

THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN ENHANCING EDUCATION, CULTURE, COMPASSION, AND COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

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Let's begin by using a telescopic lens to focus attention on two of the most important activities in the world - the arts and the sciences. Seen from the most expansive perception possible, these two activities are among the most powerful in the world because they underlie virtually all other activities and play a valuable role in all parts of the world. We neglect them at our peril going forward into the future.

Viewed from this most expansive perception, two things stand out above all else. The first is that the arts and sciences have played a phenomenal role in the world for thousands of years. The second is that there have been times when the arts have grown most rapidly, such as during the Renaissance, and other times when the sciences have grown most rapidly, such as throughout the Scientific Revolution.

However, when we use our telescopic lens to bring the arts and sciences a step closer, something else is evident. There is a major imbalance or disharmony between these two activities throughout the world at present.

While the sciences are growing very rapidly in all parts of the world due to phenomenal developments in technology, communications, artificial intelligence, the creation of numerous visual, virtual, and digital devices, an enormous amount of space exploration, and many others, the arts are lagging far behind due to substantial cuts in arts funding, significant decreases in arts courses and programs in millions of schools around the world, mounting pressures on arts organizations to maintain their current or reduced levels of activity despite severe losses in jobs and income sources, dealing with the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and most importantly of all, seeing and treating the arts as marginal rather than mainstream activities in countries and the world as a whole.

The most obvious example of this is in the field of education. While many if not most students in elementary and secondary schools in the world today are advised to take "three maths and three sciences" if they want to go to university, get a good job, have a nice home, and live an enjoyable life, they are discouraged from taking courses in the arts because they are seen as having little usefulness in the world and can produce difficulties later in life if students pursue careers in this area.

There are many reasons for the severe imbalance and disharmony that exists between the arts and sciences at present. Included among the most obvious ones are the "age-old problem" that the arts are often seen as activities of little value or importance; make minor rather than major contributions to the growth of all the

diverse economies in the world; lack concrete outcomes and practical results; and quite possibly the most important factor of all, the publication of C. P. Snow's book *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* in 1959. In his book, Snow divided intellectual life and activity in Great Britain and generally throughout Europe and the western world into two distinct and different cultures: the *artistic-humanistic culture*; and the *scientific culture*. According to Snow, this was a cause for concern in the decades after the Second World War because the artistic-humanistic culture was getting far too much attention and funding and the scientific culture far too little attention and funding. (Snow, C. P., 1959)

Snow made such a compelling argument for awarding a much higher priority and substantially more funding for the sciences and a scientific education in educational institutions in Great Britain, Europe, and the western world that a seismic shift began to occur away from the arts, humanities, and an artistic-humanistic education and towards the sciences and a scientific education. It was not long after this that the sciences became known and dealt with in most educational systems in Britain, Europe, and the western world as "*hard subjects*," while the arts and humanities were deemed to be "*soft subjects*." This resulted in a substantial increase in funding for the sciences and a substantial decrease in funding for the arts and humanities in most educational systems in these parts of the world.

If this practice had been confined to educational institutions, Great Britain, Europe, and the western world, it is quite possible that Snow's powerful argument would not have had the impact it eventually had. But it was not to be. Not long after the pendulum started swinging in favour of the sciences and away from the arts, Snow's case became popular not only in educational institutions, Europe, and the western world but also in most other educational institutions and countries in the world. This was largely because science and the sciences were linked to economics, economies, industry, politics, technology, and economic growth - and therefore the beliefs of corporations, governments, corporate executives, politicians, and civil servants - that this was the way to go in the future and the solution to the world's most difficult problems at that time.

As a result of developments like this, and others, it was no longer a case of treating the sciences as *hard subjects* and the arts and humanities as *soft subjects* in educational institutions, European countries, and the western world. More fundamentally and essentially, it was a case of treating the sciences as "*hard activities*" and the arts and humanities as "*soft activities*" in virtually all institutions, countries, and parts of the world. Not only were these attitudes and beliefs firmly entrenched in the minds of countless corporate executives, business leaders, politicians, and government and international officials by this time, but also they were firmly entrenched in the minds of millions of parents in the world as well.

As a result, the “Snow thesis”- as it was called at the time and is still called today - became a societal and global phenomenon and not just an educational and British, European, and western phenomenon. Hard activities were concerned with the “*basics in life*” and what life and living were really all about at their core and in their fundamental essence; soft activities were concerned with the “*frills in life*” and what people did in their space time. Seen and dealt with in this way, artistic and humanistic activities were appropriate as leisure-time pursuits but had little or nothing to do with “the necessities and conveniences of life.” Their principal purpose was to round people out, make them more sophisticated, and provide them with the experiences they needed to prevent them from becoming bored and able to enjoy their free time more.

When Snow saw what was happening and how the relationship between the arts and the sciences was becoming polarized and out of balance after *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* was published and in circulation, he wrote a second book on this matter titled *The Two Cultures: And a Second Look: An Expanded Version of the Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. In this book, Snow attempted to explain in far more detail why he made the case for giving the sciences and a scientific education a much higher priority and far more attention and funding in the overall scheme of things, as well as rectifying the damage that had been done by the major imbalance and disharmony that had erupted between the arts humanities, and sciences and was so conspicuous throughout the world. Regrettably, however, it was too late. The pendulum was swinging and swinging rapidly and relentlessly away from the arts and humanities and towards the sciences and neither Snow nor any other person in the world could stop it, as often happens when situations become polarized like this and nothing is done about it (Snow, C. P., 1963)

This was a very difficult time for artists, arts organizations, and people working in the arts (as well as the humanities from this point on in this article) because the *context* of the arts was stacked against them. Nevertheless, they fought back, especially in arts education where teachers and authorities in this area began to justify arts education courses, programs, and projects not only for their ability to teach students to write effectively, play musical instruments, paint pictures, take photographs, put on theatrical and dance performances, sing in choirs, pen poems, and enjoy the arts later in life, but also for their ability to address critical educational, social, cultural, and more recently health care and well-being issues, as well as to stimulate creativity, imagination, innovation, and ingenuity throughout the world. While this helped to a certain extent, it has not been able to reverse the incredible damage that was done to the arts at that time and even today.

Despite the advantages and disadvantages that have arisen as a result of the playing out of the fundamental dichotomy between the arts and the sciences, it is

time to bring the adverse imbalance or disharmony that exists between them to an end. As long as this situation exists, we will continue to pay a severe and escalating price for this. It can only be rectified by asserting the value and importance of the arts in the quintessential sense, as well as in our lives, educational institutions, governments, corporations, foundations, countries, cultures, and the world at large.

Let's use our telescopic lens once more to bring our perception of this difficult problem even closer and therefore into clearer focus by examining why it is so imperative at this particular time in history to “**double down**” on the development of the arts going forward into the future and why this is so essential. What is needed here more than anything else is to “grow and cultivate the arts” to the point where they are compatible, comparable, harmonious, and in balance with the sciences. For this is the only way it will be possible to capitalize on the numerous capabilities that exist in both the arts and the sciences to create the conditions for a better world and establish beneficial and synergistic relationships between and among them.

Just as the sciences in general and the natural, agricultural, industrial technological, medical, health, and social branches of the sciences in particular contribute a great deal to the development of education, culture, cultures, countries, and putting humanity in the strongest possible position to come to grips with the life-threatening problems of the present and the future, so do the arts in general and the performing, visual, literary, architectural, photographic, material, environmental, culinary, horticultural, and ceremonial branches of the arts in particular.

The arts are able to do this because artists and arts organizations are not only creative, imaginative, and innovative, but also produce many of the signs, symbols, myths, metaphors, legends, rituals, and signals that are necessary to broaden and deepen educational experiences and curriculums in all areas, as well as enhance our knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of culture and all the diverse cultures and civilizations in the world in holistic and inclusive terms. (Schafer, D. Paul, 2020)

What is especially fascinating about the arts when they are seen and dealt with in this all-encompassing sense is that they possess the potential to bring an enormous amount of joy, meaning, awareness, purpose, and direction into our lives if we are wise enough to realize this and take full advantage of it. And they do this both as “*ends in themselves*” as well as “*means to other ends.*”

As such, the arts possess the ability to enhance and enrich the development of our personalities and lives, improve our state of mental and physical health and well-being, produce many delightful social experiences and group situations, enrich and intensify our capacity for spirituality, compassion, and cooperation, and teach us a great about ourselves and everything else that exists in the world, the universe, and even the cosmos. This results from art forms and artistic activities that are concerned with people, places, communities, towns, cities, regions, countries, the natural

environment, nature's diverse elements, other species, and a great deal else. They are all there in one form or another for our pleasure, satisfaction, use, and enjoyment, regardless of where we live in the world and what we are anxious to achieve in life.

We have all been so moved, touched, and uplifted by the arts at certain times in our lives that we feel we have transcended ourselves and the world, had "peak experiences," and entered very special places and spaces. All art forms possess the ability to do this, as well as to stimulate and invigorate us, get us going when we are lethargic and depressed, activate, elevate, and enrich us, sooth and relax us, inspire us, and enable us to soar to great heights. It's all this and much more. The arts also bring us into contact with beauty, the sublime, the divine, nostalgia, and the momentous, connect us with other people, groups, and races, and teach us an incredible amount about everything that exists within, around, about, and beyond us.

They also enable us to delve deeply into all the diverse cultures and civilizations in the world. However, in order to do this, it is necessary to use our telescopic lens once again in an even closer, clearer, and more comprehensive way.

When we focus our attention on the cultures of neighbourhoods, communities, towns, cities, regions, and nations, for instance, we immediately become aware of the phenomenal number of people, groups, organizations, activities, resources, infrastructures, and so forth that comprise them. A little curiosity in this area can produce many benefits, relevant experiences, timely teaching and learning opportunities, and numerous rewards. It can also open the doors to a broad range and deep set of educational and cultural possibilities that include understanding the evolution of cultures at every conceivable geographical level as well as in space and time, comprehending the many different layers of cultures and civilizations that exist in the world, and learning far more about the multitude of people, ethnic, and racial groups that constitute them. Also noteworthy in this regard are the countless multicultural events, customs, traditions, and languages that exist in these cultures and civilizations, as well as the numerous sights, sounds, textures, tastes, landscapes, and culturescapes that make them up as well as their different geological features and environmental circumstances.

It is experiences like these, and many others discussed momentarily, that make it possible for the arts to contribute a great deal to the development of education and culture in all parts of the world as well as all areas of life. As Maria Montessori said many years ago, "*Culture and education have on bounds or limits.*"

Over the centuries, many artists have been interested in the comprehensive character and distinctive characteristics of town, city, regional, and national cultures, and have devoted substantial parts of their lives and careers to depicting these cultures through their vast arrays of different works, forms, features, symbols, and idioms. They have achieved this largely by selecting parts of the aforementioned

cultures that are most symbolic of them as “complex wholes” and “overall ways of life.” There are many examples of this. Brueghel achieved this through his paintings of Dutch social scenes, urban celebrations, and peasant life, Canaletto and Guardi through their colourful representations of Venice, Émile Zola through his descriptive portrayal of the vivid colours and pungent aromas of Paris, Turgenev through his remarkable illustration of Russian cosmopolitan life, and Auguste Renoir through his captivating street scenes and depictions of many different types of people.

Many other artists, authors, photographers, and so forth have also made similar contributions to this. Rohinton Mistry, for example, did this through an “unnamed city” (most likely Bombay) in *A Fine Balance*; Theodore Drieser achieved it for Chicago in his book *Sister Carrie*; James Joyce accomplished it for Dublin in *Ulysses*; Joseph O’Neill realized it for Dubai in *The Dog*; and Mikhail Bulgakov captured this for Moscow in *The Master and Margarita*.

To this list should be added what may be the most symbolic illustrations of this parts-whole phenomenon and all-encompassing process of all, namely the countless pictures taken by photographers such as Daidō Moriyama of streets in Japan and especially Tokyo that were designed to reveal the friction between traditional and contemporary cultures and ways of life there; Fan Ho and numerous streets in Hong Kong; Eugène Atget, one of the first street photographers in the world who took thousands of pictures of the streets of Paris; Henri Cartier-Bresson, who focused attention on capturing “decisive moments” in a variety of urban settings, neighbourhoods, and contexts throughout Europe; and especially Vivian Maier, undoubtedly one of the most famous and prolific street photographers of all, who portrayed numerous cities in many different parts the world.

While these illustrations cover a vast panorama of possibilities and numerous activities, this is most apparent in the holistic sense in the case of photographers who have captured images of virtually everything that exists in urban settings, countries, and cultures, including remarkable mixtures of people, cherished walks, walkways, walkers, and strollers, myriad buildings, bridges, and architectural edifices, upscale communities and downtrodden districts, people at work and people at play, the diversity of employment pursuits and social situations, and myriad others.

There is no doubt that music plays a unique and very powerful role in all this. Composers and musicians achieve this through the creation of musical works that resonate strongly with people and their hopes, dreams, aspirations, fears, feelings, emotions, and ideals in profound, potent, and far-reaching ways.

Not only is music created to be enjoyed, savoured, loved, and appreciated, but also there is a great deal of music that suits every mood, situation, occasion, and requirement. When we dig deeply into this matter, it is apparent that music probably does this better than any other art form, which is why many scholars have been

strong advocates of music in general and musical education in particular. Their thoughts and convictions on this matter can be traced back to the great Greek philosopher Plato, who was a strong advocate of the importance of music in our lives and in the world, especially when children are very young. Not only did Plato say, “I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy, but most importantly music, for the patterns in music and all the arts are the keys to learning,” but also he believed that, “musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten.” This explains why Plato’s famous book, *The Republic*, is filled with references to the incredible impact and multifarious effects music has on the development of people, their personalities, and their lives, as well as the cultivation of societies, countries, cultures, and the ideal state. In this book, Plato stressed his belief that, “Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything,” which is probably why Henry Wadsworth Longfellow claimed that “music is the universal language of mankind (humankind).”

At this point, let’s use our telescopic lens yet again to shed light on the phenomenal role that music can and does play in educating people with respect to virtually everything that exists in the world, from places, cities, cultures, and so forth to nature, the natural environment, other species, and virtually everything else. (Schafer, D. Paul, 2023)

As far as places are concerned, this should likely include Ferde Grofé’s *Grand Canyon Suite* and Albert Ketèlbey’s *In a Monastery Garden*, *In a Persian Market*, *In a Chinese Temple Garden*, *In the Mystic Land of Egypt*, and *Bells Across the Meadow*, as well as such well-known songs as “New York, New York,” “I Love Paris,” and George Gershwin’s symphonic poem *An American in Paris*. The English composer Eric Coates achieved this in a far more comprehensive way when he divided the city of London into six specific districts that he felt were most symbolic of London as a whole in his musical composition *The London Suite*. These parts were, and still are, Covent Garden, Westminster, Knightsbridge, Oxford Street, Langham Place, and Mayfair. It was a terrific idea that is enjoyed today by millions of Londoners as well as countless visitors, business people, politicians, and tourists who pour into this cosmopolitan city every minute of every day.

One of the best illustrations of all in exposing countries’ cultures as dynamic wholes and total ways of life through the use of music and musical symbols is the culture of Spain, thanks to such talented composers as Isaac Albéniz and his *Iberia Suite Asturias*, Manuel de Falla’s *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, Enrique Granados’ *Goyescas*, Pablo de Sarasate’s *Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy Airs)* and *Spanish Dances*, Édouard Lalo’s *Symphonie espagnole* and *Danse espagnola*, Rimsky-Korsakov’s

Capriccio espagnol, Joaquín Rodrigo's *Concierto Aranjuez* and *Concierto Andulez*, and Emmanuel Chabrier's *Españe*. These examples could easily be augmented by pertinent paintings by such distinguished artists as Diago Velázquez, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, El Greco, Francisco Goya, Joan Miró, and talented architects such as Giovanni Antonio Gardi. Through these works and symbols and countless others, it would be possible to produce a "musical and visual portrait of the culture of Spain" that is characteristic of the country, its people, and its culture as a whole if enough symbolic parts were used for this purpose. And what is true for Spain and its national culture is also true for other countries and their national cultures as well.

Nowhere is music's ability to depict a variety of things in the world like this more in evidence in real and symbolic terms than in nature and nature's many diverse elements.

It is amazing how many artists and especially composers in the western world and elsewhere have been fascinated with nature and nature's many diverse elements, thereby creating a colossal cornucopia of musical works that have to do with nature in all its complexity, grandeur, diversity, abundance, and magnificence. Included in this vast cornucopia of elements are rivers, lakes, streams, seas, and oceans; mountains, trees, flowers, and forests; sunrises and sunsets; the different periods of the day and seasons of the year; other species and especially plants and animals; and the sun, moon, stars, planets, universe, and cosmos.

An excellent illustration of this first group is rivers. Interestingly, rivers have been a favourite of composers for a long time. This is likely because water is one of the humanity's and the world's most precious assets – if not *the* most precious - and rivers have a great deal to do with movement and flow which are basic requirements at all ages and all areas of life. Obvious examples of this would include Johann Strauss Jr.'s *The Blue Danube*, Robert Burns and Jonathan Spilman's *Flow Gently Sweet Afton*, Bruce Springsteen's *The River*, Brent Dowe and Trevor McNaughton's *The Rivers of Babylon*, Yin Chengzong and Chu Wanghua's *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, American favourites such as *Ol' Man River* and *Oh Shenandoah*, and Smetana's *The Moldau*. This musical masterpiece is about a river that flows majestically from its origins in the mountains of Bohemia, meanders leisurely through the Czechia countryside, and finally arrives at its destination, the city of Prague. This remarkable musical and patriotic composition captures Smetana's love for his homeland and fellow citizens. It was completed in 1874 and constitutes the second movement of his six-movement magnum opus *Ma Vlast* or *My Country*.

What is true for rivers is also true for lakes, seas, and oceans, as well as mountains, trees, flowers, plants, and forests to carry this musical metaphor a step further. In this latter category, Vincent d'Indy's *Symphony on a French Mountain Air*, Alan Hovhaness' *Mysterious Mountain* (*Symphony No. 2*), John Denver's *Rocky*

Mountain High, Ottorino Respighi's *The Pines of Rome*, Leo Delibes' "Flower Duet" from *Lakmé*, "The Rose" made famous by Bette Midler, Johann Strauss II's *Roses from the South*, Handel's *Ombra mai fu* (*Ode to a Tree*), and Wagner's *Forest Murmurs* stand out among thousands of others.

Added to this are sunrises and sunsets, the different periods of the day, and the various seasons of the year. It wouldn't take long to compile a lengthy list of examples here as well. Think, for instance, of Haydn's *Sunrise Quartet*, Richard Strauss's *Im Abendrot* and *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Greig's *Morning Mood* from his *Peer Gynt Suite*, "Oh What a Beautiful Morning" from *Oklahoma*, Ravel's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'une faune* (*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Fawn*), "Some Enchanted Evening" from *South Pacific*, Engelbert Humperdinck's *Evening Prayer* from his opera *Hansel and Gretel*, Modest Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*, Arnold Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (*Transfigured Night*), Don McLean's popular song "Starry, Starry Night," and countless others.

The seasons of the year also figure prominently in this. Several composers have written major works about the seasons, most notably Joseph Haydn and *The Seasons*, Alexander Glazunov and his *Seasons*, and especially Antonio Vivaldi and the *Four Seasons*. Added to this list would surely be Schumann's *Spring Symphony* (*Symphony No. 1*), Schubert's *Im Frühling* (*In Spring*), Delius's *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, Gershwin's *Summertime*, and Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Nature's many diverse elements are also a very fundamental component of music. Most notable in this regard are rain, snow, ice, wind, clouds, sky, lightning, and thunder. There are many examples of this, including Chopin's "Raindrop Prelude," Debussy's *Jardins sous la pluie* (*Gardens in the Rain*) and *The Snow is Dancing*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snow Maiden*, Offenbach's *Ballet of the Snowflakes*, Yoko Ono's "Walking on Thin Ice," Jean-Baptiste Lully's *Alcestre – Les Vents* (*The Winds*), Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind," Sid Acharya's *Stories from the Sky*, Franz Liszt's *Nuages Gris* (*Gray Clouds*), and many others. Especially apparent in this regard is Beethoven's *Symphony No. 6* (*Pastoral Symphony*), which is all about nature, his love of it, and its many different wonders and elements.

Animals are also a very important part of the works of composers. A lengthy list could be drawn up here, such as Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*, Williams' *The Lark Ascending*, Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite*, Bach's *Sheep May Safely Graze*, Schubert's *Trout Quintet*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Flight of the Bumble Bee*, Copland's *The Red Pony*, and *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square* that was popularized by Vera Lynn during and after the Second World War. Interestingly, many composers have had a special affection for birds, likely because birds are able

to produce many different sounds and make music of sorts as well. As a result, many composers have used birds and bird calls in their musical works, such as Janequin and *Le Chant des Oiseaux (Bird Calls)*, Respighi and *Gli Uccelli (The Birds)*, Vivaldi's *Il Gardellino (The Goldfinch)*. and Mozart's *A Musical Joke* about his pet starling.

Finally, the sun, moon, stars, planets, universe, and cosmos are also fundamental components of this musical commitment to the diverse elements of nature. Think, for example, of "Here Comes the Sun" by the Beatles, Debussy's *Claire de Lune*, Henry Mancini's *Moon River*, Dvořák's *Song to the Moon* from his opera *Rusalka*, Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, Bach's *How Brightly Shines the Morning Star*, and many others. As far as the planets are concerned, one of the most well-known pieces in this area is Gustav Holst's *The Planets*. This is an orchestral suite in seven movements where each movement is named after a specific planet in the solar system and imbued with its presumed astrological features, such as Venus, the Bringer of Peace; Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity; Mercury, the Winged Messenger; and the like. Then there is Hildegard von Bingen and her remarkable musical talents and accomplishments. She is best known for her spiritual concept of *Viriditas* or "greenness" – the cosmic life force that infuses the natural world - as well as her monumental *Symphonia Armonie Celestium Reverationen* or *Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations* – and many other mystical masterpieces.

One of the most fascinating things about the arts if we use our telescopic lens one last time to move even closer to the arts is that every art form possesses certain qualities that make it distinctive and unique. For music, it is sound, melodies, rhythm, harmony, and counterpoint; for the visual arts, perception, perspective, representation, and colour; and for poetry, simplicity. While every art form strives to express things simply - and often achieves this because it is one of the keys to producing great works of art - poetry seems to be far more concerned with simplicity than other art forms, as well as to manifest this characteristic most frequently. This is because the challenge in poetry is to express things as succinctly as possible, thereby achieving the maximum effect with the minimum number of words.

There are many examples of this, such as Keats' "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," William Blake's "Robin red breast in a cage puts all heaven in a rage," Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "How do I love thee?/Let me count the ways," and William Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage/And all the men and women merely players." Talk about saying powerful things with the minimum use of words and utmost simplicity! Countless other poets in the world have also possessed this ability, such as Li Po, Rabindranath Tagore, Omar Khayyam, Federico Garcia Lorca, Robert Frost, and Maya Angelou. And what simplicity is to poetry, movement, physicality,

and choreography are to dance. Here, as well, many examples abound, most notably Tchaikovsky's ballets *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. It is facts like this that Martha Graham, the legendary American dancer and choreographer, had in mind when she said, "dance is the hidden language of the soul."

Then there is architecture, where mass, density, design, matter, and texture reign supreme and stand out most conspicuously. Architects make use of these qualities and materials all the time - and in many different ways - to produce exquisite architectural creations, which some people refer to as "frozen music" because they are so exquisite and ornate that they really do look like music that has been frozen in space and time. While the Taj Mahal in India is deemed by many people to be the most beautiful architectural masterpiece in the world, there are countless others, such as Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque in Turkey, the Shah Mosque in Iran, the Golden Pavilion or Kinkaku-ji in Japan, Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Prambanan Temple in Indonesia, and the Sydney Opera House in Australia.

Interestingly, theatre, literature, opera, and film use stories as their special technique or quality, and do so in very fascinating, informative, and illustrious ways. This is because stories communicate things that are simple and profound, mundane and momentous, and timely and timeless. Consider the works of Shakespeare for instance. His stories are full of keen insights into different personality types, diverse social, political, and societal situations, and human triumphs and tragedies. As a result, his plays are as revered today as the day they were written. His keen insights into human nature, life, living, and people's strengths, weaknesses, foibles, and idiosyncrasies in plays such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet* are phenomenal to say the least. And what is true for Shakespeare and his works is also true of many other authors, such as Molière, Charles Dickens, Jalāl ad-Din Muhammed Rūmī, and so forth. Works like this extend from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* and include everything in between, such as Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*, Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, and J.K. Rowling's incredible Harry Potter series. Films and operas also possess compelling ways to tell stories like this in visual, auditory, and musical terms, as well as to preserve them for posterity. Examples abound in this area as well, such as *Gone with the Wind*, *Doctor Zhivago*, and the life of Mahatma Gandhi, as well as operas by Puccini, Verdi, Wagner, Handel, Monteverdi, and many others.

Fortunately, the arts can be enjoyed these days in reproduced and recorded form and not just in "live form." This results from the fact that the arts are now easily accessible through radio, television, film, videos, sound recordings, books, and

magazines, as well as the social and mass media and myriad technological techniques and digital devices. The joy and satisfaction that comes from exposure to the arts in all these diverse forms and ways over a lifetime is immense and immeasurable. As Glenn Gould, put it, “The purpose of art is not the release of a momentary ejection of adrenaline but is, rather, the gradual lifelong construction of a state of wonder and serenity.”

Having established the fact that the arts are capable of playing a central rather than marginal role in the world and the imbalance and disharmony between the arts and the science must be rectified without delay so that harmonious relationships can be established between and among them, let’s turn our attention to the most essential matter of all, namely that role that the arts can play in coming to grips with the challenges of the present and the future.

Among the most obvious and pressing of these challenges is undoubtedly dealing with the environmental crisis and achieving ecological sustainability; manifesting more spirituality, compassion, humanity, and humility in the world; and creating more equitable, inclusive, and peaceful relationships between the diverse peoples, races, countries, and cultures of the world. (Schafer, D. Paul, 2024)

The distinguished cultural scholar, Johan Huizinga, gave us a profound insight into this matter as well as a remarkable start in the right direction when he said:

The realities of economic life, of power, of technology, of everything conducive to man’s [humanity’s] material well-being, must be balanced by strongly developed spiritual, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic values. (Weintraub, 1966)

In doing so, Huizinga put his finger on one of the most relevant and pressing requirements confronting humanity and the world at present and going forward into the future. Clearly the *more* time, attention, energy, funding, and commitment we make in individual and collective terms to “the realities of economic life, of power, of technology, of everything conducive to man’s [humanity’s] *material* well-being,” the *less* time, attention, energy, funding, and commitment will be given to reducing the impact we are making on the natural environment, the world’s scarce resources, and the globe’s fragile ecosystems. Not only is this causing a great deal of disorder and friction in the world and people’s lives, but also it is producing devastating floods, huge forest fires, punishing hurricanes, violent storms, and many other ecological disasters, as well as putting far more pressure and stress on nature’s realm and the lives of other species.

The arts have a very important role to play in this area in terms of achieving human, environmental, and global sustainability. This is because the arts have a great

deal to do with creating “experiences” that are low in material and capital inputs and outputs rather than “products and technologies” that are high in material inputs and outputs. Think about it for a moment. Sitting in a concert hall listening to exquisite music, watching a captivating dance or dramatic performance in a theatre, or strolling through museums and art galleries to see fascinating paintings and sculptures not only yields a great deal of enjoyment and contentment but also reduces our ecological demands, expectations, and footprints very considerably.

And this is not all. Apart from the need for basic supplies - paints, brushes, easels, and paper for painters, stone, wood, metal, and other materials for carvers and sculptors, clay and kilns for potters, musical instruments and score paper for musicians and composers, and sets and props for actors, actresses, singers, and dancers - artists and arts organizations do not make excessive or unreasonable demands on the natural environment and nature’s precious resource legacy. Even opera, which is the most expensive and elaborate art form of all as far as the need for resources is concerned, requires far fewer resources than industrial, manufacturing, technological, and commercial products and organizations, thereby having powerful implications for the world of the future.

It is matters like this that confirm why Tibor Scitovsky, a well-known economist, wrote *The Joyless Economy* and B. F. Skinner, a celebrated psychologist, wrote *Walden II*. Both these authors viewed development of the arts as a way to conserve rather than consume resources, put less pressure on nature, and yield more fulfillment in life. Perhaps this is why John Muir, generally seen as the founder of the national park movement in the United States, said, “It’s into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul,” yet another experience rather than a product.

And this is not all. Failure to create “strongly developed spiritual, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic values” not only causes a great deal of disharmony, disequilibrium, and polarization in the world and people’s lives, it also creates a world that is far more exclusive than inclusive, unjust rather than just, characterized by colossal disparities in income and wealth, and increasing devoid of feelings, emotions, compassion, spirituality, and the values, beliefs, and convictions that are needed to create a more human, humane, peaceful, ethical, and equitable world. Is it any wonder that there are many conflicts, tensions, and wars in the world these days, as well as the death of thousands of children, women, and elderly people who are seen and treated as “collateral damage” rather than “appalling atrocities?”

Fortunately, Huizinga went on to say something else of crucial importance immediately following his earlier quotation. It was this:

... balance exists above all in the fact that each of the various cultural activities enjoys as vital a function as is possible in the

context of the whole. If such harmony of cultural functions is present, it will reveal itself as order, strong structure, style, and rhythmic life of the society in question. (6)

This is where the arts can really shine and come to the fore. By bringing more caring, sharing, spirituality, compassion, and cooperation into the world and reducing the demands we are making on the natural environment, the arts will produce more conservation and less consumption, inclusion rather than exclusion, help to decrease the colossal disparities that exist in income throughout the world through sharing wealth more equitably and fairly, make greater commitments to justice and equality, and create the foundations for a more peaceful, contented, and harmonious world.

Let's get on with the commitment to developing the arts throughout the world to the point where they can stand squarely and equally beside the sciences as indispensable activities in coming to grips with the challenges of the present and the future and making the world a better place for all people, all countries, and the world as a whole in the years, decades, and centuries ahead.

References

1. Snow, C. P. (1959). *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Snow, C. P. (1963). *The Two Cultures and a Second Look: An Expanded Version of the Two Culture and the Scientific Revolution*. New York: New American Library. These matters are manifested most conspicuously at present by what most educators and educational institutions call STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics – in order to produce the best and most well-developed education. In recent years, strenuous efforts have been made by people in the arts as well as arts educators and organizations to create a much broader and more inclusive version of STEM by adding the *Arts* to it so that the acronym becomes STEAM, or *Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics*. Unfortunately, reactions to these efforts have been mixed to date. While some educational institutions have adopted STEAM in their educational and promotional programs and literature, many are still downplaying these initiatives or ignoring them entirely by sticking to their commitment to STEM. Doing so only aggravates the imbalance between these two sets of activities and causes the pendulum to swing even more forcefully in the direction of greater inequality between the arts and the sciences rather than creating more compatibility and harmony between and among them.

3. Schafer, D. Paul (2021). *The Arts: Gateway to a Fulfilling Life and Cultural Age*. Oakville, Canada: Rock's Mills Press.
4. Schafer, D. Paul (2023). 'The Power of Music: What We Can Learn from Music about Ourselves, Our Lives, Our Cultures, Nature, and the World.' This article provides numerous examples of the ability of music to broaden, deepen, and enrich our knowledge, understanding, awareness, and appreciation of all diverse cultures, countries, and civilizations in the world. It can be accessed and downloaded on the Home Page of the World Culture Project Website at: www.worldcultureproject.org
5. Schafer, D. Paul, (2024) *The Great Cultural Awakening: Key to an Equitable, Sustainable, and Harmonious Age*. Oakville, Canada, Rock's Mills Press. See Chapter 12 on 'Harmonizing Crucial Cultural Relationships, pp. 220-230, for a more detailed description and intensive discussion about the major imbalance and disharmony between the arts and the sciences at present and how it is possible to overcome it going forward into the future.
6. Weintraub, Karl J, (1966). *Visions of Culture: Voltaire, Guizot, Burckhardt, Lamprecht, Huizinga, Ortega y Gasset*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 216.
7. Ibid., p. 216

This article was written for the 15th International Conference – “The Spiritual Basis of Education in the Face of Challenges of the Modern World” - convened by Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University in Ukraine on May 21, 2024.

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