

THE FUTURE OF CULTURE

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Despite the rich potential culture possesses to make a vital contribution to the creation of a better world, this potential is not being realized.

Why is this? What vortex of forces is at work throughout the world that is causing culture to play a marginal rather than mainstream role in the world and preventing the realization of culture's full potential?

It is not difficult to identify these forces. In the first place, culture is an extremely difficult notion to pin down. This is because it can be defined in many different ways, and means different things to different people. In the second place, culture is the cause of a great deal of suspicion and mistrust throughout the world because it can be used for nationalistic, propagandistic, and racist purposes and there are fears that this could happen in the future if too much attention is given to culture or too high a priority is assigned to it. In the third place, many individuals and institutions adhere to definitions of culture that do not explain the expansive role culture is playing in the world today. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the large majority of political, corporate, and international leaders do not take culture seriously and treat it as a peripheral rather than primary force in the world.

All of these forces will all have to be dealt with in one form or another if culture is to play the role it is capable of playing in the world in the future. This will not be possible, however, without delving much more deeply into culture. For buried deep in the domain of culture are the insights and understandings that are needed to realize culture's full potential and ascertain how it can play a mainstream rather than marginal role in global development and world affairs.

THE CHARACTER OF CULTURE

Since humanity will never embrace a concept that causes confusion, misunderstanding, and uncertainty rather than acceptance and affirmation, this means that a great deal of attention will have to be focused on culture if culture's full potential is to be realized and culture is to play the role it is capable of playing in the world.

How is this possible when there are so many different definitions of culture in use throughout the world today? While many approaches to the problem are

possible, the most productive approach involves examining the way culture manifests itself in the world in fact. When this approach is taken, it is apparent that culture manifests itself in the world in four very fundamental ways:

- *as the arts, humanities, and heritage of history;*
- *as the way specific institutions and groups of people see the world and function in the world;*
- *as a complex whole or total way of life;*
- *as the organizational forms and structures of different species*

When culture manifests itself as the arts, humanities, and heritage of history, it is concerned with music, drama, dance, opera, painting, literature, architecture, ethics, education, and the legacy from the past. Most people are very familiar with this way of looking at and thinking about culture because it is very tangible and specific, and has existed for a very long period of time. As a result, they think of this concept first when they hear the term “culture” used in public and private discourse or use it themselves in conversation.

When culture manifests itself as the way specific institutions and groups of people see the world and function in the world, it is concerned with how different organizations and associations of people such as athletes, politicians, the police, corporations, governments, hospitals, and the like visualize the world and behave in the world. This makes it possible to use terms like “sports culture,” “police culture,” “political culture,” “corporate culture,” “hospital culture,” “government culture,” and the like and mean something very distinct and significant by this.

When culture manifests itself as a complex whole or total way of life, it is concerned with the way people link all the various activities in which they are engaged together - environmental, social, economic, technological, educational, recreational, artistic, scientific, religious, spiritual, and so forth - to form a collective entity such as a local culture, a regional culture, or a national culture. Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, one of the world’s first anthropologists, is largely responsible for this much more all-encompassing “holistic concept of culture.” This is because he defined culture as “a *complex whole* that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” in the latter part of the nineteenth century.⁽¹⁾ Perceived and defined in this way, culture is concerned with the way people visualize and interpret the world, organize themselves, conduct their affairs, elevate and embellish life, and position themselves in the world.

When culture manifests itself as the organizational forms and structures of different species, it is concerned with the way all species - and not just the human species - manifest culture as they go about the process of meeting their individual and collective needs, working out their complex association with the world, and living their lives. This makes sense of a vast panorama of terms like “bee culture,” “wolf culture,” “plant culture,” “the culture of bacteria,” horticulture, agriculture, permaculture, viticulture, and so forth that confirm that what human beings deem to be culture is not limited to themselves, but is omnipresent throughout the entire realm of nature. It also explains why the term “culture” derives from the Latin verb “*colere*,” meaning “to till,” “to cultivate,” or “to nurture.” This confirms the fact that there has been an intimate connection between culture and nature dating back to classical times - a connection that has been largely lost in the modern era as a result of the separation of human beings from nature.

While these are not the only ways culture manifests itself in the world, they cover all the main possibilities. This is because virtually all definitions of culture are really variations on one or another of these four principal “manifestations of culture.”

THE CENTRALITY OF CULTURE

When these four principal manifestations of culture are combined and looked at in totality, they go a long way towards explaining the nature of the world we are living in today.

Take culture as a complex whole or total way of life for example. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the world is composed of many different cultures in the all-encompassing, holistic sense - eastern and western, northern and southern, urban and rural, tribal and non-tribal, local, regional, national, and international, and African, Asian, Latin American, Caribbean, North American, and European. These cultures - which are constantly impacting on one another and interacting with one another - differ not only in their details or parts. They also differ - and differ substantially - as complex wholes and total ways of life. This is because people in different parts of the world have different worldviews, values, value systems, customs, traditions, and beliefs, and therefore different ways of perceiving, organizing, orchestrating, and ordering reality.

These differences go a long way towards explaining some of the most difficult and demanding problems in the world today, such as the terrorist attacks on the United States and in Britain, Spain, Bali, and other parts of the world, the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East, and elsewhere in the world, and the tensions between Russia and Chechnya, India and Pakistan, United States and

Iran, and numerous other countries throughout the world. These problems exist because there are major differences in the way people visualize the world, act in the world, and position themselves in the world.

What is true for culture as a complex whole or total way of life is equally true for culture as the way specific institutions and groups of people see the world and function in the world. Every institution and group of people has a particular way of perceiving the world, behaving in the world, and situating themselves in the world. This is influenced by a variety of factors, including how particular institutions and groups of people interpret the world, interact with other institutions and groups in the world, define their goals, objectives, priorities, strategies, and tactics, and react to the larger natural and man-made environments in which they find themselves. There is “a culture” at work in each of these institutions and groups that reveals a great deal about how they operate and exist in the world.

When culture manifests itself as the organizational forms and structures of different species, it also explains a great deal about the nature of the world we are living in at present. There are remarkable similarities between the human species and other species - even if there are major differences between them - because all species are organic in nature and therefore obey the laws governing all living things. While a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the differences that exist between human beings and animals for example - largely to differentiate human beings from animals and assert the superiority of human beings over animals - recent research has revealed that there are remarkable similarities between the two species, particularly in terms of procreation, nurturing, mating, and the need for safety, security, survival, and perpetuation as a species.

Take the bee culture for example. Like human cultures, the bee culture is a highly complex and intricately-designed system of cultural creations and arrangements. This system, with its well-defined structure of queen, drone and worker bees, its rigid hierarchy and division of labour, its finely-tuned communications network, and its elaborate sensing mechanisms and productive apparatus, acts to ensure the survival of bees as a species and yield a continuous supply of products. These products, such as the beehive, the honeycomb, honey, wax, and so forth have both a functional and aesthetic significance. The beehive and the honeycomb, for instance, are intricately-designed cultural creations, comparable in their way, style, design, function, and complexity to many of the cultural creations created by human beings. And what is true for the beehive, the honeycomb, honey, wax, and the bee culture generally is equally true for all animal cultures and the large majority of plant cultures. Each has its own forms of cultural creation, including its distinctive features, methods of procreation, habitat, development, organization, and production and consumption activity.

And this brings us, via a rather circuitous route, to culture as the arts, humanities, and heritage of history. This manifestation of culture has a great deal to do with the nature of the world we are living in today as well. Not only do the arts, humanities, and heritage of history play a key role in most if not all societies and parts of the world, but also they have a profound effect on the way people act, think, interact, and live their lives. They also have a powerful impact on municipal, regional, national, and international development. Many communities, cities, and countries are going through a “cultural renaissance” at present that is shaped more by the arts, humanities, and heritage of history than by anything else.

When these four ways culture manifests itself in the world are juxtaposed and considered collectively, it is easy to see why Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, former Director-General of the United Nations and President of the World Commission on Culture and Development, could say, “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.”(2) For it is becoming increasingly evident that culture is playing a central rather than marginal role in the world, even if the large majority of politicians, corporate executives, and international leaders are unwilling to recognize this and deal with its implications and consequences.

CULTURE’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE

If the only value of the four fundamental ways culture manifests itself in the world was to confirm the fact that culture plays a central rather than peripheral role in the world, it could be dismissed more readily as a force to be reckoned with in the future. But culture also possesses the capacity to make a crucial contribution to the type of world that is most needed in the years and decades ahead.

First of all, it provides “*the missing link*” that is so badly needed between human beings, nature, and other species to come to grips with the environmental crisis. While it is important to reduce global warming, prevent pollution, and decrease the demands human beings are making on the natural environment at every opportunity, it is even more essential to create an entirely new environmental reality. This is because the environmental crisis will not be solved until human beings develop a much different approach to nature and other species, and this is a cultural issue rather than any other type of issue because it is concerned with changing values, attitudes, worldviews, and interacting with the natural environment and other species on a totally different basis.

This will not be possible without focusing on the intimate connection that exists between human beings, nature and other species, as well as the many

different ways of life that all species create as they go about the process of meeting their individual and collective needs and working out their complex association with the world. This is achieved most readily by exploring the common ground that exists between human beings, nature, and other species, and therefore what is required to achieve environmental harmony and ecological balance in the future. Cultural disciplines like ecology, biology, zoology, horticulture, and the like have a particularly important role to play in this regard, as they stand at the interface between human beings, nature and other species and have a great deal to say about the interconnections, interrelationships, and interactions that are needed to provide a healthier ecological balance between all species in the future.

The arts, humanities, and heritage of history also have a very important role to play here. Most artistic, humanistic and heritage activities do not consume large amounts of natural resources and are not overly hard on the natural environment because they are labour intensive rather than capital intensive in nature. As a result, they do a great deal to reduce the ecological footprint that human beings have on the natural environment by conserving rather than consuming resources and doing as little environmental damage as possible. Moreover, artists create many of the works that are needed to expand our knowledge and awareness of nature, the natural environment, and other species, as Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, Handel's *Ombre mai fú (Ode to a Tree)*, Alan Hovhaness's *Second Symphony (Mysterious Mountain)*, the paintings of Van Gogh, Monet, and the Chinese and Japanese brush painters, Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*, Respighi's *Gli Uccelli (The Birds)*, Sibelius's *Fifth Symphony*, Smetana's *Moldau*, John Williams' *Five Sacred Trees*, Toru Takemitsu's *Tree Line*, and others readily confirm.

If culture provides "***the missing link***" that is needed to come to grips with the environmental crisis, it also provides "***the holistic perspective***" that is needed to conduct global development and human affairs more effectively. For despite our penchant for dividing all things up into parts in order to study the parts in detail - a penchant that derives largely from the triumph of specialization and science in the modern era - the fact remains that the world is composed primarily of "wholes" - and "wholes within the whole"- that are made up of many interrelated parts. For example, people, institutions, communities, cities, regions, countries, and the world are all wholes comprised of many interrelated parts. So are plants and animals, and virtually everything else that exists in the world. *This is the real reality that exists in the world, and it is culture that opens the doors to this reality.*

This makes the holistic perspective provided by culture in its all-encompassing casting as a complex whole or total way of life a categorical

imperative for the future. For it is necessary to understand the world “*as it is*” before it is possible to develop the methods, techniques, methodologies, and approaches that are needed to change it. If we have lost one thing in the modern world, surely it is our ability to see the world and all that is contained in it in holistic terms. Our existing perspectives seem so limited, fragmented, and disconnected.

Many advantages flow from the holistic perspective provided by culture. One is the ability to see the big picture, and with it, the component parts of the big picture. If this had occurred in the past, it is quite likely that the environmental crisis would not exist at all, and certainly would not be as severe as it is today. Another is the ability to focus on “the whole person,” and, as a result, what is needed to integrate all the various mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of the human personality. Still another is the ability to see communities, cities, regions, countries, and the world as wholes - rather than as smorgasbords of independent and disconnected parts - and therefore what is needed to bind all the diverse parts together to achieve harmony and unity rather than fragmentation and discord. And a fourth is the ability to shift attention from the parts of the whole to the complex interconnections and interrelationships that exist between the parts and the whole.

It is through this process that it is possible to achieve a better balance between the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of development, and therefore what is needed to reduce the demands human beings are making on the scarce resources of the earth and achieve real harmony, stability, and synergy in the world. The Dutch cultural historian, Johan Huizinga, was fully aware of how important this is when he said, “the realities of economic life, of power, of technology, of everything conducive to man’s material well-being, must be balanced by strongly developed spiritual, intellectual, moral and aesthetic values” following his intensive investigations of numerous cultures throughout the world.(3)

When this is not realized, Huizinga believed it was necessary to cut back on certain activities when they get out of hand or out of balance with other activities:

A culture which no longer can integrate... diverse pursuits... into a whole... has lost its centre and has lost its style. It is threatened by the exuberant overgrowth of its separate components. It then needs a pruning knife, a human decision to focus once again on the essentials of culture and cut back the luxuriant but dispensable.(4)

What are the essentials and what are the luxurians? This is the sixty-four thousand dollar question as far as culture and cultures are concerned. While the essentials vary somewhat from culture to culture and one part of the world to another, surely they are peace, order, security, equality, unity, diversity, caring, sharing, creativity, and a high quality of life. And the luxurians? They are obviously war, aggression, violence, terrorism, and *excessive* military, commercial, technological, racial, and religious practices. Adherence to these latter concerns - particularly when they are carried to extremes - can cause considerable hardships for people, countries, cultures, and the natural environment in all parts of the world.

Yet another contribution culture is capable of making to the world of the future is as a “***bonding mechanism***” capable of linking individuals, institutions, groups, activities, and species together. This is because culture is concerned with “shared experiences,” regardless of whether these shared experiences are concerned with the arts, humanities, ways of life, or relationships between different species. This ability makes it possible in principle - *if not always in practice* - to achieve unity and harmony rather than conflict and confrontation. For regardless of all the various differences that exist in the world - and there are many - culture possesses the ability to bind all the various elements of human collectivities together in the creation of an overall way of life.

There is one final contribution that culture is capable of making to the world of the future that needs to be addressed. It is the ability to act as a “***vehicle of communication, fulfillment and inspiration.***”

This contribution derives largely from the arts, humanities, and heritage of history, although it is by no means limited to this. Not only do these activities bring people an enormous amount of joy and happiness in life, but also they provide the wherewithal that is needed to give people a sense of identity and belonging. They also inspire people and cause them to reach for higher and higher levels of accomplishment and the sublime. This is particularly true for music and architecture. Think, for example, of how Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*, Mahler’s *Resurrection Symphony*, Handel’s *Messiah*, John Lennon’s *Imagine*, Rogers and Hammerstein’s *You’ll Never Walk Alone*, Massenet’s *Meditation from Thaïs*, the Taj Mahal, and the Forbidden City lift people up and inspire them to reach above and beyond themselves in the search for the infinite and the profound.

PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE ACTION

If culture’s ability to make a vital contribution to the creation of a better world is to be realized, a number of key priorities will have to be identified and addressed. Among the most important of these priorities are:

- *adoption of a comprehensive understanding of culture and cultures;*
- *coalescence of the cultural community into a cohesive and united force;*
- *utilization of a cultural model of development in government and the decision-making process; and*
- *achievement of a breakthrough in cultural education*

Adoption of a comprehensive understanding of culture and cultures is imperative if culture is to play the role it is capable of playing in the world of the future. The key to achieving this lies in realizing that the four fundamental ways culture manifests itself in the world are not mutually exclusive or independent of one another. Rather, they are mutually complementary and reinforcing. This is because the arts, humanities, heritage of history, and the way specific institutions and groups of people see the world and function in the world are *contained in* culture as a complex whole or total way of life, and culture as a complex whole or total way of life is *contained in* culture as the organizational forms and structures of different species.

This helps to explain why there are so many interconnections and interrelationships between the four principal manifestations of culture. Take the arts, humanities, and heritage of history for example. They act as “*gateways*” to culture and cultures in the all-encompassing sense because artists, scholars, historians, and the like create many of the signs, symbols, myths, legends, metaphors, stories, rituals, celebrations, and vehicles of communication that are needed to understand culture and cultures as complex wholes or total ways of life. Without this, it is impossible to know and understand culture and cultures in the broader, deeper, and more fundamental holistic sense.

What is true for the arts, humanities and heritage of history is also true for specific institutions and groups of people. Not only do specific institutions and groups of people create ways of life that are comparable to the ways of life created in human cultures, but also they are comparable to the ways of life and cultures created by other species. The more we learn about wolves, whales and elephants, for example, the more we become aware of the similarities that exist between the ways of life of animals and the ways of life of human beings, even if there are major differences between them as indicated earlier. Even many types of horticultural activities possess similarities to human cultures. Gardens, for instance, are “complex wholes” that are composed of many parts, just as human

cultures are. Moreover, the challenge in creating successful gardens is exactly the same as the challenge in creating successful human cultures, namely to produce a complex whole that achieves balance, harmony and synergy between the parts.

Given these interconnections between the four fundamental ways culture manifests itself in the world, it is clear that culture and cultures in the comprehensive sense can be defined formally as “the way all species - and particularly the human species - see the world, act in the world, create ways of life in the world, and position themselves in the world.” Not only does this “*comprehensive understanding of culture and cultures*” resonate with reality and the way culture and cultures manifest themselves in the world in fact, but also it unifies a field that has long been divisive and disparate.

When culture and cultures are seen and defined in the comprehensive sense, they possess “*breadth*” as well as “*depth*.” In breadth, culture and cultures are concerned with the way all the diverse activities created by human beings and other species are combined to form complex wholes and total ways of life that are greater than the parts. In depth, culture and cultures are concerned with the highest, wisest, and most enthralling activities human beings and other species create. This division of the cultural field into a “breadth dimension” and a “depth dimension” is similar to the division that exists in economics and ecology, where a distinction is made between “macro-economics” and “micro-economics” and “general ecology” and “deep ecology” to differentiate between the broader and deeper dimensions of these disciplines.

It will take time to adopt a comprehensive understanding of culture and cultures or some reasonable variation on it. Nevertheless, this is the direction that things should be moving in as far as the future of culture is concerned. Not only is this consistent with reality and the way culture and cultures actually manifest themselves in the world, but also it is consistent with the way culture and cultures have developed in theory and practice over a history spanning some two thousand years.

If adoption of a comprehensive understanding of culture and cultures is a key priority for the future, so is coalescence of the cultural community into a cohesive and united force. For despite the fact that culture has a vital contribution to make to the realization of a better world, people working in the various disciplines concerned with culture such as the arts, humanities, history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, biology, ecology, botany, zoology, horticulture, and the like have little or no contact with one another.

This poses a very serious problem as far as the future of culture and the world are concerned. *For the real power in culture will only be unleashed when*

people working in all the various disciplines associated with culture come together to explore their similarities, differences, and especially the common ground that exists between them. In order to do this, the cultural community will have to be much more consolidated than it is at present. It will also have to be much more vocal. As Melina Mercouri, former actress and Culture Minister for Greece, put it:

It is time for our voice to be heard as loud as that of the technocrats. Culture, art and creativity are not less important than technology, commerce and the economy.(5)

If coalescing the cultural community into a cohesive and united force is essential, so is utilizing a cultural model of development in government and the decision-making process. The reason for this not difficult to detect. Whereas models of development such as the economic, social, and environmental models deal with specific parts of the whole, the cultural model of development deals with the whole and the need to achieve balanced, harmonious, and synergistic relationships between the parts and the whole. As a result, it is concerned with developing culture and cultures in breadth and depth, as well as situating them effectively in the natural, historical, and global environment (see *A Cultural Model of Development* in the Hot Topics section of the World Culture Project web site).

If this matter is not attended to by governments, it will not be attended to at all. For governments are the only institution in society that possess the mandate, responsibility, and authority to deal with all sectors of society and culture as a whole in both the theoretical and practical sense. All other institutions - and there are many - are involved in specific parts of the whole and particular sectors of society, and are therefore not concerned with the whole or the need to establish balanced, harmonious and synergistic relationships between the parts and the whole or all diverse sectors that make up society.

Many benefits would be derived from utilizing a cultural model of development in government and the decision-making process.

In the first place, the demands human beings are making on the natural environment would be reduced because the focus would be *cultural development* in the broad sense rather than *economic growth* in the narrow sense. This would make it possible to achieve a much better balance between the material and non-material dimensions of development, thereby decreasing the pressure of human numbers on the finite carrying capacity of the earth and moving humanity one step closer to achieving real sustainable development. For the evidence is overwhelming and conclusive. Cultures that fail to take the natural environment

and nature's precious resource legacy fully and forcefully into account in developmental planning and decision making run the risk of overextending themselves and collapsing entirely.

In the second place, it would put the emphasis on people and matters of human welfare and well-being rather than production, consumption, commercialism, and the marketplace. This would help to reduce the huge disparities that exist in income and wealth throughout the world, since a higher priority would be placed on caring, sharing, and the distribution of wealth as opposed to consumption, consumerism, and the production of wealth. It would also cause a major shift in attitudes towards citizens. Rather than seeing citizens as consumers whose primary function is to earn and spend as much money as possible because this achieves economic growth, citizens would be seen as "cultural creatives" whose principal function is to live creative, constructive and fulfilling lives because this achieves cultural development. This is imperative if development "with a human face" is to be realized.

In the third place, it would focus on strategic relationships because a comprehensive rather than specialized approach would be taken to public policy and decision making. Included among these relationships, in addition to others, are the relationship between human beings and the natural environment, technology and society, economics and ethics, the arts and sciences, spiritualism and materialism, and the secular and sacred. This would make it possible to give much more consideration to the "trade-off effects" of different courses of political, corporate, and developmental action, as well as what is gained and what is lost when there is too much emphasis on one side or the other side of these relationships. It would also help to reduce the stress and anxiety that many people and countries feel by being pressured to increase material and monetary wealth every year because the focus would be on achieving a better balance between material and spiritual concerns.

Finally, it would enhance the possibilities for peace and harmony in the world. When economic growth is made the centrepiece of government, politics and the decision-making process, the focus is on creating material and monetary wealth, increasing power, prestige and influence in the world, and extending control over land, resources, and other species. This is usually not possible without building up a huge arsenal of military weapons because material and monetary wealth must be increased and protected, power, prestige and influence in the world must be commandeered and acquired, and control over land and natural resources must be extended and ensured. This would certainly not be the case *to the same extent* if cultural development was made the centrepiece of government, politics, and the decision-making process. In this case, much more emphasis would be placed on caring, sharing, and aspiring to the best humanity has to offer

in music, drama, dance, literature, the sciences, the humanities, ethics and education, and therefore on peace, harmony, and cooperation rather than war, aggression, and competition. For these things grow out of the cultural rather than the economic, technological, or commercial side of human nature.

And this brings us to the final priority that must be identified and addressed. It is the need to achieve a breakthrough in cultural education. It would be foolhardy to contend that culture's full potential can be realized and culture can assume its proper role in the world without this. For culture can act in a divisive as well as a unifying way, and this needs to be dealt with fully and effectively in the educational system - and generally throughout society - if culture is to play a positive and constructive rather than negative and destructive role in the world.

Unfortunately, very few schools in the world provide opportunities to learn about culture and all the various cultures in the world at present. This is a cause for real concern because it limits people's understanding of the differences that exist between cultures and contributes a great deal to misunderstanding and suspicion throughout the world. Even where such opportunities exist, they tend to be extracurricular rather than curricular in nature. This limits the study of culture and cultures to the recognition of ethnic holidays, the preparation of diverse foods and foodstuffs, and the presentation of multicultural events and activities. As valuable as these experiences are, they are no substitute for cultural education in the intensive and all-encompassing sense. This type of education must be capable of examining culture and cultures in breadth and depth, as well as exposing the strengths and shortcomings of different cultures and shedding light on the reasons for racism, intolerance, violence and terrorism in the world.

In order to do this, there must be opportunities for people to learn about culture and all the diverse cultures in the world in the formal educational system from the earliest years of childhood to the latest years of adulthood. Not only will this increase people's knowledge, awareness and understanding of cultural differences - and therefore worldviews, values, value systems, and ways of life that are different than their own - but also it will increase the potential for a great deal more harmony, stability and tolerance in the world. Surely Mahatma Gandhi was right when he said, "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."(6) For allowing the culture of all lands to be blown about one's house as freely as possible opens the doors to countless opportunities to enrich our lives and broaden our horizons. And refusing to be blown off one's feet by any specific culture prevents us from becoming short-sighted, narrow-minded, and carrying things to extremes. For no one culture has all the answers. They all have answers, and humanity will have to call on all the different cultures of the world if it is to be

successful in overcoming the difficult, demanding and debilitating problems that exist at present and cross over the threshold to a more exhilarating future.

We have been examining some of the priorities that are needed to realize culture's full potential and enable it to make a vital contribution to the creation of a better world. Some of these priorities - such as adopting a comprehensive understanding of culture and cultures and coalescing the cultural community into a cohesive and united force - are general and theoretical in nature. Others are more specific and practical, such as utilizing a cultural model of development in government and the decision-making process and achieving a breakthrough in cultural education. Nevertheless, both are imperative if culture is to make its full mark on the world and assume its rightful place in the world of the future.

ENDNOTES

1. Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, *The Origins of Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 1 (emphasis mine).
2. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, *Address to the Inaugural Session of the Third Meeting of the World Commission on Culture and Development*, San Jose, Costa Rica, February 22, 1994, p. 1.
3. Karl Weintraub, *Visions of Culture: Voltaire, Guizot, Burckhardt, Lamprecht, Huizinga, Ortega y Gasset* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 216.
4. *Ibid*, p. 219-220.
5. Melina Mercouri, Speech to the First Informal Meeting of Culture Ministers of the European Union, November 1983, Athens, Greece, as reported in Canadian Conference of the Arts, *Blizzard*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2000 (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of the Arts, 2000), p. 6.
6. World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity: Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development* (Paris: UNESCO and EGOPRIM, 1995), p. 73.