OF CULTURES AS SYMBOLS

One of the best examples of using the parts of cultures to produce this symbolic effect for the culture of a country as a whole was Gandhi’s use of “*homespun*” and “*salt*” - two of India’s most characteristic parts and precious assets - as powerful symbols to portray the character of the culture of India in holistic terms and eventually brought an end to British rule in India. And what is true for these two symbols and the culture of India is also true for the cultures of all other countries and some of their most pertinent symbols as well, such as the Statue of Liberty and American culture, the Great Wall and the culture of China, Angkor Wat and Cambodian culture, and countless others. This is also true for cultures at all other geographical levels, such as the neighbourhood, community, town, city, rural, or regional level. Think, for example, of such symbols as the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, the Coliseum in Rome, the Hagia Sophia and Blue mosques in Istanbul, Stonehenge in a “stand alone” area in England, and numerous others that communicate a great deal about the character of the places and the cultures they epitomize. Not only are these parts well known in the cities, places, and countries where they are situated, but also they are well known in many other countries and parts of the world as well.

The architect Ieoh Ming Pei emphasized this holistic capability best by using architectural works as symbols to achieve something much greater when he said: “Architecture is the very mirror of life. You only have to cast your eyes on buildings to feel the presence of the past, the spirit of a place; they are the reflection of society.” (6)

Parts like this and countless others can be used in much the same way to create and cultivate portraits of the cultures of communities, towns, cities, rural areas, regions, and countries that are very “*symbolic*” or “*representative*” of these cultures and epitomize them in holistic terms. Applying this basic process and principle can be very exhilarating because it involves learning about and using some of the most fascinating, informative, exquisite, and inspiring materials, elements, events, and places that have been created over the centuries and exist in the world today to shed light on the all-inclusive character of the billions of cultures that exist at all geographical levels in all areas of the world.

It is important to emphasize here that any part of a culture can fulfill this holistic requirement if it possesses or is accorded this strong symbolic status. This manifests itself most effectively in all the different arts forms - performing, exhibiting, literary, architectural, cinematographic, culinary, ceremonial, environmental, horticultural, and the like in general, and music, paintings, plays, photographs, poetry, films, videos, dances, stories, poems, cathedrals, mosques, synagogues, civic squares, festivals, fairs, parades, food, and so forth in particular. Moreover, parts can also be used to convey crucial information about important historical and contemporary events, such as Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* and Don McLean's *American Pie* that shed light on the plane crash that occurred in the United States on February 3, 1959 and killed three popular singers – The Big Bopper (J.P. Richardson, Jr.), Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens – and several others.

This is especially true for countries' national flags, anthems, emblems, and much more so, which explains why so many people get so upset when their flags are trampled on or people talk, laugh, or sit during the playing of their national anthems. However, this symbolic ability is also true for revered athletes such as Pelé and Brazilian culture and Messi and Argentinian culture, animals such as kiwis and New Zealand culture, flowers such as tulips and Dutch and Turkish cultures, sunflowers and Ukrainian culture, oak and cherry trees and British and Japanese culture, grapes, olives, wine, beer, and other beverages and many European and North and South American cultures, and rice and most Asian cultures.

This is also true for natural resources such as lakes, mountains, forests, and most notably rivers that can also be used for symbolic purposes. This is manifested in the ability some composers have to create musical works or portraits based on elements taken from nature that are *symbolic* of something much larger and grander and possibly even the entire way of life of people and their countries' cultures as wholes. An excellent example of this is Smetana's musical masterpiece *The Moldau*, or what is called *Vltava* in Czechia or the Czech Republic. This musical composition is about the remarkable river that flows majestically from its origins in the mountains of a Bohemian forest, meanders leisurely through the Czechia countryside, and finally arrives at its destination Prague, the country's capital. It is a very patriotic work that captures Smetana's love for his country or homeland, history, and fellow citizens. It was completed in 1874, performed in 1875, and is the second movement of his six-movement monumental work *Ma Vlast* or *My Country*. (7)

Rivers such as the *Moldau* and many others have been a favourite subject and symbol of composers for centuries. This is probably because water is one of humanity's and the world's most valuable resources - if not *the* most valuable - and rivers have a great deal to do with movement and flow that are basic elements at all stages in life for all species.

Other well-known examples of how rivers have been depicted by composers in this symbolic fashion are *The Blue Danube* by Johann Strauss Jr., *Flow Gently, Sweet Afton* by Robert Burns and Jonathan Spilman, *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* by Yin Chengzong and Chu Wanghua's based on Xian Xinghai's *Yellow River Cantata*, and such well-known American favourites as *Ol' Man River* and "*Sketches on Shenandoah*" by Peter Boyer.

Interestingly, many composers have used folk music for a similar purpose, such as Zoltán Kodály and his *Variations on a Hungarian Folk Song* and *Dances of Galanta*, Béla Bartók and his *Romanian Folk Dances for String Orchestra*, and George Enescu and his popular *Romanian Rhapsodies*. It all depends on what symbols are needed most to depict and reveal the character of countries' cultures in the all-embracing sense.

## **THE POWER AND POTENTIAL OF SYMBOLS**

Given symbols such as these and millions of others to open the doors to the comprehension of countries' cultures in the holistic sense at all geographical levels, let's delve more deeply into this miraculous parts-whole process and symbolic phenomenon to reveal just how powerful symbols can be and actually are when they are used in this symbolic way and how they manifest themselves in specific places, cases, and situations.

An excellent example of this is the Olympic Games that took place in France and Paris in 2024. Not only was the culture of France as a whole and way of life epitomized at these Games through the skillful use of the country's captivating capital Paris – also known as the City of Light - but also the Eiffel Tower was used in a similar way as one the most obvious and cherished symbols of the culture of both France and Paris. Symbols like these were needed because the cultures of France and Paris are incredibly expansive and interconnected, and it is not possible to know or learn about cultures as diverse and vast as these in holistic terms without using powerful symbols to convey and illustrate this.

Interestingly, the Eiffel Tower also reveals a great deal about the cultural paradise that exists on earth due to its universal appeal and public significance, as well as manifesting an essential part of this paradise through the cultures of France and Paris better than any other symbols, which is likely why this majestic Tower was selected by the organizing committee of the Games for this particular purpose. Not only did it fulfill this purpose admirably since it epitomized the magnetic attraction of the cultures of France and Paris in the all-encompassing sense, but also it symbolized the ideals of the Games through the Tower's ability to inspire athletes to reach for greater heights in the hope of winning gold, silver, or bronze medals as symbols of their talents and rigorous training

schedules, strenuous efforts over many years, and outstanding accomplishments. It is unlikely that any other symbol could have had the same effect or served the same purpose as well or better than this.

And this is not all. The Eiffel Tower is also known throughout the world as a cultural icon or landmark that has attracted millions of people, tourists, poets, novelists, dramatists, journalists, historians, and painters such as Robert Delaunay. Inscribed in UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1991, this Tower is seen by some people today as a synthesis of the antagonistic forces of modernity and depicted in the following manner: "The multitude of small parts, each clearly articulated and composed of the same material, each reduced to its most efficient form and interlocked with the others to form an integrated, controlled, dynamic system (or complex whole made up of myriad different parts) could be construed as a paradigm of a liberal democratic society. The thrust and counterthrust of the individual parts, by resolving their tensions within the fluid upward movement of the structure's form were taken as the sacred embodiment of the progress toward a new union which rational production in the hands of liberated individuals would make possible." (8)

Statements and insights like this also explain why Céline Dion was selected to sing the *Hymne à l'Amour (Hymn of Love)* - made popular by the world-famous French singer, Edith Piaf, decades earlier - to conclude the opening ceremonies of the Games. Talk about "the power and potential of symbols such as these and countless others!" This inspiring piece "brought the house down" and "said so much about the nature of humanity, the world, and the cultures of Paris, France, the athletes, and many others" in inclusive terms.

It is examples of the power and potential of symbols like these and many others that the cultural scholar, Raymond Williams, may have had in mind when he said it is possible to create *composite portraits of the "structure of feeling of cultures"* as wholes and ways of life through the use of symbolic parts, especially if enough parts are used and the relationships among them convey, enable, and produce the required result:

More overt and explicit than some underlying collective unconscious but less determinate and intellectualizable than an ideology, a structure of feeling is the "particular and characteristic colour" that the ensemble of the values, beliefs, and practices of a given culture imparts to the experiences of its members. In particular, a given culture's structure of feeling will at least influence if not determine the patterns of response of its members in resolving or coping with the dilemmas and contradictions that confront them in their daily lives. *For Williams, the principal aim of cultural analysis is to discern and understand*

*this structure of feeling as it manifests itself throughout the entire range of a given culture's expressions. (9)*

Given the power and potential of cultural symbols like these and countless others to play a dominant role in the world of the present and the future, it is essential to bear in mind what symbols such as these and myriad others are intended to achieve and designed to accomplish. In their most quintessential form, they are intended and designed to shed light on the nature, character, and composition of all the diverse cultures in the world so we can learn and experience a great deal more about them *in holistic terms*, share these experiences, feelings, and insights with others, and improve the identity and well-being of all the different peoples and countries in the world. Every part of a culture possesses the potential to do this, regardless of how large or small it is, who created it, or the sector in which it is produced. Their purpose is to enhance people's knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and respect for their own culture and cultures, the cultures of other countries, and foster peace, harmony, happiness, fulfillment, and well-being in the world and in life.

It is essential to point out that the number of symbols needed in any actual situation depends largely on the types of cultures and countries involved in this symbolic process. If countries' cultures are extremely diverse, many more symbols will be required than if cultures and countries have fewer differences and many more similarities. Added to this is the fact that symbols can come from any source and don't need to be well-known or famous to serve a valuable function in exploring and exposing a culture's character, characteristics, identity, and sense of belonging. While national flags, anthems, well-known architectural achievements, historic monuments and sites, revered athletes, music, stories, dances, popular songs, and numerous others may "fit the bill" best in some situations, symbols that are far less well-known may "fit the bill" best in other situations. (10)

In recent years, no person has contributed more to America's and the world's understanding, awareness, and appreciation of this remarkable parts-whole process and symbolic phenomenon than the American documentary filmmaker Ken Burns. In making his films, Burns has demonstrated an uncanny knack for selecting specific parts of American culture and the American way of life that are not only symbolic in their own right, but also highly representative of this country, culture, and way of life as a whole. This is especially true for such films as *The Civil War*, *Jazz*, *Country Music*, *Jackie Robinson*, *Baseball*, *The Roosevelts*, *The Statue of Liberty*, and *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*. It is impossible to watch any of these films without learning a great deal about Americans as people, United States as a country, and American culture as a whole and distinct way of life. By selecting and connecting these carefully crafted parts as symbols, Burns has illustrated how it is possible to produce a much more comprehensive



portrait of American culture that goes right to the heart and soul of what the United States, its culture, and way of life are like and all about. These achievements also provide an excellent example of how this powerful symbolic quality can be used by people in other parts of the world to create portraits of their countries' cultures in holistic terms as well.

It is imperative to emphasize another essential point here. It should be noted that symbols can be used for nationalistic purposes that are positive or negative. When symbols are used in nationalistic and positive ways, they can accomplish a great deal in terms of enhancing people's and countries' national identity, sense of belonging, pride of place, and overall character. However, when they are used in nationalistic and negative ways, as has often been the case over the course of history, they can be used by dictators and oppressive regimes to control and manipulate people, countries, and cultures for their own diabolical ends and purposes. Clearly, symbols should only be used in positive ways to foster activities and ideals that are beneficial, helpful, and possibly inspirational.

## **CREATING PORTRAITS OF COUNTRIES' CULTURES**

For people and organizations interested in creating holistic portraits of their countries' cultures, the best place to start - although it is not the only place to start - is with their own cultures, be it at the neighbourhood, community, town, city, rural, regional, or national level. This is because they will likely be aware of many symbols that are ideal for this purpose, especially if they think about this long enough and write them down or record them in some way. If you were asked, for example, to provide ten symbols that communicate the most in holistic terms about the *character, characteristics, and distinctiveness* of your own countries' cultures at each of these different geographical levels, what symbols would you select and why would you select them?

Take "urban and city cultures" as the closest and most obvious example of this. As Amos Rapoport pointed out in his informative article *Culture and the Urban Order*:

In dealing with the urban order, it may be useful to begin with the sensory, experiential qualities of cities which are also organized or ordered. Cities, among other things, are physical artifacts, experienced through all the senses by people who are in them.... *Cities look, smell, sound, and feel different; they have a different character or ambiance.* This is easily felt, but is very difficult to describe. (11)

How often do we take the time and make the effort to delve deeply into our neighbourhood, community, town, and city cultures in this holistic sense? Do we assume too much and explore too little? As soon as we begin to explore our own cultures at these levels or at any other level, we instantly become aware of the incredible number of parts such as people, groups, organizations, activities, resources, infrastructures, events, facilities, and so forth that comprise them. A little curiosity in this area can yield countless benefits, rewards, learning opportunities, and experiences. It will also open the doors to a vast array of possibilities, such as knowing more about the evolution of these cultures in space and time, understanding the many different cultural layers that exist in historical terms that make them up, and becoming far more aware of the multitude of diverse elements and activities that exist in them and constitute them. Also noteworthy in this regard are the numerous people, ethnic groups, places, events, and celebrations of the different customs, traditions, and languages that are apparent in them, as well as the geological and geographical features such as rivers that run through them, mountains that hover over them, forests or flat lands that surround them, and many others.

Exposure and exploration of these elements and activities helps to enhance our knowledge, understanding, awareness, appreciation, and respect for all the different cultures and cultural features that exist in every neighbourhood, community, town, city, region, and country in the world. It is through exploration, discovery, and identification of entities and factors like these and many others - as well as the many different symbols that epitomize them and give them meaning, substance, significance, and identity - that it is possible to slowly but surely piece together portraits of these cultures in space and time as dynamic and organic wholes and captivating ways of life. And the broader and deeper we go, the more distinct, pervasive, and expansive these portraits become.

Here, as well, nothing transcends or surpasses the arts when it comes to broadening, deepening, and enriching our knowledge and understanding of all the different urban cultures in the world in real and symbolic terms. Over the centuries, many artists have been fascinated with the distinctive characters, characteristics, and features of town and city cultures, and have devoted significant parts of their lives and works to depicting them through an incredible array of artistic activities, forms, idioms, creations, and images. They do this, as indicated earlier, primarily by selecting parts of these cultures that are representative of these cultures as wholes and ways of life. There are numerous examples of this. In Europe, for instance, Bruegel did this through his paintings of Dutch social scenes and urban life, Canaletto and Guardi through their colourful representations of

Venice, Émile Zola through his portrayal of the vivid colours and pungent aromas of Paris, and Turgenev through his incredible descriptions of Russian local and municipal life.

Interestingly, the English composer, Eric Coates, achieved this on a much larger, deeper, and more fundamental and representative scale by dividing London into six distinct districts or parts that he felt were most symbolic of the culture of this huge cosmopolitan city as a whole in his musical composition *The London Suite*. These parts were, and still are, Covent Garden, Westminster, Knightsbridge, Oxford Street, Langham Place, and Mayfair. It was a terrific idea when he composed this piece, and even more so today, since this musical composition is now enjoyed by millions of Londoners as well as countless businesspeople, politicians, tourists, students, and so forth who pour into this world-class and famous city from other parts of the world every minute of every day.

For those who are interested in creating portraits of the national cultures of countries *as wholes and ways of life* – which are without doubt *the* most important cultures in the world today due to the state of the world, prospects for the future, how little is known about cultures in the holistic sense, and the fact that they include local, town, city, and regional cultures in them - the best place to start this important task and unique opportunity is with an illustration of how this portrait can be created for a specific country in the world.

In order to do this, I have selected the culture of Spain to show how this parts-whole process and symbolic phenomenon discussed earlier relates to a particular country. I have chosen this culture because I have travelled, read about, and explored many of Spain's towns, cities, and regions, have a great deal of respect for its culture, it is well known in the world, and I believe from all the research and experiences I have had with the cultures of many countries over the course of my life that there are many benefits to be had from examining the culture of Spain to see how this process and phenomenon work, although the culture of any country in the world could be chosen for this purpose as well.

It is often said that music and stories are two of the best parts and symbols to use to communicate crucial information and valuable insights into the cultures of countries in an expansive sense. This is certainly true for the culture of Spain. There is no doubt that music is one of its most symbolic parts – if not *the* most symbolic part – when it is seen as a complex whole and overall way of life. This musical tradition commenced in Spain many centuries ago and continues to captivate millions of people in Spain and around the world today. Several Spanish composers, for instance, were well-known during the Renaissance, such as Cristóbal de Morales, Tomás Luis de Victoria, and others. However, the music of

Spain is manifested most profusely in symbolic terms by Flamenco music, which originated in the Andalusian region of southern Spain following the arrival of the Moors in 711 and the dominant role they played in the southern and central regions of Spain for many centuries after this. Since that time, many Flamenco singers, dancers, guitarists, violinists, and cellists have become well-known in Spain and other parts in the world, such as singers Pastora Pavón (La Niña de los Peines), José Monje Cruz (Camarón de la Isla), Estrella Morente, and Carmen Pacheco Rodríguez (Carmen Linares), dancers Carmen Amaya Amaya, Sara Baras, and Rafael Amargo, guitarists Carlos Montoya, Paco de Lucía, Vicente Amigo, and Andrés Segovia, violinist Pablo de Sarasate, cellist Pablo Casals; and many others.

In classical terms, many distinguished Spanish composers have composed music that is very indicative of Spain and its culture, including Isaac Albéniz and *Asturias* and *Iberia Suite*, Manuel de Falla and *Noches en los Jardines de España* (*Nights in the Gardens of Spain*), Enrique Granados and *Goyescas*, Pablo de Sarasate and *Zigeunerweisen* (*Gypsy Airs*), *Danzas españolas* (*Spanish Dances*), and *Fantasia de Carmen* (*Carmen Fantasy* for violin, piano, and orchestra based on themes from Bizet's opera *Carmen*), Joaquín Rodrigo and his remarkable *Concierto de Aranjuez*, *Concierto Andaluz*, and *Fantasia para un gentilhombre* (*Fantasy for a Nobleman*), Francisco Tárrega and *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*, and many others. This is probably why Plato proclaimed in his book *The Republic* many centuries ago that “Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.”

One of the highest tributes that can be paid to the music of Spain is the fact that many composers from other countries have been captivated – *mesmerized* would likely be a better word - with this music as well. This goes back many centuries. When Miguel de Cervantes, who many claim is one of the best story tellers in the world if not *the* best, was able to get his masterpiece - *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (*Don Quixote*) published in Spain between 1605 to 1615 - many literary authorities and historians have claimed since that time that this is one of the most important non-fiction book in the world and the first real novel ever written. It is not surprising in this regard that Spain's reputation in the literary arts spread slowly but surely throughout Europe and then to most other parts of the world.

One composer who became totally obsessed with Cervantes' popular book and its contents was the German composer Georg Philipp Telemann, a close friend of Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel. Telemann had a special talent for creating musical works that make it possible for people to conjure up “visual images and pictures”

and did this when he composed his *Burlesque de Quixotte (Don Quixote Suite)* in 1720, as well as his much longer opera *Don Quichotte auf de Hochzeit des Comacho (Don Quixote at the Wedding of Comacho)* in the final years of his life. His *Don Quixote Suite* - which is by far the most popular and performed of the two works – is remarkable. Not only is the music very alluring, charming, and majestic, but also Telemann depicts the hidalgo Alonso Quixano, his squire and peasant friend Sancho Panza, his over-worked steed Rosinante, and the love of his life Princess Dulcinea del Toboso in many ways that relate to Spain and its culture. You can almost see Quixano on this powerful steed (mule) in full armor holding his trusty lance under one arm and tilting at windmills, reviving chivalry, undertaking heroic deeds to impress his lady love, and trying to overcome the many injustices that existed in the world at that time as the music unfolds.

Like Telemann, there were many other composers who were not Spanish or born in Spain but nevertheless produced musical works that are characteristic of Spain and its culture. Included here are such well-known composers as Luigi Boccherini, who was born in Italy but spent most of his life in Spain and wrote *Del Fandango (Fandango, Quintet in D. major, No. 4, G. 488)* and *Musica notturna delle strade di Madrid (Nocturnal Street Music of Madrid)*, composers from France such as Édouard Lalo who wrote *Symphonie espagnole* and *Danse espagnole*, Emmanuel Chabrier who wrote *Españe*, and Maurice Ravel who wrote *Boléro (Bolero)*, as well as Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov from Russia and his popular *Capriccio espagnol (Spanish capriccio)*. Seldom, if ever, have so many composers from other countries been totally carried away by the music and culture of another country and composed music like this as a result. What a great tribute this is.

These well-known musical works can be augmented and enhanced by adding numerous paintings by such talented Spanish artists as Diego Velázquez and his *Las Meninas (Royal Members of Society)* (12), Salvador Dali and *La Persistencia de la Memoria (The Persistence of Memory)*, El Greco and *El Entierro del Conde de Orgaz (The Burial of the Count of Orgaz)*, Francisco Goya and *La Maja Desnuda (Naked Gypsy/Venus)* and *La Maja Vestida (Clothed Gypsy/Venus)*, Pablo Picasso and his famous painting *Guernica*, and countless others. To this list must be added many well-known Spanish authors and poets, often referred to as “masters of the pen, prose, and poetry.” In addition to Miguel de Cervantes and his precious literary achievements much earlier, over the past centuries there have been many other literary masters and poets such as Juan Ruiz, Lope de Vega, Rosalía de Castro, Benito Pérez, Galdos Juan Ramón Jiménez, Federico García Lorca, Jorge Luis Borges, and many others. Also added to this list should be many highly representative architects, architectural creations, and symbols including the Alhambra in

Granada, Toledo Cathedral, the Mezquita Mosque in Cordoba, Burgos Cathedral, the Museo Nacional del Prado and Paseo del Prado in Madrid, and especially several of Giovanni Antoni Gaudi's controversial architectural masterpieces, such as Casa Batlló, Park Güell, La Pedrera, Casa Milà, and especially Basilica della Sagrada Familia.

Capping off and celebrating this precious architectural feast would undoubtedly be the Plaza de España situated in the Parque de Maria Lucia in Seville. This Plaza was built in 1928 for the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929 and is a landmark symbol of the regional character of Spain and Spanish architecture that mixes together parts of the Baroque, Renaissance, and Moorish (Mudéjar) styles and traditions. The Parque is designed in the "Moorish *paradisical* style" with a half mile of tiled fountains, many pavilions representing the diverse regions of Spain - each with a pavilion of its own covered with very specific and symbolic ceramic tiles - as well as ponds, beaches, palm, orange, and pine trees, and lush flower gardens. All these artistic wonders and powerful symbols, and many others like them, make it possible to conjure up and visualize a "*musical, visual, literary, and architectural portrait of the culture of Spain*" capable of making a major contribution to broadening and deepening the overall portrait of Spain as a country, its people, and its culture as a whole through its many profound symbolic parts.

There are many other powerful symbols of Spain's culture as a whole and way of life. Included here would undoubtedly be Quixote windmills, bulls and bull runs, culinary delights such as tapas, paella, sangria, sherry, churro, special wines and olive oils, Camina scallop shells deemed to have a special "spiritual quality," colourful flags and castanets, paseo or strolling, exquisite craft objects, magnificent Spanish horses and gardens, El Cid (Spain's Robin Hood), espadrilles or summer shoes, cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Granada, Cordoba, Burgos, Santiago de Compostela, Salamanca, and Zaragoza, Fútbol (football) and such heroes as Iker Casillas, Andrés Iniesta, Raúl González, Xavi, Aitana Bonmati, Olga Carmona, and countless others, the recently created gender neutral organization Selección Española de Fútbol, and numerous other players and organizations.

These symbols have evolved over many centuries, and many of them have resulted from interactions that took place in southern and central Spain following the arrival of the Moors and the dominant role they played in the Andalusian region during the "Golden Age" from 756 to 1031 that produced a very lively flowerings of the arts, sciences, technology, and other activities. This age was declared by the scholar Américo Castor in 1948 and confirmed by many other scholars and historians during and since that time that resulted in a great deal of peace, harmony, and happiness between Christians, Jews, and

Muslims in Spain that has seldom occurred in history or any other part of the world. This was because these three groups set aside their religious differences and conflicts and experienced what is called “*convivencia*” or “*coexistence*” that was not only in the best interests of these three groups but also beneficial for all people and religions in Spain.

One of the most obvious illustrations of *convivencia* in historical terms was the marriage of Queen Isabella I of Castile (1451-1504) and King Ferdinand of Aragon (1452-1516) and the joint rule of these two heroic leaders that sealed the de facto *unification of Spain* as a country and no longer separate regions (a major feature in the creation and development of Spain as a country and culture as a whole). These two outstanding leaders jointly and successfully governed the country and acted as powerful symbols of *gender equality* that seldom occurred in the world at that time and for many centuries thereafter.

And this is not the end of this symbolic process. Far from it. As more and more symbols are added to this evolving portrait of the culture of Spain in the holistic sense, a more expansive portrait of this culture begins to emerge and take shape. Thanks to many contemporary technological developments such as films, television, recordings, and videos in earlier times and social media networks, technical advances, and digital devices recently, it is possible to enhance this emerging portrait considerably by exploring and experiencing many other important dimensions of Spain’s culture and appreciate its many cherished cultural achievements and symbols over the centuries. This can be enlarged and enriched considerably by flying over Spain in a virtual sense and viewing its geological and geographical features and formations, diverse regions, and cultures in visual terms in far more detail, which is now possible for most other countries’ cultures in the world today.

This can also be achieved, and far more so, by taking virtual tours of Spain’s art galleries, museums, cathedrals, mosques, castles, libraries, palaces, parades, festivals, and especially walking tours through the streets of its many enticing towns and cities at any time of the day to form general impressions of how the country’s public and private institutions and political, legal, economic, communications, and transportation systems work. These contemporary achievements are equally valuable and should be recognized and utilized rather than ignored, especially with respect to Spain’s highly effective social security system and impressive automotive, medical, technological, chemical, shipbuilding, and textile industries and exports. Added to this is the ability of Spain to achieve a fine balance between the forces of centralization and decentralization as well as relationships between many different types of people and groups in the country, thereby reducing some of the polarizations, divisions, and conflicts this can and do arise from this.

As indicated earlier, regions have always played a very important role in the cultural development of Spain over the centuries and still do today. As Anna Villarroya and Pedro Rothstein pointed out in their recent article, ‘The Integration of Cultural Rights in Spanish Cultural Policies’

Spain is a highly decentralised, quasi-federal country, where regional authorities have taken over most of the responsibility for culture.... In 2021, the majority of public cultural expenditure in Spain came from regional and local governments, which together represent 85% of public cultural spending. (13) This decentralized nature of Spain’s political model has favoured the adoption of different models for cultural policies. One of the most recent outstanding aspects is the adoption of different initiatives (e.g. legislative plans, and changes in structures) in the area of cultural rights at the state level, as well as in different Spanish regions....

To be fully exercised, cultural rights have to be taken into account in cultural policy making on all levels, including legal instruments for their protection and implementation.... Defending a cultural rights approach entails a rearticulation of human rights and freedoms towards a more democratic, equal and inclusive society for all citizens.

It is clear from this evolving portrait of the culture of Spain in holistic terms that the more parts and symbols such as these and others are added, the more the portrait is enlarged, enhanced, and begins to manifest what this culture as a whole and way of life is about, how it functions, and reveals itself to the world in more all-encompassing terms.

Much like most countries and cultures in the world, Spain and its culture have had positive and negative experiences over the course of history. Just as my own country and culture, Canada and Canadian culture, United States and American culture, and many European countries and their cultures were engaged in devastating acts of colonialism at home or abroad that involved the subjugation, oppression, and killing of millions of Indigenous people, expropriating their land and resources, taking children from their parents and putting them in residential schools where they were abused, beaten, and buried in unmarked graves, and also treated different ethnic and racial groups with disdain or disrespect, so Spain and its culture were involved in similar acts of colonialism abroad, went through bitter experiences with the Inquisition at home, and had painful encounters with dictatorial regimes more recently in their history. Experiences like these, which likely many peoples and countries in the world have had and possibly participated in at one time



or another in their history, must be included in the portraits of countries' cultures if they are to be objective, holistic, and concerned with addressing and rectifying these incredible injustices as much as possible. This includes official apologies from national governments, seeking forgiveness, and more importantly as far as the Indigenous peoples are concerned, conducting truth and reconciliation commissions, making retribution payments, instituting many legal resource and land agreements, and providing justice, compensation, and other measures and developments at present and going forward into the future. (14)

This helps to explain why the arts, humanities, heritage of history, and cultures have a much greater role to play in the world at this time and in the years ahead, why inclusion, integration, and cooperation are far more effective than exclusion, isolation, and competition, and artistic, scientific, and humanistic values and ideals are far superior to divisions, conflicts, confrontations, and wars. It is not coincidental in this regard that Federico Mayor, former Director-General of UNESCO and a well-known scientist, educator, poet, and diplomat in Spain and elsewhere in the world, created the Fundación Cultura de Paz (Foundation for a Culture of Peace) in Madrid in 2000 for such purposes. He has been unrelenting in his commitment to spreading the word about the dire need for peace and forgiveness rather than war and aggression in the world at every opportunity.

Hopefully, this more expansive portrait of the culture of Spain as a whole and way of life will help people and organizations in other countries and parts of the world to create similar portraits of their cultures in objective and holistic terms, be it in Africa, Asia, South America, North America, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, or elsewhere in the world. What should be constantly borne in mind in creating and using portraits like this and others is that this is not only possible and necessary at the national level, but also at the neighbourhood, community, town, city, and regional level as well.

While creating portraits like this can be very helpful to people and countries in all parts of the world in experiencing the paradise that exists on earth and realizing all the joy, happiness, and fulfillment that can come from this, there are many other productive uses of these portraits and remarkable parts-whole process and symbolic phenomenon.

## **SHIFTING FROM DEVELOPING ECONOMIES TO CULTIVATING CULTURES**

One of the most imperative of these uses is shifting attention and the priority in the world from *developing economies* in the partial sense to *cultivating cultures* in the holistic sense.

There is a reason why this shift is so necessary at present. It is because the natural environment was ignored (apart from being used as a valuable resource for developing economies) when Adam Smith laid the theoretical and practical foundations for the economic age with the publication of *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776. In this book, Smith recommended that people and countries should focus their attention and accord the highest priority to breaking wholes up into parts and used the example of the pin factory to illustrate how huge increases in material and monetary wealth could be realized from this, why people need to specialize in very specific production functions and jobs, pursue their own self interests, and allow an “invisible hand” and the “marketplace” to take care of everything else. This belief was strengthened substantially by numerous classical, Marxian, neoclassical, Keynesian, developmental, and contemporary economists who followed in Smith’s footsteps. As a result of these developments, the environmental crisis has been steadily increasing over the last two and a half centuries, is still given insufficient consideration today, and is threatening to escalate out of control and produce a “global catastrophe” or “ecological disaster” if it is not confronted and overcome without delay. This can only be dealt with effectively by seeing “the total picture of the world in holistic, impartial, and cultural terms” - rather than “an essential part of the total picture in partial, privileged, and economic terms” - as well as making a full commitment to the realization of this all-encompassing cultural perspective in the years and decades ahead.

The severity of this problem exists today because no consideration was given to the environmental, human, species, and cultural “**context**” in which economics and economies were situated when the economic age was initiated by Smith and still resides in much the same context today. As a result, it is not possible now, after the elapse of more than two hundred and fifty years, to insert the natural environment, people, other species, culture, and cultures in the holistic sense into the theoretical and practical foundations and ideological beliefs and underpinnings of the economic age *after the fact* since developing economies is still being given the highest priority in the world today. (15)

Without doubt, creation and development of the present economic age is the greatest human achievement in history. Not only has it improved living standards and the quality of life substantially for billions of people and numerous countries throughout the world since this age was started in 1776, but also it has produced major advances in virtually all other activities, from agriculture, industry, technology, and health care to longevity, education, the sciences, the arts, and numerous others. Unfortunately, however, the economic age is not capable of dealing with the difficult problems that exist in the world today because it was - and still is - designed to produce goods, services, and material and

monetary wealth before anything else, and is not designed to come to grips with the vast, complex, multidimensional, and dangerous problems that exist in the world today. This is why the “systemic and holistic” approach to the world’s most difficult problems – rather than the “partial, pillars, and “global public good” approach - is so essential. (16)

While progress has been made in certain areas using the partial, pillars, and global public good approach to culture that are now being utilized and promoted by virtually all countries, governments, the United Nations, UNESCO, other international institutions, and most people and organizations in the arts, heritage, and cultural fields, these more restricted and partial approaches to culture fall far short of what is needed to achieve the ambitious, essential, and inspiring UN Social Development Goals advocated for 2030. They can only be achieved by adopting and utilizing the holistic approach to culture since this is the only way to create the *new* perceptions, perspectives, worldviews, value systems, and especially lifestyles and the ways of life that are required for the future, rather than continuing to rely on the existing ones which are no longer working or are out of date. This makes it impossible to come to grips with the world’s most difficult and life-threatening problems, bring an end to treating the arts, humanities, heritage of history, and culture in marginal rather than mainstream terms, and chart a more viable, equitable, sustainable, and peaceful path for the future.

This also explains why it is so essential at this crucial juncture in history and the world to shift from *developing* economies in the partial sense – important as this is at present, has been in the past, and will be in the future - to *cultivating* cultures in the holistic sense which is the most effective way to go in the future. There is an obvious reason for this. Developing economies is a highly concentrated, specialized, and **one-stage activity** that is predicated on creating material and momentary **wealth** by breaking wholes up into parts, specializing in specific jobs and production functions, and relying on markets and the marketplace to attend to most if not all other matters and situations in the world.

In contrast, *cultivating* cultures is a substantially broader, deeper, multi-dimensional, and **two-stage activity** that is based on creating **well-being** in all its diverse forms and manifestations, *but, in addition to this and far more importantly and fundamentally, achieving balance, harmony, and synergy between all the diverse parts of cultures and especially creating cultures as wholes and ways of life that are far greater than the parts and the sum of the parts because new qualities are brought into existence when these cultural wholes and ways of life are created that are not in the parts.* Perhaps this is why Voltaire said rhetorically several centuries ago “do I plant, do I build, do I

*cultivate*,” and the great Roman orator and statesman Marcus Cicero claimed many centuries prior to this that “culture is the philosophy or *cultivation* of the soul” when he defined culture for the first time in history. Both these scholars understood only too well that “creating wholes” by connecting countless parts and reordering them if necessary to create harmony between them is a far more difficult, demanding, challenging, but necessary task in the overall scheme of things than developing parts such as economies and others taken separately or by themselves, thereby making this harmonization process one of the most crucial areas of public policy in the future.

In order to achieve this much more balanced and idealistic state of affairs in the future, economics and economies will have to be seen and treated as an essential part of culture and cultures in the holistic sense, rather than seeing and treating culture and cultures as an insignificant part of economics and economies in the partial sense which is the case today. It follows from this that the challenge of the future is not to ignore the fundamental importance of economics, developing economies, and the age of economics in the overall scheme of things. Rather, it is to situate and incorporate economics, economies, and economic activities in the substantially broader, deeper, and more fundamental challenge of *cultivating cultures*. In order to do this, holism, the holistic perspective, and well-being must be to the future cultural age what partialism, the partial perspective, and wealth are to the present economic age (17)

This should be accompanied by creating a comprehensive set of “cultural indicators” in holistic terms rather than continuing to rely on the set of “economic indicators” in partial terms which is still being used by many organizations, corporations, governments, and international institutions in the world today. In specific terms, these cultural indicators should be based on the many different ways well-being manifests itself in the world in all-inclusive ways - which include the natural environment, other species, social, health, welfare, artistic, humanistic, spiritual, economic, scientific, and many other indicators - rather than economic indicators in partial ways that are based on wealth and therefore people’s per capita income, countries’ gross or net national products or incomes, rates of economic growth, levels of economic development, and others.

These cultural indicators will necessitate focusing much more attention on and accord a much higher priority to the state of the natural environment, the overall well-being of people, countries, and other species, and the many different ways cultures can be cultivated in the years, decades, and centuries ahead. This will result in more inclusion and less exclusion, horizontal and “ground up” rather than vertical and “top down” cultivation

of cultures, favouring conservation, preservation, and distribution over consumption, materialism, and the marketplace, focusing attention on unity rather than division, peace rather than war, empathy, caring, sharing, cooperation, and compassion rather than greed, mistrust, competition, self-centredness, and aggression, beauty over brutality, and increasing funding for the arts, humanities, heritage of history, and “cultural industries” substantially in order to bring them into line and equilibrium with the sciences, artificial intelligence (AI), and contemporary technology. (18)

The distinguished cultural scholar and historian, Johan Huizinga, put his finger on the crux of this matter and summed up the future from an all-encompassing cultural perspective most effectively when he penned in the following passages:

The realities of economic life, of power, of technology, of everything conducive to man’s (humanity’s) material well-being must be balanced by strongly developed spiritual, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic values.... A culture which no longer can integrate the diverse pursuits of men (people) into a whole, which cannot restrain men (people) through a guiding set of norms, has lost its center and has lost its style. It is threatened by the exuberant overgrowth of its separate components. *It then needs a pruning knife, a human decision to focus once again on the essentials of culture and cut back the luxuriant but dispensable....* If such harmony of cultural functions is present, it will reveal itself as order, strong structure, style, and rhythmic life of the society (culture) in question. (19)

Unfortunately, there is a huge gap today between these harmonious possibilities proposed by Huizinga and the imbalances and disharmonies that exist in these areas throughout the world today. We desperately need to overcome this huge gap and severe imbalances and disharmonies if we are to be successful in experiencing more sustainability, stability, peace, order, and harmony in the world, less consumption, pollution, environmental devastation, and waste, wars over land and resources, polarization, and so forth. While the sciences and technology have a very important role to play in all this, so do the arts, humanities, heritage of history, culture, and the like. In fact, they have a much greater and more essential role to play at this particular time in history and the world by creating a great deal more humanity, humility, generosity, kindness, and forgiveness in the world, as well as making the world a more generous, kind, just, and humane place. (20)

Clearly many more ways will have to be found to cultivate artistic, humanistic, and heritage policies and practices that are capable of shifting the balance and priority from

“the self” to “the other,” helping poor, marginalized, and oppressed groups as well as different races, genders, tribes, and other species, doing much more to beautify neighbourhoods, communities, towns, cities, rural areas, regions, and nations through the latest advances in the horticultural and environmental arts, providing much more funding for music, drama, dance, and other artistic activities that unite and connect people rather than divide and separate them, creating many more community, ethnic, and cultural centres as well as multicultural festivals and fairs, establish many more opportunities for people of all ages to improve their education, training, and learning in artistic and cultural fields and academic disciplines, fostering more enticing architectural innovations and design developments, and many others. As Huizinga saw this:

A community is in a state of culture when the domination of nature in the material, moral, and spiritual realms permits a state of existence which is *higher* and *better* than the given natural conditions, and when this state of existence is furthermore characterized by a harmonious balance of material and spiritual values and is guided by an ideal ... towards which the different activities of the community are directed. (21)

This won't happen without confronting and addressing the major imbalances, disharmonies, divisions, and polarizations that exist in the world today, as well as dealing with problems before or when they happen rather than ignoring them or waiting until it is too late to do anything about them and they multiply and escalate out of control. (22) Developments like this, and others, are required more than ever to put humanity and the world in the strongest possible position to come to grips with the most difficult problems confronting humanity and the world today and going forward into the future.

## **COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE WORLD'S MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS**

Let's commence this quintessential requirement by examining climate change, global warming, and the environmental crisis as the most obvious, dangerous, and life-threatening problem in the world today. This problem will only be addressed successfully by cultivating cultures in the holistic sense that are based on new and more enlightened worldviews, values, value systems, lifestyles, and ways of life as stated earlier. This is because cultivating cultures *as wholes and ways of life* is the only way to create more harmonious relationships between human beings, other species, and the natural world, establish more balanced relationships between the material and non-material dimensions of development and life, and decrease the ecological demands that are being made on the world's scarce resources, finite carrying capacity, and fragile eco-systems.

There are many ways this can be accomplished in fact. Included here are reducing people's *excessive* material demands, desires, wants, and expectations; focusing attention and placing a much higher priority on "artistic and humanistic *experiences*" rather than "material and manufactured *products*" because experiences require far fewer resources than the production of products; eliminating fossil fuel use as quickly and completely as possible; developing green economies; using alternative forms of energy; and especially helping people to "*be more*" rather than "*have more*" in their daily lives and behaviour going forward into the future. (23) While this latter requirement will not be easy as Thomas Legrand points out in his valuable book *Politics of Being: WISDOM and SCIENCE for a New Developmental Paradigm*, fortunately many people and countries are beginning to realize that this must be done immediately and on a far more massive scale and sustained basis as well as accompanied by countless commitments to sustainability and conservation.

Added to this very difficult problem is overcoming the colossal inequalities that exist in income, wealth, and resources throughout the world at present. What has become crystal clear over the last century or so is that the more income and wealth is created, the more the bulk of this income and wealth ends up in the hands of wealthy elites, multinational corporations, CEO's and shareholders, and the most powerful nations.

This problem was identified more than a century ago by Vilfredo Pareto who developed what came to be known as Pareto's "law of income distribution." After undertaking numerous empirical studies and intensive investigations, Pareto concluded that aristocratic elites, powerful corporations, and affluent countries will always be the recipients of the lion's share of any and all increases in the world's income, wealth, and resources because they own or control most of this income, wealth, and resources to begin with, and will always be on the receiving end of the majority of every increase that takes place in this area in the future. This is due largely to the nature and functioning of the economic age and its diverse economic systems – especially the capitalist system but also others - that are designed to function this way through such practices as profit maximization, manipulation of markets in general and stock markets in particular, horizontal expansion and vertical integration, and numerous others. (24)

This is confirmed at present by the fact that the richest classes, corporations, and countries in the world own or control more than 95 percent of the world's income, wealth, and resources and have no intention of giving this up. This is evident as soon as we view the "distribution problem" from a holistic, cultural perspective rather than partial, economic perspective. This problem will only be dealt with successfully by creating many

more inclusive employment possibilities and investment and educational opportunities; increasing the minimum wage significantly; creating and enforcing rigorous and progressive taxation measures, policies, and practices; and redistributing income, wealth, and resources on a far more equitable and generous basis than the ones that exists today.

And this brings us to the third difficult problem in the world that must be addressed and overcome in the future. It results from the fact that there is an enormous amount of movement, immigration, emigration, intermingling, intermixing, travelling, and tourism going on in the world today between people and countries with very different worldviews, values, customs, beliefs, traditions, and ways of life due to phenomenal improvements in transportation, communications, globalization, and technology. As this occurs, countries, cultures, and populations are becoming much more multicultural and diverse in their composition and character. They are also experiencing many more tensions, conflicts, and confrontations within and between them, and, in many cases, experiencing erosions in their national identities and collective sense of belonging. As this happens, more and more countries are being pushed closer to radical breakdowns and potential break-ups in their constitutional arrangements and political, economic, social, and cultural affairs.

While achieving “unity in diversity” would go a long way towards resolving this problem, it will take a great deal of time and a considerable amount of effort and hard work to realize this more ideal state of affairs. This will not be possible, however, without people, organizations, and countries learning much more about their own cultures in the holistic sense and the cultures of other people, groups, organizations, and countries; teaching children and young people about the cultures, worldviews, roots, beliefs, and ways of life of their own cultures and the cultures of other countries; sharing information and discussing the cultivation of cultures with family members, friends, colleagues, and people in their own networks and those of others; and exchanging and sharing thoughts, ideas, insights, and ideals on matters like this with people and organizations around the world.

What may be even more imperative than this is creating the *new symbols* that are mandatory to bring people, organizations, countries, and cultures together when other forces are operating to split them apart. Think, for instance, of what Edward Elgar’s *Pomp and Circumstances Marches* and especially his *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1* (“Land of Hope and Glory”) achieved in this area for England and Great Britain, Jean Sibelius’ *Finlandia* for Finland, and flamenco music and dances for Spain.



If history is any guide, many of these symbols will come from Indigenous people, marginalized groups, oppressed minorities, different ethnic and racial groups, and recent immigrants. A good example of this is the United States during and after the Second World War when there was a profuse outpouring of music by many American composers and lyricists whose parents came from Europe as immigrants in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century and settled in or near New York when this city was rapidly becoming the major focal point for musical and theatrical activity in the United States and the world. Included in this group, among many others, are Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II popular musicals *Oklahoma*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Carousel*, as well as such famous songs as “You’ll Never Walk Alone” and “Climb Every Mountain;” Aaron Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*, *Rodeo*, and *Fanfare for the Common Man*; Max Steiner’s film music for *Gone With the Wind*; and Irving Berlin’s “White Christmas,” “Easter Parade,” and especially “God Bless America” to name a few. These musical masterpieces achieved a great deal in creating “unity in diversity” in the United States during and after the Second World War when it was needed the most. They also had a powerful nationalistic effect in a positive sense on Americans, American culture, and the American way of life, and are now enjoyed by billions of people all over the world and not just in the United States.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

Requirements like these and the many others mentioned earlier will not be realized without powerful and proactive contributions coming from four very distinct and specific groups: people and organizations working in the arts, humanities, heritage, and cultural fields; people and organizations working in government and politics; corporations and educational institutions; and the general public. (25)

Of these four groups, people and organizations working in the arts, humanities, heritage, and cultural fields have the most immediate and quintessential role to play in proactive terms and taking responsibility for it. This group needs to provide the leadership, inspiration, and commitments that are required to set this transformational cultural process in motion and enable it to flourish. While this group is spread across many different disciplines, activities, and areas of the world at present, what is needed more than ever is coming together and coalescing into a cohesive and coherent cultural community and powerful global force. If this group does not provide the initiative, impetus, and proactive activities that are necessary for this, it is very likely that the exciting developments and latent possibilities mentioned earlier will not be achieved and never become realities.

Next to people and organizations working in the arts, humanities, heritage, and cultural fields, people and organizations working in government and politics have the most essential role to play and responsibilities to assume, especially in terms of committing to the creation and cultivation of cultures and entering a cultural age. This must be a powerful and proactive role as well, but in a very different way compared to the first group.

As far as governments and politicians are concerned, their role and responsibilities provide an opportunity to realize one of the highest, wisest, and most crucial ideals of government and politics as well as culture and cultures of all. It is commitment in principal and practice to the development of “the whole” in general and “wholes” in particular, and not just to particular parts of the whole and wholes. In order to realize this, it will be necessary to act in the best interests of *all* people, countries, species, and the natural environment, which also happens to coincide with the cultivation of cultures and culture in this all-inclusive sense as well. If this holistic requirement is not taken up, acted upon, and endorsed by governments and politicians it will likely not be achieved at all because virtually all other groups in society and the world are concerned with, involved in, and committed to developing the parts of cultures and not cultures as wholes and ways of life.

This will necessitate leadership in the governmental and political domains that comes from people who are conversant with and knowledgeable about the arts, humanities, heritage of history, culture, and cultures in holistic terms, rather than the types of people who are in power today. Political and governmental leaders of this type that come to mind from the past in this respect are Léopold Sédar Senghor, a prominent cultural activist, poet, and first president of Senegal; Ignacy Jan Paderewski, a pianist, composer, and former prime minister of Poland; Václav Havel, a playwright, author, and the last president of Czechoslovakia before it broke up; and more recently, Angela Merkel, chancellor of Germany for many years; Jacinda Ardern, former prime minister of New Zealand; and Volodymyr Zelenskyy, president of Ukraine today. Leaders like these and many others will be needed more than ever to bring a cultural age into existence and guide it through its formative stage of development. These leaders will need broad rather than narrow perspectives on the world and countries; understand the fundamental importance of culture and cultures in the overall scheme of things; have the courage to stand up to other people and organizations such as wealthy elites and powerful corporations and their lobbies when and where it is necessary to do so; and commit to placing a much higher priority on the well-being of all people, species, countries, and the natural environment and not just some people, species, countries, and select parts of the environment.

In order to be successful, political and governmental developments, policies, and practices will have to be *transformational* in the sense that they bring about fundamental

changes in human actions, behaviour, lifestyles, and ways of life; *transcendental* in the sense that they expand people's consciousness, appreciation, and commitment to the non-material and qualitative aspects of life, elevate, enhance, and achieve higher and loftier goals, ideals, ethics, and objectives for humanity, and live happier, healthier, and more fulfilling spiritual, and compassionate lives; *redistributive* in the sense that income and wealth are deflected from people and countries that have too much to people and countries that have too little and desperately need help; and *regenerative* in the sense that things are recycled rather than thrown out, shared with other people, and are reproduced and recreated in order to capitalize on recent developments and breakthroughs in medical, biological, and ecological research, knowledge, and innovations.

Corporations and educational institutions are the next group. As far as corporations are concerned, they will likely be required to initiate and implement some of the biggest and most essential changes of all. In order to do this, it will be necessary to abandon their commitment to profit maximization as their principal objective and settle for "reasonable" rather than "excessive profits," as well as change their behavioural practices and beliefs from acting as economic organizations in the specialized sense to cultural organizations in the holistic sense which is being advocated by more and more people in business, corporations, and corporate scholars today. The benefits from this could be substantial and very exciting, since they will see their organizations as cultural wholes made up of many inter-related parts, and, as a result of this, examine what their responsibilities are with respect to their historical development, worldviews, value systems, and underlying axioms and assumptions, how they deal with their clients, customers, employees, suppliers, other corporations, communities, countries where they are located, the natural environment, and future directions. (26) There is no doubt that many of these and other benefits that will accrue to corporations will result in an incredible expansion of markets that are already becoming much more inclusive than exclusive in nature and are providing many more opportunities to provide goods and services that have already begun to manifest themselves throughout the world today.

Like corporations, educational institutions also have an important role to play and responsibilities to assume. This will require awarding a much higher priority and far more funding to developing the arts, humanities, heritage, culture, and cultures in their educational systems, curriculum offerings, programs, present plans, and future directions. This will also require a much larger battery of courses specifically related to culture and cultures in the all-embracing sense, as well as specially-designed courses that broaden and deepen students' understanding, knowledge, and experiences in specific cultures in the world in both theory and practice, as well as future cultural developments and policies

throughout the world. This should also result in pedagogical policies and practices that bring many disciplines together rather than driving them farther apart.

And this brings us to the final group in this quadruple requirement, namely the general public or public at large. While this group may not be expected to play as forceful or immediate a role as the other stakeholders, ultimately their role and responsibilities could be the most important of all. This is because things will not change - and change substantially and for the better - until people in both the public sector and the private sector advocate for “systemic cultural change” and the need to “change the culture” when this is necessary, rather than piecemeal and partial change which is usually the case today. In order to do this, this group will have to participate actively in reducing the demands they are making on the natural environment by living lives that are more qualitative, creative, balanced, and experiential in character, as well as make a full commitment to preservation of the world’s natural resources and cultural heritage, fundamental foodstuffs, and technological practices. They will also have to fight for more equality, justice, civility, morality, and order in the world, help oppressed and marginalized people and countries, live their lives in communion and solidarity with each other, and elevate life to a higher state of consciousness, stage of mindfulness, and level of awareness.

Is it possible for people and organizations in these four inter-connected areas to initiate and implement these roles and responsibilities successfully? Indeed it is. As the great cultural awakening and many other developments that are now occurring in the world have demonstrated and demonstrated convincingly, people and countries in all parts of the world have achieved and are achieving remarkable changes through aggressive actions and enlightened engagements in numerous environmental causes and humanistic concerns, participating in many activities that have resulted in substantial and constructive cultural changes and reforms, and are laying the foundations and creating the conditions for a much more peaceful, equitable, and harmonious world. In doing so, they have confirmed the fact that it is possible to get things done when people work together, are persistent, and act in the public interest. While a great deal remains to be accomplished, the collective, bottom up, and collaborative approach to cultivating cultures and addressing the world’s most difficult problems is working and consequently there are grounds for optimism and enthusiasm rather than pessimism, anxiety, and apprehension in the future.

This confirms the fact that dedication to inclusion, recognition of people’s rights, beliefs, differences, talents, and freedoms, and commitment to cultivating the world’s cultures as wholes and ways of life is the right way to go in the future.

## ENDNOTES

1. Culture was first defined in print in holistic terms by Edward Burnett Tylor in 1871 when he claimed that culture is “*that complex whole* which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any *other capabilities and habits acquired by man (people) as a member (members) of society.*” Edward Burnett Tylor, *The Origins of Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 1 (italics and insert mine). Some cultural scholars like to use trees and what is sometimes called “*the culture tree*” to illustrate the holistic character of culture and cultures because trees are also wholes made up of many different parts such as roots, trunks, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit where some of these parts are visible but others not, such as their roots. The most symbolic and visual parts of trees are obviously the leaves, flowers, and fruit because they epitomize trees most effectively and make it possible to differentiate between diverse types of trees. Nevertheless, they are not the most important parts of trees because trees are holistic, dynamic, and living organisms just like culture and cultures, and the branches, trunks, and especially roots play the most essential role of all in the functioning of trees because they carry the nutrients and fluids that are essential to keep trees in general and their leaves, flowers, and fruit in particular alive, functioning, and flourishing. They are also like the cultures of human beings and other species in many ways because they interact with other trees through their root systems, just as humans and other species interact with their species and other species. See, for example, “Culture and Cultural Identity: Analogy of the Tree.” *Interculture*, Issue No. 127, Volume XXVIII, No. 2, Issue (Montreal: Intercultural Institute of Montreal), Montreal, Canada).
2. Giles Gunn, *The Culture of Criticism and the Criticism of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 95 (italics mine).
3. Robert Redfield, *The Little Community: Viewpoints for the Study of a Human Whole* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 158–159 (italics mine). For a detailed analysis of the many different perceptions and definitions of culture and cultures that have been advocated over the course of history, see: D. Paul Schafer, *The World as Cultures: Cultivation of the Soul to the Cosmic Whole* (Oakville, ON: Rock’s Mills Press, 2022).
4. *Ibid.*, p. 161 (quotation marks Redfield’s, italics mine).
5. Edward Hall, *Beyond Culture* (Garden City: New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976), p. 195 (insert mine).
6. D. Paul Schafer, ‘The Significance of Symbols in the Cultivation of Cultures as Wholes and Ways of Life,’ *International Journal of Architecture and Engineering*, Special Two-Volume Issue co-edited by Olimpia Niglio and Rana P.B. Singh (Rome: EdA Esempi di Architettura, International Research Center, 2024), p. 39.

7. Smetana conceived and wrote *Vltava* (*The Moldau*) as a very important component of his musical masterpiece *Ma Vlast* (*My Country*) which conveys his love for his country and culture *in musical terms* in a series of portraits based on legends and landscapes of his homeland or what he called “musical pictures of Czech glories and defeats.” It took Smetana the better part of the 1870’s to bring this monumental musical portrait of his country and culture to fruition. Each movement in the portrait is a self-standing symphonic poem with its own specific story. In order of their placement in this portrait, the movements portray chivalrous deeds at a medieval castle (*Vyšehrad*); a river journey with scenes of rural life (*Vltava*); the legendary revenge of a spurned maiden (*Šárka*); the fields and woods along the Elbe River (*Z českých luhů a hájů*); the perseverance of Czech warriors (*Tábor*); and the reminder of their eventual return in victory (*Blaník*). This description is based on a write-up provided in the Encyclopedia Britannica.

8. See: D. Paul Schafer, ‘The Significance of Symbols in the Cultivation of Cultures as Wholes and Ways of Life,’ *op. cit.*, p. 30 (insert mine).

9. Jere Paul Surber, *Culture and Critique: An Introduction to the Critical Discourses of Cultural Studies* (Boulder: Western Press, 1988), p. 238 (italics mine).

10. In the case of my own country and culture – Canada and Canadian culture – there are a few songs I feel should definitely be included that achieve this symbolic effect. One is Godfrey Ridout’s *Fall Fair* since fairs are very common in most towns and cities across the country. Another is Allister MacGillivray’s *Song for the Mira* (*Out on the Mira*) sung by John McDermott, Anne Murray, or Daniel O’Connell that achieves a similar purpose and effect. While these works are not well-known or often heard in Canada or by Canadians today, they communicate a great deal in informational, sensorial, and symbolic terms about the character of Canada and Canadian culture as a whole and overall way of life.

11. Amos Rapoport, ‘Culture and the Urban Order,’ in John A. Agnew, John Mercer, and David E. Sopher (eds.), *The City in Cultural Context* (Boston: Allan and Unwin, 1984), p. 54 (italics mine).

12. Interestingly, a small clay pot in Diego Velázquez’s *Las Meninas* may hold the key to unlocking this mysterious 17th-Century painting according to Kelly Grovier and the following post on the Internet: “Sometimes a vase is just a vase. However, sometimes it is a portal to another plane of perception. In Velázquez’s 17th-Century masterpiece *Las Meninas*, a ricochet of shadows and mirrors that never ceases to intrigue, a small and underappreciated clay jug at the centre of the canvas transforms the work from a disorderly snapshot of courtly life into an arresting treatise on the illusory and ultimately transcendable nature of existence. Erase that easily overlooked earthenware object from the heart of the Spanish Golden Age painting, and its mysterious pulse, which has captivated the attention of observers for more than three and a half centuries since Velázquez created the painting in 1656, withers to a whisper and stops.”

13. Anna Villarroya and Pedro Rothstein, ‘The Integration of Cultural Rights in Spanish Cultural Policies,’ *Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends*, September, 2024. It should be noted here that the statistics provided in this article are based on the partial definition of culture provided at the outset of this article and not the holistic one.

14. See: D. Paul Schafer, *The Great Cultural Awakening: Key to an Equitable, Sustainable, and Harmonious Age* (Oakville, ON: Rock’s Mills Press, 2024), Chapter 9, ‘The Centrality of Cultural Development and Policy,’ pp. 173-198.

15. D. Paul Schafer, *Revolution or Renaissance: Making the Transition from an Economic Age to a Cultural Age* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2008). See: *Part I, The Age of Economics*, pp. 9-135 for a detailed analysis of the origins, evolution, mechanics, and assessment of the economic age and what is needed to shift to a cultural age in the future

16. The *partial definition of culture* is mentioned at the beginning of this article as “the arts, humanities, heritage of history, and, more recently, the “cultural industries.” This “cultural sector” definition is used by virtually all governments, corporations, educational institutions, foundations, people, and organizations in the world today. The *pillar definition of culture* was first formulated and advocated by the Australian scholar Jon Hawkes who examined the need to structure a new ‘pillar’ for sustainability. His document *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture’s essential role in public planning* is recognized as a masterpiece for local policy making in many cities throughout the world. The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) officially endorsed this definition as “the fourth pillar of sustainable development” on November 17, 2010. The first three of these pillars are economic, environmental, and social pillars in that order. The “*global public good*” *definition of culture* was introduced at UNESCO’s Mondiacult Conference convened in Mexico City in 2022.

17. See: *Revolution or Renaissance, op. cit., Part II, The Age of Culture and Epilogue*, pp. 139-261 for a description and examination of the signs, foundations, functioning, priorities, and flourishing of the age of culture.

18. D. Paul Schafer, ‘The Role of the Arts in Enhancing Education, Culture, Compassion, and Coming to Grips with the Challenges of the Present and the Future.’ This article was written for an International Conference held at Volodymyr Dahl East Ukraine National University in Kyiv in May, 2024.

19. Karl J Weintraub, *Visions of Culture: Voltaire, Guizot, Burckhardt, Lamprecht, Huizinga, Ortega y Gasset* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966). p, 216, 219, 220 (inserts and italics mine).

20. D. Paul Schafer, ‘The Role of the Arts ....’ *op. cit.* Written for the International Conference held at the Volodymyr Dahl East Ukraine National University in Kyiv in May, 2024.

21. Karl J. Weintraub, *Visions of Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

22. D. Paul Schafer. *The Great Cultural Awakening: Key to an Equitable, Sustainable, and Harmonious Age*, *op.cit.* See Chapter 11, pp. 219-243 on ‘Harmonizing Crucial Cultural Relationships’ for a detailed analysis of how major disharmonies can be dealt with effectively by cultivating cultures in holistic terms, such as the disharmonies between the arts and sciences, human rights and human responsibilities, unity and diversity, the material and non-material dimensions of development and life, people and the natural environment, and others. This includes instituting the cultural policies and practices that are necessary to overcome these disharmonies before they get out of hand.

23. Thomas Legrand, *Politics of Being: WISDOM and SCIENCE for a New Developmental Paradigm* (Ocean of Wisdom Press, 2021).

24. See: D. Paul Schafer, *Revolution or Renaissance*, *op. cit.*, Part I, Chapter 2 on the ‘*Evolution of the Economic Age*’ for information on the studies, theories, law, and findings of Vilfredo Pareto, as well as Chapters 3 on the *Mechanics of the Economic Age* and Chapter 4 on an *Assessment of the Economic Age* which are concerned with how the economic age and its systems function in fact, pp. 65-66, 93-118, and 119-135 respectively.

25. D. Paul Schafer, *The Great Cultural Awakening*, *op. cit.* See Chapter 10, pp. 199-217 on ‘Opening the Doors to a Cultural Age’ for a more detailed description of what the roles and responsibilities of the principal groups of stakeholders are and how they can be realized.

26. See, for example: Edgar Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (New York: Jossey-Bass, 2010); John Kotter, *Corporate Culture and Performance* (New York: Free Press, 2011); and Elliott Jacques, *Requisite Organization: A Total System of Effective Managerial Organization and Managerial Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup>. Century* (London: Routledge, 2011).

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