

# **CULTURE AS A REALITY**

## **20 PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS THE CREATION OF A CULTURAL AGE**

**This series was created by D. Paul Schafer, Founder and Director of the World Culture Project and Mark Riva, Founder of the IMAGINE magazine and is divided into 20 sessions that were posted on the IMAGINE Website once a week from May 21, 2022 to October 1, 2022.**

Each of these 20 sessions is divided into four parts, consisting of a principal **THEME**, a few key **QUOTES**, several relevant **QUESTIONS**, and a number of **SOURCES** of information such as readings, videos, and so forth.

### **OVERVIEW OF THE SERIES**

#### **MAY21 TO OCTOBER 1, 2022**

SESSION 1 (MAY 21)	INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES –CREATING A CULTURAL AGE AND ENABLING IT TO FLOURISH
SESSION 2 (MAY 28)	PEOPLE ARE CULTURE (MEG PIER)
SESSION 3 (JUNE 4)	CULTURE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PERSONALITIES AND LIVES
SESSION 4 (JUNE 11)	THE CULTURAL PERSONALITY
SESSION 5 (JUNE 18)	THE CULTURESCAPE - SELF-AWARARENESS OF COMMUNITIES
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SESSION 7 (JULY 2)	CULTURAL EDUCATION
SESSION 8 (JULY 9)	CULTURE FROM THE GROUND UP
SESSION 9 (JULY 16)	TOWN, CITY, AND REGIONAL CULTURES (PART I – THE ARTS)
SESSION 10 (JULY 23)	– TOWN, CITY, AND REGIONAL CULTURES (PART II -

- GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

SESSION 11 (JULY 30) – NATIONAL CULTURES

SESSION 12 (AUG. 6) – INTERNATIONAL (CULTURAL) RELATIONS

SESSION 13 (AUG. 13) – WORLD CULTURE, WORLD CULTURES, AND THE COSMOS

SESSION 14 (AUG. 20) – THE ROOTS OF CULTURE, CULTURES, AND CULTURAL GENETICS (DR. MIRA SARTIKA)

SESSION 15 (AUG. 27) – THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY (PROFESSOR BENNO WERLEN)

SESSION 16 (SEPT 3) - THE LIVES, CULTURES, AND WAYS OF LIFE OF OTHER SPECIES

SESSION 17 (SEPT. 10) – THE AGE OF CULTURE: WHY, WHAT, AND HOW?

SESSION 18 (SEPT. 17) – CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY: KEY TO LIFE AND LIVING IN A CULTURAL AGE

SESSION 19 (SEPT. 24) – IMAGINING, ENTERING, AND LIVING IN A CULTURAL AGE

SESSION 20 (OCT. 1) – MAKING THE AGE OF CULTURE A REALITY

**SESSION 1 - Saturday, May 21, 2022**

**THEME**

The basic theme of the series is that we have been living in an economic age ever since Adam Smith's famous book *The Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776. While this age has produced a phenomenal volume of goods and services and incredible amounts of material and monetary that have enabled billions of people throughout the world to enjoy higher standards of living and a far better quality of life since Smith's day, it is becoming increasingly apparent that this age is not capable of coming to grips with the dangerous and life-threatening problems that exist in the world today. This is especially true for climate change and the environmental crises, colossal disparities and inequalities of income and wealth, many more conflicts and wars, and the potential for a nuclear, chemical, or ecological disaster. This is largely because the economic age is not designed to deal with difficulties as vast, multidimensional, and complicated as these and many others.

In order to deal with these and other problems, it is necessary to move out of the present economic age and into a future cultural age, where culture and cultures are perceived and defined in **central** terms in the holistic and all-encompassing sense as “complex wholes” and “total ways of life,” rather than in **marginal** terms as frills, leisure-time activities, and generators of economic growth and activity.

This realization is occurring as a result of the great cultural awakening that is taking place in the world today and involving billions of people and numerous countries in one form or another. This is due to the protests of the Black and Indigenous peoples of the world, the actions of countless colonized, marginalized, and oppressed groups, countries, and people who are returning to their original cultures, traditions, and ways of life, the growing realization that organizations are cultures and should be seen and dealt with in these terms, the steady growth of cultural studies in most educational institutions in the world, the rapid escalation of cultural tourism, and others. These developments are revealing that a major transformation is taking place in the world that is based on such frequently voiced statements as “*change the culture*” and the dire need for “*systemic cultural change*” and not just incremental or partial change.”

## QUOTES

“Culture in the future is the crux of the future.” Eleanora Barbieri Masini, *The Future of Cultures: Meeting of the Working Group on the Futures of Cultures*, UNESCO, Paris, Vol. 1, p. 6.

“Culture, however we define it, is central to everything we do and think. It is what we do and the reason why we do it, what we wish and why we imagine it, what we are and how we express it, how we live and in what manner we approach death. It is our environment and the patterns of our adaptation to it. It is the world we have created and are still creating; it is the way we see that world and the motives that urge us to change it. It is the way we know ourselves and each other; it is our web personal relationships; it is the images and abstractions that allow us to live together in communities and nations. It is the element in which we live.” Bernard Ostry. *The Cultural Connection* (Toronto. McClelland and Stewart, 1978), p. 1.

“The systematic interpretation of culture brings us close to the thesis that global development is in reality the development of cultures and civilizations.” Nada Švob-Dokić “Culture as a System: Identity, Development and Communication.” Radvoj Development International. Vol. VI, No. 2-3 July-December, 1991, Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb, 1991. p. 299.

Development is not merely an economic and political concept; it is more fundamentally a process of culture and civilization.” Rajni Kothari (Rapporteur) *The Scheveningen Report*:

*Towards a New International Development Strategy*. (Scheveningen Symposium, 25-28 July, 1979), International Foundations for Development Alternatives, Nyon, 1979, p.7.

“The root causes of the crisis are essentially systemic in nature. That is to say, the cause and effect relationships take place within a complex system of interactions in which no single element can be isolated from the whole. Ignoring this simple truth is, in my view, one of the principal root causes of the past development that have produced the current crisis.” Maurice Strong, *Bridges of Hope*, p. 147.

“Culture, like freedom, is never something which once gained can be taken for granted. It is a matter of ceaseless effort. Hugh Jenkins, *The Culture Gap: An Experience of Government and the Arts*. Marion Boyars. London, 1979, p. 19.

## QUESTIONS

Are you in agreement with the statement that culture should play a central rather than marginal role in the world of the future? If so, why? If not, why not?

Do you think developing culture and cultures should replace developing economics and economies as the highest priority in the world of the future?

From your perspective, what do you think the world of the future should be like and how would should and could play a central role in it?

## SOURCES

D. Paul Schafer, *The World as Culture: Cultivation of the Soul to the Cosmic Whole*. Rock’s Mills Press, Oakville, Ontario. 2022.

## SESSION 2 - SATURDAY, MAY 28, 2022

### THEME:

In the inaugural launch of the first week of our 20-week conversation series on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>., the main theme of **Culture as a Reality** was stated as the central role culture needs to play in the world in order to enter a cultural age. The most relevant quote for this inaugural session was by Eleanora Barbieri Masini, a distinguished cultural scholar and futurist from Italy, who said “culture in the future is the crux of the future,” thereby indicating that culture has a far more powerful role to play in the world of the future than it has the past or does at present.

Now that the main theme has been established for the series, the spotlight focuses on people and the key role they can and should play in opening the doors to a cultural age and enabling it to flourish. We are privileged to have Meg Pier provide the input and basis for this

conservation because no person is more qualified or knowledgeable about this matter or has more experience in this specific area.

Meg Pier is the founder, editor, and publisher of **People Are Culture (PAC)**, a website that explores the meaning and relevance of culture through in-depth interviews and feature stories about how culture is created and shared. PAC profiles indigenous artisans; pioneering activists and innovators; dedicated stewards and preservationists; spiritual seekers; global visionaries and a host of others, who each relate their inspiration, process, techniques, and heritage. PAC's human interest pieces also delve into its subject's personal epiphanies, challenges, breakthroughs, and hopes for the future - for at the heart of all culture is our shared human condition.

People Are Culture presently provides more than 250 interviews, feature stories, and travel guides like this that reveal what makes places and different cultures unique. PAC shines a light on the traditions, customs, crafts, and lifestyles of more than 30 countries in North, South and Central America, as well as Armenia, Europe, India, and the Middle East. Interviews with people in this project cover 13 major categories, from architecture, archaeology, dance, and food to music, spirituality, textiles, and visual arts. As indicated on the PAC website, “In each piece, people share powerful insights about their heritage, while also revealing their own transformational life lessons and spiritual practices, world-changing ideas, dramatic adventures, and hard-won wisdom.

PAC's stories take you deeper into the world's different cultures--and also reminds us that we all share the human condition. Culture explains what it means to be human. Culture is all the myriad ways we create, communicate, identify, individuate, and connect. Culture provides ways to both express our individuality, and to see ourselves in others. Culture is the transmission line that makes possible cooperation, peace, and prosperity. Without the capacity for *connection* we have misunderstandings, fear, intolerance, prejudice, chaos, anarchy, and annihilation.

#### **QUOTES:**

Relevant quotes by Meg for this session are “Culture is both Universal and Personal” and “Culture explains what it means to be human.”

#### **QUESTIONS:**

Given that “people are culture” and we live a “cultural life” in the holistic sense that encompasses all aspects of culture and cultures and not just some aspects, how can people play a practical and proactive role in coming to grips with the dangerous and life-threatening problems that exist in the world today and make it possible for humanity and the world to cross over the threshold to a cultural age in the years and decades ahead. Your thoughts, suggestions, and ideas on this would be highly valued and much appreciated as

we move forward with our series of conversations and probe into many other aspects of culture in the weeks to come

### SOURCES:

People are Culture website: <https://www.peopleareculture.com/>

Book: What is Culture?; Why Does it Matter? This book is available on all Amazon sites

## SESSION 3 - SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2022

### THEME

The theme of last week's **Culture as a Reality** conversation was "**people**" – *all people* and not just some people, most people, or wealthy and privileged people. It is important to state and accept this fact because culture plays a central role in the lives of all people when it is seen and treated in the holistic sense as a complex whole or total way of life. This is why Session 2 of our conversation series was devoted to the work of Meg Pier and her organization – **People Are Culture** – since the focus of Meg's wonderful work in this area is on the role that culture plays in the lives of all people throughout the world as depicted in the way they live their lives, the personal stories they possess about this, and the interviews Meg creates and posts on her website to illustrate and confirm this.

This week's theme delves deeply into this most essential matter by examining "culture as the **foundation** for the development of people's personalities and lives." It is based on the conviction that all people in the world live a "**cultural life**" in this all-encompassing sense that is made up of countless parts that are woven together in different combinations and arrangements to create unique wholes and distinctive ways of life. These parts include not only people's bodies, minds, brains, souls, and spirits, but also all the diverse social, educational, economic, technological, political, environmental, recreational, spiritual, and other activities they are involved in over the course of their lives.

And this matter does not end here. Far from it. In order to be effective, people need to strive to make their cultural lives "**harmonious wholes**" and not just "wholes" since this is what experiencing happiness, fulfillment, meaning, and good health in life is really all about. Many cultural scholars have written about this in one form or another over the years, such as Matthew Arnold who believed that culture is the "harmonious expansion of all the powers which make the beauty and worth of human

nature and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the others,” as well as Goethe who advised us to “live in the whole, in the good, and the beautiful,” and Joseph Campbell who contended that we should “follow our bliss” if we want to do the things that we were intended to do with our lives and then strive to achieve this.

## QUOTES

“The study of culture properly begins with the study of the cultural elements of the individual.” James Feibleman

“Human cultures are people’s personalities writ large” This quote was made by Margaret Mead in the Foreword to Ruth Benedict’s popular book *Patterns of Culture* as a result of excerpts in this book by Benedict that said, “A culture, like an individual, is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action,” as well as these traits “add up to the culture’s unique form or shape, its wholeness.”

## QUESTIONS

Do you agree with the claim that all people live a *cultural life* as a whole or total way of life in the holistic sense? If so, do you see your own life in these terms now, or do you think this would be a good objective to pursue in the future? And what about creating and living your life as a “harmonious whole?” Is this your principal goal in life or are there other more effective ways of realizing this? If so, how can people avoid living a “disharmonious life” in the sense that they experience a lack of fulfillment, happiness, and good health in their lives?

Your comments on these questions will be much appreciated and very helpful as we move forward with this conversation series, especially as the next conversation will be about visualizing a new prototype of the human personality and how to develop it in the future, namely the cultural personality.

## SOURCES

D. Paul Schafer, ‘Culture as the Foundation for the Development of Our Personalities and Our Lives’ This article can be accessed by putting the title of the article in quotation marks into Google, or through: <https://oaji.net/articles/2020/690-1607525657.pdf>

Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*

James Feibleman, *The Theory of Human Culture*

Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*

John Cowper Powys, *The Meaning of Culture*

**SESSION 4 – SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 2022**

## THEME

The theme of last week's **Culture as a Reality** series was **culture** and **people** - *all* people and not just *some* people, *most* people, or *wealthy* people. This week's session is intimately related to this because it has to do with developing our own and other people's personalities and lives. In the economic age, two "personality types" have dominated this field because they are based on the objectives of this age. The first is "the specialist personality;" and the second is "the economic personality." The specialist personality results from Adam Smith's belief that all people should specialize in a specific production function because this creates the most material and monetary wealth for themselves, their countries, and the world at large. The economic personality results from the studies of neo-classical economists such as William Stanley Jevons who believed people are producers of goods and services on the one hand and consumers of goods and services on the other hand and should therefore strive to maximize their consumer satisfaction in the marketplace.

Both these personality types, which have dominated the world for more than two centuries, are breaking down. The specialist personality is breaking down because contemporary economic systems and technologies are changing so rapidly that people's production skills and abilities are often out of date soon after they are acquired, thereby causing them to lose their jobs or confront the fact that they may have ten or fifteen different jobs over the course of their lives. The economic personality is breaking down because people are seen largely as producers, consumers, and maximizers of their satisfaction in the marketplace, and consequently objects to be exploited in the interests of economic growth which, as we know, is having a devastating effect on the natural environment and making it impossible to achieve sustainable development. As a result of developments like this, and others, it is rapidly becoming apparent that we must create "new personality prototypes" that are consistent with the needs of the future rather than the present and the past.

This is why this week's session and theme are concerned with the personality prototype that is most appropriate for the age of culture and its goals, objectives, and ideals. I believe this is *the cultural personality*, which should be holistic, centered, creative, altruistic, and humane in order to realize more happiness, spirituality, and fulfillment in life as well as live in harmony with other people, species, culture, cultures, and the natural environment.

## QUOTES

"As the key to all the highest interests of the human race, Personality seems to be quite the most important and fruitful problem to which the thinkers of the coming generation could direct their attention." Hans Christiaan Smuts

"The whole purpose and end of culture is a thrilling happiness of a particular sort - of the sort, in fact, that is caused by a response to life made by the harmony of the intellect, the imagination, and the senses." John Cowper Powys

“Follow your bliss and the universe will open doors where there are only walls.” Joseph Campbell

“Live in the whole, the good, and the beautiful.” Goethe

## **QUESTIONS**

Do you agree that the two personality prototypes - the specialist personality and the economic personality – are the most common today but are breaking down? Is your life at present based on one or both of these prototypes? If so, how have current developments and events impacted on your thoughts and views about your own personality development and that of others? Are you attracted to the idea and characteristics of the cultural personality proposed here, or are you searching for a different kind of personality development and characteristics in the future? And what about this concept of personality types and prototypes in the first place? Do you think they are helpful or harmful going forward into the future and living in a cultural age?

Your comments on these matters will be much appreciated and very helpful as we move forward with our conversational sessions. My sincere thanks for being part of this process. Today’s session ends our focus on culture, people, the person, and personality development and prototypes. Next week, the focus will be shifted to the community and communities and how they should be viewed and developed in the age of culture.

## **SOURCES**

D. Paul Schafer, *The Cultural Personality* (Oakville, Rock’s Mills Press, 2018) This book is available from Rock’s Mills Press, the publisher, or from all Amazon sites in the world

Link to The Cultural Personality video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oeh96njxdbg>

World Culture Project Website: [www.worldcultureproject.org](http://www.worldcultureproject.org)

## **SESSION 5 – SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 2020**

### **THEME**

Now that we have examined culture in terms of people, living a cultural life, and the cultural personality, let’s move forward with this process by venturing into communities. This word covers a variety of situations and places: groups, neighbours, neighbourhoods, villages, towns, and cities. Our focus today is on physical places - neighbourhoods, villages, towns, and cities – and not accumulations of people as groups and neighbours.

How much do we really know about these places, especially the ones we are living in or can access easily by foot, car, or bus. How familiar are we with their residential and industrial districts, diverse ethnic groups and districts, restaurants, galleries, museums,

libraries, arts centres, sports complexes, political and religious institutions, architectural masterpieces, and the like? Do we assume too much and explore too little?

The community culturescape is a tool or technique that enables us to examine, discover, and learn a great deal more about our communities. Its objective is to help us see and understand our communities as cultural environments or wholes made up of countless parts. This can be achieved by building a constellation of community profiles, such as their different sights, sounds, smells, textures, tastes, structures, resources, institutions, buildings, mysteries, delights, and a great deal else. Information on this can be choreographed in many different ways to reveal residents' strengths and shortcomings, likes and dislikes in individual or collective terms in, favourite haunts and hideaways, and so forth. This information can also be choreographed and used to create cultural maps, inventories, itineraries, better decision-making and citizen engagement processes, and a great deal more.

What role should the community culturescape play in this and where should it be situated? Over the centuries, many different activities, institutions, and facilities have played a key role in this. At one time, it was religion and religious buildings and institutions. At another, the central square where social meetings and conversations were conducted and daily affairs discussed. In more recent times, it is industrial, commercial, or financial complexes where economic and financial activities take place and decisions about them are made. And what about the future? Should we be creating “**community culturescape centres**” at the core of our communities where the collective cultural image of the community is located and people can go to if they want to acquire more information about this, contribute ideas, stories, or artefacts to it, or get to know it as an ordered whole and engaging way of life?

## QUOTES

“A community is like a shattered mirror. Each person possesses a piece that is large enough to see his or her own reflection. However, no one has a piece that is large enough to provide a reflection of the community as a whole. A culturescape is a tool that enables people everywhere to participate in putting the shattered mirror of their communities back together again.” D. Paul Schafer, ‘The Culturescape: Self-Awareness of Communities,’ UNESCO, *Cultures* 5:1 (1978).

“The city is both a physical utility for collective living and a symbol of those collective purposes and unanimities that arise under such favouring circumstances. With language itself, it remains man’s (people’s) greatest work of art.” Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1938), p. 5 (insert mine)

“Cities, among other things, are physical artifacts, experienced through all the senses by people who are in them. They are experienced sequentially as people follow different paths and use different movement modes through them. Cities look, smell, sound and *feel*

different, they have a different character or *ambience*.” Amos Rapoport, ‘Culture and the Urban Order,’ in John A. Agnew, John Mercer and David E Sopher (ed.) *The City in Cultural Context* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984). p. 51.

## QUESTIONS

How much do you know about your community, neighbourhood, village, town, or city *as a whole*? How involved are you in its daily affairs or engaged in its decision-making processes? Are there things you would like to contribute to your community’s culturescape process and methodology? How concerned are you about the future development and direction of your community and its all-inclusive culturescape?

Your comments on these matters will be greatly appreciated and very helpful as we move forward with our conversational sessions. Many thanks for being part of this informative and organic process. Next week, we will follow up on the community culturescape by examining the role children, young people, families, and schools should play in this.

## SOURCES

Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1938).

John A. Agnew, John Mercer and David E Sopher (ed.) *The City in Cultural Context* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984).

D. Paul Schafer, ‘The Culturescape: Self-Awareness of Communities,’ UNESCO, *Cultures* 5:1 (1978). I would be pleased to send you an electronic copy of this article in English, French, or Spanish if you provide me with your email address.

‘Feasting on Cultures to Solve Our Problems and Enrich Our Lives’ (<http://www.worldcultureproject.org/Feasting.pdf>)

World Culture Project Website: [www.worldcultureproject.org](http://www.worldcultureproject.org)

## SESSION 6 – SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2022

### THEME

One of the most important developments taking place in the world today is the need many people, peoples, groups, and countries have to protect, connect, or reconnect with their original cultures and heritages as *ways of life*. If their cultures and heritages are not threatened or attacked, it is easy to take them for granted. However, if they are threatened or attacked, they will immediately act to protect, preserve, connect, or reconnect with them, as is manifested in many parts of the world today. As ways of life, cultures and heritages are the most important elements of all since they provide the *context* for everything and

reveal how people see the world, live in the world, and work out their connection with the world.

This is most apparent in terms of Black and Indigenous peoples as well as people in colonized countries who have lost or had their cultures and heritages destroyed many centuries ago and are now committed to reconnecting with them. This is also true for Ukraine, Ukrainians, and the illegal war in Ukraine, where this country, its culture and heritage, and its overall way of life are under attack by Russia and are fighting to the bitter end to protect them.

If there is one place where the response to developments like these should take place in the years ahead, surely it is with children, young people, and future generations. Their need to connect or reconnect with their cultures and heritages is crucial, especially in terms of learning their original languages, centuries-old customs and traditions, important historical events, artistic accomplishments, and especially their cherished worldviews, values, value systems, myths, legends, and beliefs. This is because they differ fundamentally from the foreign languages, heritages, and cultures they were forced to learn and are now imperative for their individual and collective survival and well-being, sense of identity, health and welfare, and ability to thrive as distinctive and creative peoples, groups, and nations.

While many organizations are involved in undertakings and activities like this, here is some basic information on one of these organizations that is expanding rapidly throughout the world. It is *Reconnecting With Your Culture*. It was founded in 2020 by Olimpia Niglio, a professor of architecture, and her colleagues and supported by the International Research Centre Esempli di Architettura and many others. Its main mission is to enable children and young people in elementary and secondary schools to explore their own cultures and heritages and those of others in their own communities and document and share their experiences and results by drawing pictures, writing stories, making maps, and the like. They work closely with their teachers, schools, and parents on this process, and do so at the perfect time in their lives. While these experiences have national and international implications, most of the teaching and learning activities like this take place close to home and are proving to be very effective.

#### **QUOTES (Reconnecting With Your Culture)**

“Children and young people encounter their cultures and heritages first and foremost at the local level.”

“You must prepare yourself as if you were going on a trip to find a treasure and then draw it.”

“Think Cosmically, see Globally, behave Regionally, act Locally but insightfully.”

#### **QUESTIONS**

How does the situation confronting Black and Indigenous peoples, colonized countries, Ukraine and Ukrainians, and other minority and oppressed groups resonate with your own situation and experiences? Do you require help in preserving, protecting, and reconnecting with your original culture and heritage, or are grandparents, parents, relatives, friends, or community leaders able to help you with this? Are you able to help others in your community or culture who are experiencing problems like this with their problems? How are developments like this proving helpful in enabling you to find the confidence and comfort you need to recreate your own lives in creative, constructive, and rewarding ways?

Your comments and contributions to these questions or others like them will be much appreciated and contribute a great deal to this and other sessions moving forward and positioning developments like this in their proper place and visualizing the changes that are imperative to recreate the world from a cultural perspective in practical terms. Next week's session will follow up on this session by examining the urgent need at the present time to teach and learn about culture, cultures, and heritages in all schools and institutions throughout the world as well as all levels of the educational system.

#### **SOURCES:**

Reconnecting With Your Culture : <http://esempidiarchitettura.it/sito/edakids-reconnecting-with-your-culture/>

RWYC: An Accessible Guide to the Pedagogical Method: <http://esempidiarchitettura.it/sito/rwyc-international-guide/>

RWYC: Tokyo Charter:

<http://esempidiarchitettura.it/sito/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/TOKYO-CHARTER-EDUCATION-2021.pdf>

The Tokyo Charter is available in many languages as you will notice on the RWYC's website provided above.

D. Paul Schafer, World Culture Project, WCP Website: [www.worldcultureproject.org](http://www.worldcultureproject.org)

## **SESSION 7 – SATURDAY, JULY 2, 2022**

### **THEME**

Session 6 ended with *Reconnecting With Your Culture* and the essential role it is playing in encouraging children and young people in the 5-17 age category to explore their own cultures and heritages and those of others in their own localities and communities and document their experiences in a variety of ways. As a result, it is working at the cutting edge of one of the most important requirements in the educational field of all at present,

namely what type of “*cultural education*” should people get in the future and how should educational authorities, institutions, and systems in the world respond and deal with this necessity.

Unfortunately, most people get little or no education in culture and cultures at present. Courses in the arts, humanities, and heritage of history are either non-existent or are being cut back, courses in culture in post-secondary educational institutions are limited to students taking a course or courses in anthropology, sociology, or cultural studies, and there are very few if any extensions courses in this domain. This must change and change dramatically in the future, with a far higher priority accorded to *cultural education*.

To be effective and in tune with present and prospective needs and developments, cultural education should be divided into four distinct components: learning about the nature and meaning of culture and cultures in all their diverse forms and manifestations; learning about the fundamentals of culture, cultures, and civilizations, including their underlying assumptions, axioms, values, value systems, worldviews, ways of life, ideals, and so forth; dealing with the *context* of culture and cultures as well as culture and cultures as *contexts*; and situating culture and cultures effectively in the natural, historical, global, and cosmic environment. Given the complexity and diversity of culture and cultures as wholes or total ways of life, special emphasis should be placed on “cultural symbols” that “stand for the whole” or “the total ways of life of people” and consequently say a great deal about culture and cultures in the symbolic and representational sense.

The type of cultural education advocated here should start early in life and end late, as well as be tailored to coincide with the different stages of life. In order to do this, it should start with children in the home and family, continue through their elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education, be sustained later in life through adult education, extension, and lifelong learning courses. It should also be designed to cover the broad range of disciplines relevant to culture and cultures, from the arts, humanities, heritage of history, psychology, sociology, and anthropology to ecology, biology, mythology, and cosmology.

## QUOTES

“Culture and education have no bounds or limits.” Maria Montessori

“The crucial differences which distinguish human societies and human beings are not biological. They are cultural.” Ruth Benedict

“If we are to preserve culture we must continue to create it.” Johan Huizinga

“A truly vibrant and creative culture depends on a system of education which is not divided along class and sectarian lines.” Tom Paulin

## QUESTIONS

How would you assess your own education in culture and cultures? Was, or is, it non-existence, inadequate, adequate, or more than adequate? What changes would you like to see made in cultural education at present and especially going forward into the future? Did you receive any education in other cultures besides your own? The distinguished Mexican cultural scholar, Antonio Alonso-Concheiro, believes that we can never really get to know or understand other cultures because we can't transcend our own cultural frame of reference and conditioning. Do you agree with this? If so, what are the implications of this for cultural education and international relations in the future? Do you think a special role should be accorded to the arts in cultural education in the years and decades ahead?

Your comments and contributions to these questions - or others like them - will be much appreciated and contribute a great deal to this and other sessions moving forward and positioning developments like this in their proper place and visualizing the changes that are needed to recreate the world from a cultural perspective in practical terms. Next week's session – Session 8 – will be devoted to the *Jena Declaration* which was created very recently and is committed to the broadly agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a “bottom up” rather than “top down” approach to these goals and stronger engagement of the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts in this. This coincides with the approach being taken in this *Culture as a Reality* series and its 20 specific sessions.

#### **SOURCES:**

Culture and Cultures: Key Learning Requirements for the Future

<http://www3.sympatico.ca/dpaulschafer/CultureAndCultures.pdf>

‘The Future of Arts Education: Broaden, Deepen, Diversify, Intensify’

<https://wherewordsfailblog.com/2020/03/10/future-arts-education/>

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## **SESSION 8 - SATURDAY, JULY 9, 2022**

### **CULTURE FROM THE BOTTOM UP**

#### **THEME**

Throughout history, most major developments in the world have occurred from the “**top down.**” This was true in ancient and medieval times when virtually all decisions concerning crucial developments were made by powerful rulers, wealthy elites, and landlords who owned vast tracts of land and compelled serfs (labourers) to do all the

work on them. This is also true in modern times where rich and powerful classes, countries, and institutions - corporations, “developed countries,” national governments, international organizations, and wealthy people - own and control more than ninety percent of the world’s income and wealth and make decisions about what developments will take place and who will benefit most from them.

However, things are starting to change at present because the top down approach is not working and is proving incapable of coming to grips with the life-threatening problems that exist in the world today, most obviously the environmental crisis, huge inequalities in income and wealth, and clashes between different classes, races, ethnic groups, and countries. As a result, more and more pressure is being exerted from the “**bottom up**” to deal with these problems. While both approaches are needed to resolve these problems, there is no doubt that a much higher priority will be placed on developments for the bottom up in the future.

What is true for history and the world is also true for this series. This is why this series has been concerned from the outset with developments from the bottom up, commencing with people are culture, culture as the foundation of people’s personalities and lives, the cultural personality, the culturescape: self-awareness of communities, and cultural education at the local level. With this as the foundation and centrepiece, it is now time to start moving up the cultural ladder to show what this means for city, regional, national, and world cultures, international relations, the world, the cosmos, and forays into the profound and sublime. This session is concerned with the “*cultural model of development*” and “*the new politics*” for government, governments, and political decision-making since this impacts on all these areas and others. This session also introduces the Jena Declaration since it is concerned primarily with developments from the bottom up in order to achieve real sustainable development and will be encountered again near the end of the series.

## QUOTES

“Culture is not merely an economic or political concept; it is more fundamentally a process of culture and civilization.” The Schveningen Report.

“Without a large cultural transformation, development is doomed to the destiny of ghost towns.” Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

“Culture is the alpha and omega of any sound development policy.” Léopold Senghor

## QUESTIONS

What model of development is used in your country to make decisions about key matters at the present time? Would the cultural model of development described here be a more appropriate model for the future? If so, what obstacles stand in the way of using this model, particularly by governments? Is this cultural model shared by people in your area of culture? What do you think is required to convince those in power that this is the right model and way to go in the years and decades ahead?

Your comments and contributions to these questions - and others like them - will be much appreciated and contribute a great deal to this and other sessions moving forward to recreate the world from a cultural perspective and enter a cultural age in practical terms. Next week's session – Session 9 – will be devoted to the “bottom up” approach as it relates to city, municipal, and regional cultures and the powerful role they are destined to play in the world of the future.

#### **SOURCES:**

The Jena Declaration: <https://www.thejenadeclaration.org/>

<http://www3.sympatico.ca/dpaulschafer/ACULTURALMODELOFDEVELOPMENT.pdf>

Click on Open Hyperlink to access this article, or access it on the World Culture Project Website in the “Hot Topics” section. This article can be downloaded if required.)

<http://www3.sympatico.ca/dpaulschafer/TheNewPolitics.pdf> Click on Open Hyperlink to access this article, or access it on the World Culture Project Website in the “Hot Topics” section. This article can be downloaded if required.)

World Culture Project Website: [www.worldcultureproject.org](http://www.worldcultureproject.org)

## **SESSION 9 - SATURDAY, JULY 16, 2022**

### **TOWN, CITY, AND REGIONAL CULTURES (PART 1 – THE ROLE OF THE ARTS)**

#### **THEME**

Once we move beyond families, localities, and schools as cultures, we are greeted by a vast array of town, city, regional, national, international, and global cultures. These cultures, which are all very distinctive, are becoming more accessible through travel by car, bus, and planes, computers, tourism, and a variety of visual and virtual devices. These cultures can be classified in many different ways that help to reveal their specific characteristics, features, traditions, customs, and worldviews as complex wholes and total ways of life.

Nothing beats the arts when it comes to broadening, deepening, and intensifying our knowledge, understanding, and awareness of town, city, and regional cultures in the holistic sense, which is also true for cultures at all other levels. When we talk about the arts in this sense, we not only mean the performing, exhibiting, and literary arts – essential as these are – but also the culinary, decorative, architectural, material, recreational, horticultural, and all other art forms. Visualized in this way, the arts contribute an enormous amount to the livability, vitality, uniqueness, and sustainability of town, city, and regional cultures, as well as to their creativity, synergy, connectivity, and collectively, revitalization, renewal, and revival, identity and sense of belonging, beautification and economic benefits, and the happiness, enjoyment, and fulfillment they provide to citizens.

And this is not all. Do you remember the *culturescape* discussed in Session 5? Well, the arts are the best vehicle of all for “putting the shattered mirror of town, city, and regional cultures back together again,” as well as creating and capitalizing on a more all-encompassing portrait and vision of them. When all the different art forms as well as the qualities and capabilities inherent in them are added up and combined with the “symbolic significance and potential” of every art form, object, artefact, or activity, it is possible to create an enticing and all-inclusive visualization of any town, city, or regional culture and its most informative characteristics. This might even include a culturescape centre that would enable citizens to contribute a great deal more to the planning and development of their towns, cities, and regions, as well as play a more prominent and active role in this.

## QUOTES

“... the arts are not for a privileged few but for the many, their place is not on the periphery of society but at its center, (they) are not just a form of recreation but are of central importance of our well-being and happiness.” *The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects*, The Rockefeller Panel Report

“Without art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable.” George Bernard Shaw

“Art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass.” Walter Pater

“The chief function of the city is to convert power into form, energy into culture, dead matter into the living symbols of art, biological reproduction into social creativity.” Lewis Mumford.

## QUESTIONS

Have you ever thought of creating a comprehensive culturescape for your own town, city, or regional culture? If so, how would you go about it? Would you do it yourself, or with a group of people at an arts council, cultural centre, art gallery, museum, or library? What art forms and artistic activities do you think would predominate most in this culturescape?

Your comments and responses to these questions – and others like them - will be much appreciated and contribute a great deal to this and future sessions. Next week's session will be focused more on the planning and development of town, city, and regional cultures and the role that governments and municipal institutions and authorities should play in this.

## **SOURCES**

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'Place-As Product: A Place-Based Approach to Cultural Tourism,' Steven Thorne: <https://www.slideshare.net/StevenThorne2/place-as-product-a-placebased-approach-to-cultural-tourism-2013-71873629>

Charles Landry, *The Creative City*, Earthscan Publishers, Second Edition, 2008.

Charles Landry, *The Sensory Landscape of Cities*, Comedia, 2012.

## **ORGANIZATIONS**

Creative City Network of Canada - <https://www.creativecity.ca/>

UNESCO Creative Cities Network - <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home>  
New Cities - [media@newcities.org](mailto:media@newcities.org)

Artscape Canada - <https://www.artscape.ca/>

### **SESSION 10 – SATURDAY, JULY 23, 2022**

#### **TOWN, CITY, AND REGIONAL CULTURES (PART II – GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE)**

## **THEME**

If town, city, and regional cultures are to be livable and enjoyable in the future, many changes will be required in environmental sustainability, decreasing poverty,

unemployment, vast inequalities in income and wealth, creating more affordable housing, reducing religious, ethnic, and racial tensions and conflicts, dealing with numerous transportation and communications difficulties and many others. In order to do this, fundamental improvements will have to be made in the way towns, cities, and regions and their cultures are governed and administered.

This is especially important as people broaden and deepen their perceptions, perspectives, and understanding of culture and cultures from “the arts, humanities, heritage of history, and cultural industries” to culture and cultures as “complex wholes” and “total ways of life,” and with this, from marginal to mainstream activities. This is bound to have a profound effect on the way towns, cities, and regional cultures are mapped out, planned, developed, and managed.

Few, if any, town, municipal, and regional governments are able to do this due to the way they are structured at present, since this will necessitate establishing departments or ministries of culture as principal developmental, administrative, and planning institutions, creating cultural plans that include the economic sector rather than economic plans that include the cultural sector, renegotiating financial and constitutional arrangements on a more equitable basis between the various levels of government, changing taxation policies, procedures, and practices, and creating a great deal more cultural infrastructure.

To my knowledge, no government in the world at the municipal or regional level is able to achieve this at present, or even have their sights set on this as their ultimate goal. Hence the need to give a great deal more thought and attention to this matter at present. Most importantly, this will require establishing departments or ministries of culture with the authority, power, resources, and checks and balances to make the development of culture and cultures their top priority in public planning, policy, and decision-making in both theoretical and practical terms, as well as increasing citizen involvement and participation in the developmental process.

## QUOTES

“There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; *people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans.*” Jane Jacobs (*italics mine*)

“A city must be a place where groups of women and men are seeking and developing the highest things they know.” Margaret Mead

“Wealth in cities is created less by what we produce and more by how we use our brains and add value through knowledge and imagination... Human cleverness,

ingenuity, and creativity are replacing location, natural resources, and market access as urban assets. We need to provide the conditions to unleash this.” Charles Landry

“The seeds of civilization are in every culture, but it is city life that brings them to perfection.” Suzanne Langer

## QUESTIONS

What are the major characteristics and differences between town, city, and regional cultures in your area of the world? Where does your town, city, and region stand in terms of government and governance? How effective is this going forward into the future? What changes are needed in planning policies, decision-making processes, taxation powers, funding formulas, and departmental structures to improve this situation? Your comments and responses to these questions – and others like them - will be much appreciated. Next week’s session will be focused on the planning, development, and importance of national cultures and international relations.

## SOURCES

‘Livable Neighbourhoods, Towns, and Cities,’ Chapter 8, *Will This Be Canada’s Century?*, Rock’s Mills Press, 2018.

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[https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/en/culture\\_sd\\_cities\\_web.pdf](https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/en/culture_sd_cities_web.pdf)

Colin Mercer, ‘Cultural Planning for Urban Development and Creative Cities -  
[https://www.kulturplan-oresund.dk/pdf/Shanghai\\_cultural\\_planning\\_paper.pdf](https://www.kulturplan-oresund.dk/pdf/Shanghai_cultural_planning_paper.pdf)

‘Municipalities and Regions, Powerful Forces in a Dynamic World -  
<http://www.worldcultureproject.org/MunicipalitiesAndRegions.pdf>

Agenda 21 for Culture: <https://www.agenda21culture.net/>

## SESSION 11 - SATURDAY, JULY 30, 2022

### NATIONAL CULTURES

#### THEME

In the vast constellation of cultures, *national cultures* stand out and are the most essential of all in many ways. Not only are they the sum and substance of the total way of life of

people and countries in the holistic sense, but also many of the most important decisions in the world as well as people's citizenship and rights are dealt with at the national level. Furthermore, most countries are known in the world for their national cultural symbols, especially their flags, anthems, sports, and works of art, science, and scholarship.

While evaluation of countries' cultural policies has been very popular over the last few decades, these evaluations have been largely confined to the arts, cultural industries, and related areas. Unfortunately, very little has been written about national cultures in holistic terms as complex wholes or total ways of life, although there has been a substantial amount written about these cultures in economic and corporate terms. As a result, there is room for a great deal of original research and many publications in this area, especially given all the problems national cultures are confronted with today and going forward into the future.

Two countries that are closest to making commitments to culture in the all-inclusive holistic sense at the present time through their national cultures are France and Indonesia. France is well known throughout the world for its strong historical and contemporary commitment to culture and the role it plays in the lives of its citizens and the country as a whole, mapping out the cultural regions of France, and funding a variety of cultural activities.

Indonesia is very likely the first country in the world to make a *political* commitment to the centrality of culture in the holistic sense, which is set out in its Act No. 5/2017 titled Advancement of Culture. This Act states: "The promotion of Indonesian National Culture is carried out based on Pancasila, the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. Principles for the Advancement of National Culture in Indonesia are tolerance, diversity, locality, cross-regional participation, benefits, sustainability, freedom of expression, cohesiveness, equality, and mutual cooperation... the purpose is to develop the noble values of the nation's culture, enrich cultural diversity, strengthen national identity, strengthen the unity and integrity of the nation, educate life of the nation, improve the image of the nation, realize civil society, improve the welfare of free people, preserve the nation's cultural heritage, and influence the direction of development of world civilization so that **Culture becomes national development direction.**" Fortunately, Indonesia has had a number of prominent cultural scholars over the years such as S. Takdir Alisjahbana, Soedjatmoko, Mochtar Lubis, and more recently Mira Sartika and others who have and are making valuable contributions to this seminal achievement.

Bhutan should likely be added to this list. It has done a great deal in recent years to commit to "gross national happiness" as its principal goal - as well as develop national yardsticks and fundamental forms of measurement - rather than "gross national product." Remember what Ruth Benedict said, "context determines content." *Change the context and you change the contents!*

## QUOTES

“A nation’s culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its citizens.” Mahatma Gandhi

“If you want to change the culture, you will have to start by changing the organization.”  
Mary Douglas

“Culture in the last analysis represents the human aspiration to realize the highest form of life. In this respect, secular cultures are no different from religiously-oriented cultures.” S. Takdir Alisjahbana

“It is becoming evident that to understand the true nature of development, we need to see culture as the bedrock from which reality is perceived, aspirations are articulated, and choices defined.” Soedjatmoko

## QUESTIONS

What is the situation in your country with respect to developing your culture nationally in holistic terms? What activities, elements, and events best epitomize or symbolize your national culture and what yardsticks and cultural indicators can or are used most effectively to do this? Are you interested in undertaking research in this area for your country?

I would highly recommend reading the entire Chapter 13 of Brian Holihan’s remarkable book and especially the **UIG** (Unity, Infinity, Growth) and **AWB** (At, With, Beyond) interactive cycle (see book and link below). Brian believes that we can experience a paradise of earth by exploring, understanding, appreciating, and learning about and from all the different cultures in the world. I couldn’t agree more. Your comments on this session will be greatly appreciated. Next week’s session will be on International Relations.

## SOURCES

Geert Hofstede, *Cultures Consequences: Comparing Values, Behavior, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations* (Los Angeles, CA, Sage Publications, 2001).

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S. Takdir Alisjahbana, *Values as Integrating Forces in Personality, Society, and Culture*. (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1986).

Brian Holihan, *THINKING IN A NEW LIGHT: How to Boost Your Creativity and Live More Fully by Exploring World Cultures* (Sunnyvale, CA.: Full Humanity Press, 2016).

## SESSION 12 – SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 2022

### INTERNATIONAL (CULTURAL) RELATIONS

## THEME

A major transformation is needed in the present system of international relations. This is because it has become apparent in recent years that this system is not working.

The most important factor in determining the current character and functioning of the current system of international relations is the publication of C. P. Snow's book *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* in 1959. In this book, Snow made the case that intellectual life in the western world was divided into two cultures: the artistic-humanistic culture; and the scientific culture. According to Snow, this was a major impediment in coming to grips with the world's problems *at that time* because the artistic-humanistic culture was given far too much attention and funding and the scientific culture far too little.

This caused a major paradigm shift to occur in most educational systems in the world from “**soft subjects**” (the arts and humanities) to “**hard subjects** (the sciences). It wasn't long after this that the sciences were linked to economics, politics, industry, and technology and therefore the interests and concerns of corporations and governments. These interests and concerns then came to be known as “**hard activities**” or “**the basics in life**” - what life and living are really all about - whereas the arts and humanities came to be known as “**soft activities**” or “**the frills in life**” – what people do in their leisure time.

This system needs to be transformed for two reasons. First, it is a partial, partisan, and dichotomous way of looking at and dealing with international relations – a way that satisfies the needs of the economic age but not the needs of a cultural age. Second, this system can't deal with the environment crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and conflicts between different people and countries because the environmental, artistic, humanistic, and spiritual requirements of life are downplayed, missing, or ignored, as confirmed by the war in Ukraine and relations between the United States and China, Palestine and Israel, and others that are no longer able or willing to collaborate, negotiate, discuss, or cooperate.

In order to deal with these problems, and others, it is imperative to view international relations from a holistic and all-inclusive cultural perspective rather than a partial, partisan, and bifurcated economic perspective, as well as accord a much higher priority to the environment, the arts, education, heritage, the humanities, social affairs, and other activities. Viewed and dealt with in this way, there is no difference between international relations and international cultural relations since they are both seen in cultural terms. This is consistent with the holistic meaning culture and cultures are acquiring in the world today, as well as the fact that it is impossible to conduct international relations in any area of foreign policy without profound cultural implications and consequences. What this means in fact is that international relations should be concerned with what is in the best **cultural** interests of countries in the holistic sense, rather than what is in their best **economic** interests in the partial sense. Properly understood and conducted, this could open the doors to the development of a new system of international relations between all countries based

on inclusion, equality, sustainability, humanity, and compassion, rather than exclusion, inequality, environmental devastation, and materialism. If something is not in a country's best *cultural* interests, it should not be pursued regardless of how much it satisfies the economic and political interests of some institutions and countries but not all institutions and countries.

## QUOTES

"...cultural relations are, and will increasingly become, a decisive factor of international affairs." Paul J. Braisted, Soedjatmoko, and Kenneth W. Thompson

"Cultures in watertight compartments are doomed to oblivion." Dialogue is essential. Mircea Malitza

"We must prepare the field for the cooperation of all cultures of the world where all will give and take from each other. This is the keynote of the coming age." Rabindranath Tagore

"...the entire foreign policy process is itself subordinate to larger cultural dynamics." F.A. Ninkovitch

## QUESTIONS

What is your main concern about international relations today? Do you think we need a new system of international relations? If so, how do you think this can be achieved most effectively in your country? Your comments on this matter will be much appreciated. Next week's session will be concerned with world culture, cultures, and the new cosmic reality.

## SOURCES

Biserka Cvjectičanin and Nada Švob-Đokić (editors), *Cultures in Cooperation: Realities and Tendencies*. Centre for Democracy and Law Miko Tripalo in cooperation with the Institute for Development and International Relations/Culturelink, Zagreb, and University of Rijeka, Rijeka, 2020.

*Ibid.*, D. Paul Schafer, 'International Cultural Relations: - Canada and the European Union - Past, Present, and Future, pp. 175-187.

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D. Paul Schafer, *Canada's International Cultural Relations: Key to Canada's Role in the World* (Markham, Canada: World Culture Project, 1996).

**SESSION 13 – SATURDAY, AUGUST 13, 2022**

**WORLD CULTURE, WORLD CULTURES, AND THE COSMOS**

## THEME

Over the last fifty or sixty years, several visions of the world and world system have been created or are being created and promoted in one form or another.

Shortly after World War II, a vision was promoted by western countries and international organizations based on a “**world system**” based primarily on economics, economies, and economic growth. In this vision, people are seen as consumers first and foremost, corporations maximize their profits, and countries and governments accord the highest priority to economic growth. This vision has been driven by globalization and its capacity to bring people, countries, and the world together to yield a homogeneous global culture and the belief that eventually all people, organizations, and countries will benefit from this.

Over the last few decades, this vision has been challenged by a second emerging vision, largely as a result of the environmental crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the reaction of countless people and many countries to the vision of a homogeneous global culture dominated by economics, powerful elites, huge corporations, and a few superpowers that own and control most of the world’s income, wealth, and resources, call the shots, and people, countries, and cultures act and look much the same. This has resulted from the anti-globalization movement spreading in the world and driven largely by marginalized and oppressed people and colonized countries that are advocating for systemic rather than piecemeal change, more equality and justice in the world, many different cultures and identities rather than a homogeneous world culture and identity, a rich diversity of cultural creations and expressions, and, quite recently, developments from the “bottom up” and not only the “top down.” This has focused more attention on “unity in diversity,” “**world cultures**”- cultures that are very much in the world but still possess their own distinctive identity, character, and authenticity - and perhaps the creation of a “global federation of world cultures” that makes it possible to bring people and countries closer together.

Over the last few years, these two visions have been influenced by the escalating interest in “the cosmos.” While many factors are driving this, one of the most important factors is the danger of an imminent environmental catastrophe and the destruction of the planet. This is being matched by a growing interest in the cultures of the Indigenous peoples, as well as cultures in Asia and especially India that tend to view life and living from a holistic perspective, recognize the need to situate culture and cultures in a broader and deeper ecological, historical, and cosmological context, and most of all, visualize the development of the world, world system, and culture and cultures in these terms. Could this provide the foundation for a more sustainable, equitable, and human vision of the world in the future?

## QUOTES

“Every culture, every people, every society must rediscover its own interior cosmology, must arrive at a coherent account of its being in the world, must be able to locate itself in a recognizable world and find for itself the organizing principle of its world.” Pierre Pascallon

“Our only possibility of progress lies in thorough comprehension of and immersion in the problem of world-view.” Albert Schweitzer

“What is needed is a meaning-filled story that sees humankind as part of cosmic processes... Dance, song, art, drama, and spoken narratives can make explicit the bondedness and interdependence of all species... The very survival of the human community requires the creative articulation of a new mode of human presence within universal processes.” Angela T. Lydon

“When there is no vision, the people perish.” Proverbs, 29:18.

## QUESTIONS

Where do you feel your country and culture is situated in terms of these actual and potential visions of the world and world system? Do you think they can incorporate the insights, wisdom, and understanding of the cultures of the Indigenous peoples and people living in countries like India in time to prevent an environmental catastrophe? If so, how do you think this can be achieved through a more compelling and pertinent vision of the world and world system? Your response to these questions will be much appreciated. Next week’s session on *The Roots of Culture, Cultures, and Cultural Genetics* will be provided by Mira Sartika, an outstanding cultural scholar from Indonesia and founder and president of the Chakra Cultural Foundation in that country.

## SOURCES

Chapter 11, Mythology, Worldview, and Cosmology in D. Paul Schafer, *THE WORLD AS CULTURE: Cultivation of the Soul to the Cosmic Whole*, (Oakville, ON: Rock’s Mills Press, 2022), pp. 235-252.

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## SESSION 14 – SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 2022

### THE ROOTS OF CULTURE, CULTURES, AND CULTURAL GENETICS

This session is provided by Dr. Mira Sartika, an outstanding cultural scholar from Indonesia and founder and president of the Chakra Cultural Foundation in that country.

#### THEME

The roots of culture, cultures, and cultural genetics provide a new perspective on how culture is truly “the complex whole” in human life. Apprehending this dimension of culture contributes to making a concrete step and following the pathway to a **Cultural Age** as discussed in Session 1. The **roots of culture** are the foundation of people’s identity in conducting “total ways of life” in harmony with the natural environment. I believe there are two fundamental roots of culture that exist in human society based on “environmentally affected thresholds and these are the sea environment and the land environment” (Sartika, 2015). These two roots give birth to two distinct cultures that exist in human populations and they are the Sea People Culture and the Land People Culture (Sartika, 2015).

The next step is why culture has something to do with genetics. The most fundamental answer why culture is interconnected with genetics is that both culture and genetics share the same natural characteristic and that is *inheritance*. Genes are passed on from parents to children and so is culture. Yet, the roots of culture (sea and land environment) make the regulations of genes act differently between the two cultures mentioned above which result in two different characteristics in human populations. For we are all aware that gene regulation is influenced by various factors including RNA and the dedicated environment.

Furthermore, I have discovered during my research on conclusive involution of culture based on the pattern of human history that culture is actually a storehouse of genetic applications and much of it is, and indeed exists, in the understanding of the genetic field. In other words, culture and genetic are interwoven and connected throughout human history, from which the description of *Cultural Genetics* is originally derived. Cultural Genetics is a holistic approach to the study of genetics that involves cultural roots and cultural mapping, notwithstanding cultural knowledge construed from the environmental affected threshold, which encapsulates the concatenation between genetics, the environment, and societies in order to maintain the sustainability of life in harmony with

nature. (Sartika, 2018). Thus, cultural genetics is a tool to study culture as a complex whole in order to understand harmonious and balanced relationships between people, societies, and the environment.

One of the concrete steps for the **Cultural Age** is to perceive **People Are Culture** (Meg Pier) as discussed in Session 2 regarding culture and cultures as “complex wholes” and their identity as “total ways of life” (Schafer, 2022). People should understand what his/her **roots of culture** are, and what **culture or cultures** he/she belong to as a result of inheritance from their ancestors. Only by everyone following their own roots and cultures will the *principles of tolerance, diversity, locality, cross-regional participation, benefits, sustainability, freedom of expression, cohesiveness, equality, and mutual cooperation* (Act No. 5, 2017) *be truly manifested in human society*. Ultimately, knowing who we are and our own identity as “People are Culture” is the very first concrete step in the realization of the Cultural Age. Succinctly, educating the younger generation to reconnect again with their own local culture is truly essential and a real manifestation to commencing the Cultural Age, which is being implemented by RWYC (Session 6) lead by Professor Olimpia Niglio.

## QUOTES

1. *“No society can flourish without culture and no development can be sustainable without it.”* UNESCO
2. *“Increasingly, it is becoming evident that to understand the true nature of development, we need to see culture as the bedrock from which reality is perceived, aspirations are articulated, and choices defined – including those related to development.”* – Soedjatmoko
3. *“Knowing who we are and our own identity as “People are Culture” is the very first concrete step in the realization of the Cultural Age.”* – Mira Sartika

## QUESTIONS

Who are you as individuals, as communities, and as part of the environment?

This basic question is important in terms of elaborating on the loss of identity, increased anxiety, and other issues, since loss or unsettled identity can be the cause of deep psychological stresses resulting in various consequences such as different diseases or even social crises which are contrary to sustainability. Therefore, understanding “People are Culture” in terms of who we are and what society and culture we belong to is essential. Moreover, the cultural background and customs that you inherited are highly interconnected with the regulation of the genome in your own body. Thus, the roots of culture provide the new perspective on how humans see their own identity instead of using race or physical and anthropological platforms since the later can produce various misunderstandings among fellow human beings. As Dr. Reich (July, 2022) remarked:

“Genetically, “race” is a broken concept as this work shows, because every population is a mixture of other populations—which are themselves mixtures of still earlier populations.”

Next week’s session (Session15, August 27<sup>th</sup>.) on **Cultural Sustainability** will be provided by Professor Benno Werlen, a pioneer in this field and a founder of the Jena Declaration, UNESCO Chair at Jena University in Germany as well as a collaborator in Reconnecting With Your Culture, Germany.

#### **SOURCES:**

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@UNESCO (2021, January 10). No society can flourish without culture and no development can be sustainable without it. #IndigenousPeoples are the bearers of unique traditions and knowledge. Join us in upholding their rights and protecting their way of life! #WeAreIndigenous <http://on.unesco.org/2Cs6lPW> [Twitter Post]. Retrieved from [https://twitter.com/UNESCO/status/1348041916173185024?s=20&t=ON5NbWG-CD\\_mPMCOwaHUBg](https://twitter.com/UNESCO/status/1348041916173185024?s=20&t=ON5NbWG-CD_mPMCOwaHUBg)

### **SESSION 15, AUGUST 27, 2022**

#### **The Cultural Dimensions of Global Sustainability**

This session is provided by Prof. Dr. Benno Werlen, UNESCO Chair on Global Understanding for Sustainability, Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany

## THEME

The challenges facing humanity today are not abstract: the confluence of various global crises is having an immediate and potentially devastating effect on the daily lives of billions of people. Intensification of the frequency and magnitude of storms, floods, droughts, wildfires, and so on in Europe and elsewhere in the world over the past few years is a pressing and obvious manifestation of this situation.

The background of these everyday occurrences and information in the news makes it look natural that: *first*, the dominance of the climate change topic remains unquestioned; *second*, the encompassing dependence on technical solutions is seen as a must; and *third*, the primary role of the natural sciences in sustainability issues is not at our disposal.

But despite the strong presence of disastrous natural events in the news, the call for an increase in technological solutions and environmental interventions and budgets is not sufficient. We need to dig much deeper. We need a strategy based on a deep societal transformation of this problem. Such a transformation is obviously only possible if the cultural basis is taken seriously and respectfully into account. That is why I claim that *Culture must be at the center of all sustainability issues*. To recognize this central role demands, of course, a new point of departure, another point of reference.

As demonstrated by the recent crises, not least of which is the Covid-19 pandemic, local, everyday practices and routines are the basis of global situations and conditions. Or, speaking more generally, all social as well as all cultural and social realities are comprised of and reproduced through everyday practices, which in turn either constrict or promote sustainable lifestyles and ways of life.

Everyday actions are never merely a purely individual matter. All practices are always shaped by cultural systems of interpretation as well as by social relations. That is to say, they are always culturally shaped, socially embedded, geographically located, and historically contextualized.

This culture-centered point implies and necessitates the need for a radical change or paradigm shift in sustainability policies, research, and education. This call for change is a key element of The Jena Declaration (see Session 8 or the link below).

Firstly, sustainability is about more than ecology. Much of today's thinking about sustainability is rooted in the idea that human beings and the natural sphere are somehow opposed – that nature is simply our “environment.” But the opposite is true: With our bodies, we are part of nature! And the way we understand, relate to, and transform nature depends on our cultural backgrounds. Therefore, sustainability is in fact about us as part of nature, guided by cultural methods of interpretation.

Secondly, true change toward sustainability can only be achieved if people begin to change their everyday routines and practices. And this will only be possible through a change in the culture these practices are based on.

Thirdly, sustainability has to be understood as a *mindset* – a culture that enables us to live sustainably. Here, the voice of the arts is especially important as it can make a powerful contribution in the manner I just mentioned: namely establishing new ways of connecting with the world, and finding sustainable solutions for everyday problems in the most diverse contexts.

This idea leads directly to a fourth point. It is about the deficiencies inherent in currently dominating “top-down approaches”. If you have ever bought a “one size fits all” shirt,” you know that one size rarely fits everyone. The same holds true for solutions to achieve sustainability. Top-down approaches that prescribe solutions for all people never succeed. On the contrary, we need to find solutions that fit specific conditions and needs in different cultural contexts. Or, more precisely, we need to empower people to develop solutions themselves in the framework of a multitude of cultures.

As a direct consequence of this, we can say – as a major fifth point – cultural and regional diversity should be the starting point for any and all sustainability strategies. Everything people do is locally emplaced, historically situated, and embedded in Cultures as omnipresent realities! And even more so: *What counts as real is very much culture dependent!*

## QUOTES

“How we do things depends very much on what they signify to us, how we see the world, and our place in it.” – The Jena Declaration – <https://www.thejenadeclaration.org/>)

“Sustainability needs and produces culture: as a form-creating mode of communication and action, through which value orientation is developed, reflected and changed.” – [Tutzinger Manifesto](#)

“The transition to a globally just, inclusive and sustainable life requires careful alignment with local and regional needs and conditions.” – Garry Jacobs, President of the World Academy of Arts and Sciences

“The pressing global crises today are cultural and societal rather than purely environmental issues.” – Benno Werlen

## QUESTIONS

How can humankind move from the age of extraction towards cultures of regeneration?

What’s the role of culture for deep societal transformations?

How can we mobilize the local sphere in a global perspective?

## **SOURCES**

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Werlen, Benno (2021): What Constitutes Societal Transformations? In: New Perspectives on Major Global Issues, Cadmus Journal, Vol. 5, 203-205.

## **SESSION 16 – SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2022**

### **THE LIVES, CULTURES, AND WAYS OF LIFE OF OTHER SPECIES**

#### **THEME**

Thus far, the **Culture as a Reality** series has been confined to human beings and their cultures. There is a reason for this. Not only are the cultures of humans the most obvious in the world today, but also the planet is headed for a major catastrophe if these cultures are not fundamentally changed in the future. Clearly, we need to achieve a great deal more sustainability and regeneration in human cultures if human beings are to survive and the cultures of many other species are not to be devastated or destroyed.

Fortunately, an incredible amount of research and many articles and books have been written and published on the lives, behaviour, ways of life, and cultures other species over the last few decades. This is especially true with respect to the similarities and differences between animal and plant cultures on the one hand and human cultures on the other.

Generally speaking, the consensus on the research seems to indicate that the similarities between all species and their cultures are much greater than the differences. Despite the desire human beings have had for centuries for the differences to outweigh the similarities - largely to dominate other species, take advantage of them in numerous ways, and exercise their “dominion over all species and the earth,” most contemporary research has confirmed that the differences between all species are far less pronounced than previously admitted, and are largely differences in degree and extent and not substance and kind. In the case of animals and humans, for instance, the differences seem to come down to discrepancies in brain size, capabilities, and potential, as well as how the brain evolves over time. In the case of plants compared to animals and humans, it is the ability animals and people have to move, fight, or run, whereas plants remain fixed and must fight because they can’t run.

The reasons for the similarities are obvious. All creatures are living organisms and, as such, are members of one gigantic constellation of “living beings” that share numerous

similarities in common, including the life cycle (birth, youth, adulthood, aging, and death), consumption and elimination, living together rather than apart, helping others in times of need or when they are distressed or under attack, communicating in a variety of ways including sounds, signs, languages, and other forms of expression, and creating cultures that share specific traits, habits, behavioural characteristics, traditions, actions, and so forth.

It is now crystal clear that a great deal can be learned from animal and plant cultures, such as trees that create cultures through their root systems and can respond to each other's needs, and elephants that live in groups, create very distinct and fascinating cultures, are worldly wise, and show a great deal of love and affection for their off-springs and mates. It is hoped that eventually it will be possible to learn a great deal from animal and plant cultures about sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration that is relevant to the survival and sustainability of human beings and cultures as well as the well-being of all species.

## QUOTES

“Culture consists of certain biological activities, neither more or less biological than digestion and locomotion... Culture is merely a special direction we give to our animal potencies.” José Ortega y Gasset

Instead of making humanity the measure of all things, we need to elevate other species by what *they* are. In so doing, I am sure we will discover many magic wells, including some as yet beyond our imagination.” Frans de Wahl

“The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.” Rachel Carson

“One must take into account the nature of each being and its mutual connection in an ordered system, which is the cosmos.” Pope John Paul II

## QUESTIONS

If human beings eventually achieve sustainability through changes in their cultures, will this be sufficient to ensure the survival and sustainability of all species? What policies do you think governments and international organizations should initiate to prevent the loss of more animal and plant species as well as improve the livability of all species? Your thoughts on these questions and others like them will be much appreciated and very helpful. Next week's session will be concerned with **The Age of Culture: Why, What, and How.**

## SOURCES

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## **SESSION 17 – SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2022**

### **THE AGE OF CULTURE: WHY, WHAT, AND HOW?**

#### **THEME**

I believe we should enter a cultural age as I stated at the beginning of this series. This is largely because the economic age we are living in at present is designed to create goods, products, and material and monetary wealth and not designed to come to grips with the vast, vital, multidimensional, and life-threatening problems confronting humanity and the world today. These problems include climate change, global pandemics, colossal disparities in income and wealth, tensions, conflicts, and wars between different genders, races, ethnic groups, countries, and cultures, the intermingling of people with very different customs, traditions, and beliefs, and most dangerous of all, the ever broadening and deepening environmental crisis which could eventually spell disaster for human beings, other species, and the earth if it is not overcome.

Hence the need to enter a cultural age. This will not be possible, however, without taking maximum advantage of the two principal ways of perceiving and defining culture and cultures as “complex wholes” or “total ways of life” of human beings and other species on the one hand, and “the arts, humanities, heritage of history, and cultural industries” on the other hand. The first way is necessary to create the new worldviews, values, value systems, lifestyles, and ways of life that are desperately needed to come to grips with the aforementioned problems. The second way is necessary because most of the activities included in this way make it possible to open the doors to learning about and understanding culture and cultures in the holistic sense due to their symbolic significance and capabilities - a picture is worth a thousand words for example - as well as the fact that these activities are largely labour-intensive rather than material-intensive and therefore don't make as many demands on the natural environment and world's scarce resources as most industrial, manufacturing, and technological activities that are mainly commodity-driven and profit-oriented.

Since culture and cultures are wholes and economics and economies are parts of wholes (which is the biggest mistake made in the economic age because economics and economies were given priority over people, other species, the natural environment, and everything else), there is an additional benefit to the cultural age that has been ignored in the economic age. It is the ability to see the “big picture,” as well as the potential culture possess to create *balanced* and *harmonious* relationships between the parts and the whole. While this is most essential in terms of the relationships between human-beings, the natural environment, and other species as well as the material and non-material or quantitative and qualitative dimensions of development and life, it is also essential with respect to rich and poor people and countries, the arts and the sciences, technology and humans, the public sector and the private sector, human rights and responsibilities, and many others. Achieving balance and harmony in these areas is the most important goal in the cultural age because it is the key to the health, welfare, and well-being of human beings and other species as well as realizing more peace, safety, security, and sustainability in the world.

In order to enter a cultural age and enable it to flourish, leadership and action will have to come first and foremost from all the diverse *cultural communities and disciplines* in the world – most notably the arts, humanities, heritage of history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, biology, ecology, and cosmology – as well as from *governments at level levels*, as well as *people from all walks of life and parts of the world*. Without this, the cultural age will not be created and the environmental crisis will not be solved.

## QUOTES

“Today, rethinking development is necessary on a world scale. It was believed, not so long ago, that the economy was the base, the infrastructure. That is wrong; historians of the “long history” have shown that the decisive element is culture.” Pérez de Cuéllar

“I would therefore define the theory of culture as the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life.” Raymond Williams

“The realities of economic life, of power, or technology, of everything conducive to man’s (people’s) material well-being, must be balanced by strongly developed spiritual, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic values.” Johan Huizinga

“We need therefore to constantly reinforce our awareness of the primacy of source, and that source is the universal spring of culture.” Wole Soyinka

## QUESTIONS

Do you agree that we need to enter a cultural age? If so, why? If not, why not? What do you think are the most important strengths and shortcomings of a cultural age? Are you capable of living in a cultural age in your own life, or must it be created in a collective or global sense first before this is possible? Your thoughts and ideas on these matters will be

much appreciated. Next week's session – Session 18 – will be on Culture and Spirituality – Keys to Life and Living in a Cultural Age.

## SOURCES

D. Paul Schafer, 'The Age of Culture: Why, What, and How?' (Home Page, WCP Website: [www.worldcultureproject.org](http://www.worldcultureproject.org))

'Out of the Economic Age and into the Cultural Age' YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1o7TnC5FKqE>

D. Paul Schafer, *The Age of Culture* (Oakville: ON: Rock's Mills Press, 2014) Foreword by Federico Mayor, Former Director-General of UNESCO.

## SESSION 18 – SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2022

### CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY: KEY TO LIFE AND LIVING IN A CULTURAL AGE

#### THEME

If two words stand out above all others in the creation of a cultural age and realization of a more sustainable, harmonious, equitable, and peaceful world, surely those words are *culture* and *spirituality*.

As indicated throughout the **Culture as a Reality** series, seeing the world from the all-encompassing holistic perspective provided by culture and acting on it are imperative to yield the *transformational* changes that are required to decrease the demands we are making on the natural environment and ensure that environmental sustainability is achieved in the future. However, sustainability goes much deeper than this. In order to realize total sustainability, it is equally imperative to create the *transcendental* activities that are necessary to eliminate the vast inequalities that exist in income and wealth in the world, treat minorities and oppressed groups with dignity, compassion, equality, and respect, reduce conflicts between different countries, cultures, and civilizations, and reach above and beyond ourselves to create higher goals, values, and ideals for humanity and the planet as a whole.

This is where spirituality comes to the fore and asserts itself in earnest. For centuries, we have associated spirituality largely with religion, religions, and religious institutions. Regrettably, this has led to a more narrow and limited understanding of this remarkable state and awesome asset. Fortunately, many scholars, mystics, and spiritual leaders have provided us with a much broader, deeper, and more

fundamental, comfortable, and compelling understanding and vision of spirituality in recent years. It is an understanding and vision that results from thinking about and visualizing spirituality in a *transcendental* manner – a way that elevates us, enriches us, inspires us, and gives us the sense that spirituality can be found and experienced in all areas of life and not just in religion. This includes a kind gesture, helping people in need, enjoying exquisite paintings, beautiful flowers, enchanting landscapes, seascapes, and sunsets, memorable music, architectural masterpieces, the world of nature, walking in forests, magnificent and mystical pictures of the cosmos, and so much more.

It is not surprising in this regard that culture and spirituality are intimately connected and intricately interlaced. This is because spirituality manifests itself most profusely and is experienced most profoundly and profusely in all the main materials and domains of culture, from the arts, humanities, and heritage of history to the ways of life of people, their cultures, other species, the universe, and the sublime. To be effective, these perceptions and experiences must now be pushed to the forefront of global development and human affairs and linked with culture and cultures in a vast variety of interesting, stimulating, and dynamic ways.

## QUOTES

We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.” Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

“By having reverence for life, we enter into a spiritual relation with the world.”  
Albert Schweitzer

“A community is in the 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 ... toward which the different activities of the community are directed.”  
Johan Huizinga

“Spirituality as a science, as a study, is the greatest and healthiest exercise that the human mind can have.” Swami Vivekananda

“There is a candle in your heart, ready to be kindled. There is a void in your soul, ready to be filled. You feel it, don't you?” Mavolana Rumi

## QUESTIONS

What does spirituality mean to you personally? Do you agree with the intimate connection that is made in this session between culture and spirituality, or do you believe that spirituality transcends culture and cultures? Your thoughts and ideas on these matters will be much appreciated and very helpful. Next week's session will be on 'Living a Cultural Life.'

## **SOURCES**

D. Paul Schafer, 'Culture and Spirituality: Key to Life and Living in the Twenty-first Century.'

D. Paul Schafer, 'Cultivating Spirituality: A Necessity for Present and Future Generations'

Thomas Legrand, *Politics of Being: WIDSOM and SCIENCE for a New Development Paradigm* (Auckland, NZ: Ocean of Wisdom Press, 2021).

## **SESSION 19 – SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2022**

### **IMAGINING, ENTERING, AND LIVING IN A CULTURAL AGE**

#### **THEME**

I have been imagining what it would be like to enter and live in a cultural age ever since I was in elementary school. This resulted largely from a presentation I gave to my grade five class on Marco Polo and his trip to China and Asia. I was fascinated with his journey along the historic Silk Route from Venice to China and all the diverse peoples and cultures he encountered along the way, as well as all the time he spent in China and other parts of Asia after this. I couldn't help thinking that the world would be a much better and more peaceful and fulfilling place if people in all parts of the world were able to have cultural experiences like this and learn as much from them as Marco Polo and his family members and fellow travellers did from their experiences.

While this presentation led me to thinking about what it would be like to enter and live in a cultural age very early in life, I wasn't able to write about this until I was well into my thirties. This occurred when UNESCO published two of my articles on this subject – 'Towards a New World Order: The Age of Culture' and 'The Age of Culture: Prospects and Implications' – in its journal *Cultures* in 1976. This was intensified and magnified much more when I was able to broaden and deepen my knowledge and understanding of culture and cultures very substantially by researching them on a full-time basis and writing about them in earnest at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It wasn't until then that I began to realize what my good friend, Brian Holihan, meant when he said that it is possible to

experience a “paradise on earth” by exploring all the diverse and countless cultures in the world (see Session 11 for Brian’s chapter on this).

Until very recently, it has not been possible for most people in the world to have experiences with culture and the different cultures in the world like this. However, recent advances in digital technologies and virtual reality have now made this possible everywhere in the world. I know this isn’t the “real thing,” which may bother some people who feel that these experiences are not grounded in reality. Nevertheless, they are worth having, since they enable people to “explore many important aspects and dimensions of cultures” which is the first step towards getting to know cultures in the broader, deeper, and more fundamental holistic sense.

This is also where the imagination comes in. Imagination is the elixir that is needed in our lives to visualize, enjoy, and learn about many things in life that can’t be seen or experienced in fact, but can still be experienced in our minds, visions, and senses.

There are many ways of doing this, such as through experiences with the gateways to cultures, such as nature and the natural environment, other species, the arts, sciences, sports, recreation, paintings, films, literature, stories, travel, and so forth. In my case, it has been largely through music. What makes this so essential for me is that music from all the different cultures in the world says so much about these cultures as overall ways of life, as well as creates peak experiences that border on the profound and the sublime.

## QUOTES

“The whole purpose and end of culture is a thrilling happiness of a particular sort – of a sort, in fact, that is caused by a response to life made by a harmony of the intellect, the imagination, and the sense.” John Cowper Powys

“You need imagination in order to imagine a future that doesn’t exist.” Azar Fafisi

“Imagination is the beginning of creation. You *imagine* what you desire, you *will* what you imagine, and, at last, you *create* what you will.” George Bernard Shaw

“Everything you can imagine is real.” Picasso

“Imagination creates reality.” Richard Wagner

“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.” Plato

## QUESTIONS

Do you feel you can learn enough about culture and cultures to enter and live in a cultural age in your mind, imagination, experiences, and actions? If so, how does your life differ from those around you? What is *your* favourite vehicle for living in a cultural age. Your answers to these questions will be much appreciated. Next week's session – Session 20, which is the last one – will provide a brief summary of the entire series as well as probe more deeply into how we can work together to make a cultural age a fact.

## SOURCES

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## SESSION 20 – SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2022

### MAKING THE AGE OF CULTURE A REALITY

#### THEME

We have reached the end of a long and fascinating journey. We commenced this journey with a statement about the need to move out of the present economic age and into a future cultural age. This was followed by working our way *up* the cultural ladder rather than *down* the cultural ladder: first, by starting with people are culture, culture as the foundation of people's lives, and the cultural personality; then by examining the role of culture and cultures in the lives of young people, communities, schools, cities, regions, countries, the world, international relations, the cosmos, the roots of cultures, and cultural sustainability; and finally by dealing with a number of crucial matters and requirements related to making the age of culture a reality.

I must confess that I am very excited and optimistic about the creation of a cultural age, despite all the problems, obstacles, and challenges that may stand in the way. There are many reasons for this. First, there is the rapidly escalating interest in culture and cultures in all parts of the world, which results from the realization by countless people that culture is the "**change agent**" that is required in the world to produce transformational, transcendental, and systemic change as indicated earlier in this series. Coupled with this is the "**change the culture**" **movement** that is rapidly gaining ground and having an effect on governments, corporations, countless other public and private organizations, as well as the paradigm shift that is occurring in the world to see and understand culture and cultures as "the total ways of life" of people, groups, and institutions. These developments confirm

the ancient Chinese proverb that states, “the beginning of wisdom lies in calling things by their right name.” It is culture and cultures in this all-encompassing, holistic sense - not economics and economies in the partial sense - that is the right name for this because it constitutes the real foundations of existence and essence of life and living in the world.

Added to this is the realization that culture is the key to coming to grips with some of the world’s most difficult and dangerous problems, most notably the environmental crisis, the necessity for inclusion rather than exclusion, far more income equality in the world, lessening the tensions, conflicts, and wars between people, groups, and countries with very different worldviews, values, and customs, and creating peace rather than war in the world. When this is added to the fact that more than half the world’s population – including the Indigenous peoples in the world and millions of people in colonized countries – are involved in connecting or reconnecting with their original cultures rather than the cultures that were imposed on them through colonization – it is clear that culture and cultures are increasingly being visualized and understood as “the *cause* of change” rather than the “*consequence* of change” which is a necessity going forward into the future.

While it is imperative for people in general and governments and international institutions in particular to play a proactive role in these developments, it behooves dedicated and committed who are working in the various domains of culture to light the way and chart the course for the future. Without this, the age of culture will not be created and we will not be able to claim that culture is “an idea (and an ideal) whose time has come.”

## QUOTES

“Cultures constitutes the topmost phenomenon level yet imagined – or for that matter now imaginable – in the realm of nature. This, of course, does not compel the prediction that emergence into our consciousness of a new and higher plane is precluded.” Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn. *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*.

“Use your imagination to visualize what may be, not what is. Then set your goals, take action, and make what you imagined a reality.” Catherine Pulsifer

“The destiny of humans cannot be separated from the destiny of the Earth.” Thomas Berry

“The universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.” Thomas Berry

## QUESTIONS

Are you in agreement with the claim that culture is the key to charting the path that is most urgently required in the world today and the prerequisite for a cultural age? If so, what developments do you feel are most essential to achieve this? How do you think you, your colleagues, and your country could contribute to this most effectively? Your involvement in this series has been and is deeply appreciated. I hope this has been a useful experience and helpful in your present and future work in your field of interest and involvement.

## SOURCES

Mark Riva's interview with Paul about his work in the cultural field and the World Culture Project. (Available upon request from D. Paul Schafer at [dpaulschafer@sympatico.ca](mailto:dpaulschafer@sympatico.ca))

D. Paul Schafer, 'A Tale of Two Ages and the Quest to Create a Peaceful, Harmonious, Equitable, Sustainable, and Spiritual World.' WCP Website: [www.worldcultureproject.org](http://www.worldcultureproject.org)

D. Paul Schafer, *The Great Cultural Awakening: Key to an Equitable, Sustainable, and Harmonious Age*, 2024. Rock's Mills Press, Oakville, Ontario and all Amazon sites in the world.