CES Musings
Chronicking the Transition from Economic-Industrial
To Ecological-Cultural Societies
(March-April 2017)

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The Chronicle
by Alice Loyd

ENERGY

The new administration is pro-oil and pro-coal, but nevertheless momentum is with sun and wind. Solar ranked as the number one source of new US electric generating capacity additions in 2016. It represented 39 percent of new capacity additions across all fuel types. greentechmedia.com Solar is also the largest employer in the US electric power generation industry, according to the 2017 US Energy and Employment Report. USEER Photovoltaics (PV) and concentrating solar technologies together employ almost 374,000 workers—43% of the electric power generation workforce. Wind turbine technician is by far the nation’s fastest-growing occupation, with a 108% growth rate and a median salary of $51,050 per year. bureau labor.gov Wind energy surpassed hydro-electric power in generating capacity for the first time in 2016, after more than tripling in capacity since 2008. nytimes.com

The administration is following through on the commitment to fossil fuels, however. On February 2, 2017, the Republican-led Congress repealed the stream protection rule that restricts coal companies from dumping mining waste into streams and waterways. This swift action was possible because with simple majority votes in both chambers Congress can overturn any Obama-era regulation finished after mid-June 2016. vox.com Another immediately effective tactic was seen when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) withdrew a request that operators of existing oil and gas wells provide the agency with extensive information about their equipment and its emissions of methane. The announcement was a first step towards reversing a late-Obama-administration effort to gather information. Said Vera Pardee, a senior attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity’s Climate Law Institute, “The Trump administration doesn’t want this data because it doesn’t want to rein in oil companies’ massive emissions of this dangerous greenhouse gas.” washingtonpost.com

Observers say Trump’s fossil-fuel-minded appointees, such as EPA’s Scott Pruitt, will find it more difficult to unravel more established regulations. The long process of hearings, scientific determinations and public review periods that went into creating the policy get reopened, leaving opportunity for attorneys to dig in and slow everything down. “Under President Reagan, under George W. Bush, when Newt Gingrich was House speaker, there were similar efforts,” said David Goldston, director of government affairs at the Natural Resources Defense Council. “All those efforts foundered, and the basic laws were left unscathed. We think that will happen again.” latimes.com

The world does not follow the White House in energy choices. China plans to invest $361 billion into non-carbon electricity projects by 2020, with the result that about half of China’s new electricity generation will come from installed solar, wind, hydro and nuclear power projects. The investment in renewables is expected to create more than 13 million jobs. mashable.com Saudi Arabia is launching a $50 billion renewable-resources push to meeting growing energy demand while reducing domestic oil use. Starting this year, OPEC’s biggest crude producer plans to develop almost 10 gigawatts of renewable energy such as solar and
wind power by 2023. [indiatimes.com](http://indiatimes.com) Scotland intends to cut total climate emissions by 66% within 15 years, one of the world’s most ambitious climate strategies. Plans include increasing the use of ultra-low-carbon cars, green electricity and green home heating. [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com) Even in the country of Texas, renewables are booming in the form of wind. Texas has 11,592 turbines and an installed wind capacity of 20,321 megawatts, capacity that provides 12.68% of Texas’s electricity production and powers the equivalent of 5.7 million homes. [awea.org](http://awea.org)

**CLIMATE**

You noticed? February 2017 temperatures were often the highest we’ve ever seen. On February 11 Mangum, Oklahoma, saw temperatures close to 100 degrees Fahrenheit, setting a state record. The average February high in Mangum is 56º F. Across the United States during the week beginning February 15, there were 736 daily record highs set or tied, with 940 nights of record warm temperatures set or tied. There were no record cold overnight low temperatures set or tied during the same period. While individual months will still vary from this trend, it’s clear that over the long-term, the ratio of record highs to record lows is now strongly favoring record highs as well as record warm overnight temperatures. [mashable.com](http://mashable.com)

![Map of United States showing temperature data](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

As expected, **2016 temperatures did set records for warmth**. According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [data](http://data), the global average temperature for 2016 was
1.69° F (0.94°C) above the 20th century average and 0.07°F (0.04°C) above the previous record set last year. In NASA’s records, 2016 was 1.8°F (0.99°C) above the 1951-1980 average. Each agency has slightly different methods of processing the data and different baseline periods they use for comparison, as do other groups around the world that monitor global temperatures, leading to slightly different year-to-year numbers. [climatecentral.org](http://climatecentral.org)

**Global sea levels could rise by more than eight feet by the end of the century** in a worst-case scenario, suggests a report released by NOAA on the last day of Barack Obama’s presidency. The report also suggests that many parts of the United States will experience sea-level rise at a rate well above the global average—with some coastal cities seeing a 25-fold increase in the frequency of damaging floods. Researcher William Sweet commented, “I think it’s important for people to know that sea level’s not rising like it would in a bathtub.” The findings are intended to be used by local governments in efforts to plan for future climate change. [noaa.gov](http://noaa.gov) The town of Princeville, North Carolina, gives us a warning about that kind of future. Because of flooding resulting from Hurricane Matthew in early October 2016, at least twenty six people were killed; a million homes were without power—some for days; hundreds of roads were closed, including I-95 and I-40; and five months later thousands of residents on the North Carolina coast still have no homes to return to. [publicnewsservice](http://publicnewsservice) and [WRAL](http://WRAL) Five months later the fecal matter of more than a dozen hog waste lagoons flooded by the storm is showing up in the coastal ocean, too. On February 28, 2017, the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries closed 2,450 acres of water to shellfish harvest after the areas did not meet bacterial water quality standards. The closures are the result of sanitary surveys and reviews from the last five years of shellfish growing areas. The division said “the past three of five years had higher than usual rainfall, washing pollution and human and animal waste into the water bodies.” [coastalreview.com](http://coastalreview.com)

**Researchers call it “clear-sky flooding.”** A new report states, “Global climate change is being felt in many coastal communities of the United States, not always in the form of big weather disasters but as a steady drip, drip, drip of nuisance flooding.” Research shows that rising sea levels will cause these smaller events to become increasingly frequent in the future, and the cumulative effect will be comparable to extreme events such as a hurricane. For example, in Washington, DC, the number of hours of nuisance flooding per year has grown from 19 between 1930 and 1970 to 94 over the last two decades. Projections suggest that there could be as many as 700 hours of nuisance flooding per year by 2050. The capital’s monuments, marinas, parks, public transportation infrastructure, roads and businesses could be affected. Because ocean levels are so high, a full moon on a clear night triggering higher tides is now enough to cause flooding. [sciencedaily.com](http://sciencedaily.com)

**A warming climate poses water risk to inland areas as well as coasts.** On February 20, 2017, nearly 200,000 people had to be evacuated after the Oroville Dam in California fractured on February 7. Northern California is in the midst of its wettest rainy season on record—twice as wet as the 20th century average, and America’s tallest dam, estimated to contain more than one million cubic yards of material, began to erode when water managers were forced to use Oroville Dam’s emergency spillway for the first time ever. Environmental groups had warned the state about Oroville Dam in 2005, noting that in an intensely wet year, its emergency spillway could give way, and thus should be coated with
concrete. State agencies concluded that the cost of this project couldn’t be justified given the low probability of such a wet season. theguardian.com

Climate change is mentioned more frequently now, but a question mark is still being implied. Trump’s cabinet nominees adopted “denial-light” to slip past Democrats’ questioning on their climate change positions. Though sounding slightly more sensible than expected, their more subtle versions of climate skepticism nevertheless failed to show any commitment to make the drastic greenhouse gas emissions cuts that will be needed. mashable.com Thinkprogress.org has been tracking the occasions mainstream media has covered the administration’s brand of climate skepticism in words that likewise mystify the true climate situation. A CNN headline December 12, 2016, read “Trump: ‘Nobody really knows’ if climate change is real;” on December 14, “Trump aide Anthony Scaramucci: Scientific community gets ‘a lot of things wrong.’” thinkprogress.org In January NPR described Ryan Zinke’s hearing with these words: “Trump Pick To Head Interior Department Says Climate Change Is Not A Hoax.” Climate commentator Joe Romm’s response to NPR’s headline was “Trump nominee for Surgeon General says smoking-cancer link not a hoax” and “Trump nominee for NASA chief says moon-landing not a hoax.” thinkprogress.org Even the New York Times ad during the Academy Awards ceremony repeats Trump’s “the truth is climate change is a hoax” without any rebuttal. thinkprogress.org The seriousness of climate change was given its due by comedian Seth Meyers, however, when he introduced Lawrence Livermore National Lab’s Ben Santer on his show of February 23. “Obviously this is a scary time. It’s an interesting time as you’ve called it, yet you remain optimistic. . . (W)here are you finding optimism right now, considering this sort of deck that’s stacked against you?” The scientist replied, “Climate science has been elevated in public discourse. The President of the United States saying nobody really knows the causes of climate change. And we do.” His basis for optimism? “This seems like a teachable moment.” mediamatters.org

Take a look at this spectacular 2015 graphic “What’s Warming the World?”

POLLUTION

Efforts to dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are underway. On February 28, 2017, Trump signed an executive order to reverse the rule known as Waters of the United States. Also known as the Clean Water Rule, it was issued under the Clean Water Act in 1972 and completed by the Obama administration in spring 2015. It gives the federal government broad authority to limit pollution in major bodies of water, like Chesapeake Bay, the Mississippi River, and Puget Sound, as well as in streams and wetlands that drain into those larger waters. “The executive order has no legal significance at all,” said Richard L. Revesz, a professor of environmental law at New York University. “It’s like the president calling Scott Pruitt and telling him to start the legal proceedings. It does the same thing as a phone call or a tweet. It just signals that the president wants it to happen.” nytimes.com Since the Rule is currently on hold, blocked by the Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit due to litigation against it, Trump’s order can’t change much immediately. It does not repeal the rule, but rather directs the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to consider rolling it back. thehill.com For the history of the Clean Water Rule and explanation of how it became controversial, see vox.com
How important is the EPA? An example of the agency’s work is the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), a summary of mountains of data collected each year by EPA employees. The Executive Summary for 2015, the latest issue, states, “Air releases of toxic chemicals (in the US) decreased by 56% since 2005, including a 63 million pound decrease from 2014 to 2015. Coal-and-oil-fired electric utilities accounted for more than 90% of the reduced releases of hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid and mercury to air from 2005 to 2015. In 2015, 87% of toxic chemical waste managed was not released into the environment due to the use of preferred waste management practices such as recycling, energy recovery, and treatment”—all measures encouraged and sometimes required by EPA regulations. epa.gov Without this collection of information, analysis, and regulation, it is unlikely clean air progress would have occurred at the same rate, and possibly not at all—although removing factories to overseas locations has also improved US air quality.

India needs an agency like the EPA. India’s rapidly worsening air pollution is causing about 1.1 million people to die prematurely each year and is now surpassing China’s as the deadliest in the world, a new study of global air pollution shows. India has registered an alarming increase of nearly 50 percent in premature deaths from particulate matter between 1990 and 2015, the report says. The major contributor is the ramp-up in industrialization, but population growth and an aging populace more susceptible to air pollution are also contributors. Bhargav Krishna, manager for environmental health at the Public Health Foundation of India, a health policy research center in New Delhi, expressed the missing EPA-type factor, saying, “The idea that policy making should be led by government is lacking.” nytimes.com

EQUALITY

The right to life should include America’s infants. Each year in the United States, more than 23,000 infants die before reaching their first birthday. White, educated American women lose their infants at rates similar to mothers in America’s economically-peer countries, while infants born to poorer, less-educated women, particularly unmarried or black women, have higher rates of mortality. Across the United States black infants die at a rate more than twice as high as that of white infants. In the 1980s health officials began focusing on access to prenatal care as a way to reduce the high rate of mortality with black infants. After two decades researchers found the black women who received prenatal care starting in the first trimester were still losing children at higher rates than white women who never saw a doctor during their pregnancies. Even black women with advanced degrees—doctors, lawyers, MBAs—were more likely to lose infants than white women who hadn’t graduated from high school. A recent analysis offers insight into why these disparities may persist: stress that can disrupt body systems; racial discrimination that puts higher stress on black women throughout their lives; and poverty. A study released last year found that a $1 increase in the minimum wage in various states between 1980 and 2011 corresponded with a 1 to 2 percent decrease in low birth weight and a 4 percent decline in deaths of infants between one month and one year. thenation.com Asian and white women earn $18 and $17, respectively; average wages for black and Hispanic women are $13 and $12, respectively--and also higher than those of black and Hispanic men. pewresearch.org
Equality in health care coverage takes a step backward in the new plan put forward by Republicans. The replacement plan benefits people who are healthy and high-income, and hurts those who are sick and low-income. Insurers are prohibited today from charging the older person more than three times as much as the youngest, but the Republican plan would allow them to charge five times as much. A 64-year-old could see annual premiums increase by almost 30 percent to $13,100 on average, according to the S&P analysis. ncpolicywatch.org Anyone interested in material for articulating opposition to the change will find it in the Kaiser Family Foundation’s analysis.

A SAMPLING OF THE INDIVISIBLE MOVEMENT
by Carla Skuce

Editor’s note: The November election has brought thousands of people into the activist role who never thought they’d be making almost daily calls to their elected officials, or regularly joining public protests such as “Trump Tuesdays.” In the days following the election more than one in three Democrats said they planned to become “more involved in the political process in the next year,” and after the inauguration the number of phone calls received by members of Congress showed action on the commitment. These statements by members of one of the many North Carolina advocacy groups working under the banner “Indivisible” are representative of the movement.

If Hillary had won, I doubt I’d be calling my Senators every day to voice my opposition to Cabinet candidates or bills that gut our democracy. Trump has got me marching, phoning, writing, meeting and paying closer attention to how government works—or doesn’t. Our Indivisible meetings help us focus on relevant actions at a time when we’re feeling overwhelmed and thinking, “What difference can one person make during this onslaught?” An unintentional consequence of Trump’s win is the awakening of a sleeping giant—us.

We’re in boot camp and finding our voice. Here are a few of the voices from our group.

I took democracy for granted, having known no other culture. Since the election and the rise to power of Donald Trump and Steve Bannon, I’ve experienced emotions of despair and fear, but have learned I am not alone in these feelings. Because of this visceral response, I have joined others in my community. We are following the wisdom displayed in the document “Indivisible.” I am personally undergoing a crash course in how our democracy works. I have been at protests, a new activity for me. I am making calls to my senators to voice my opinion, a new activity for me. I am feeling the power and security a community can provide—this too is new for me. I am no longer sitting on my couch waiting for others to do for me. I am now a soldier for my democracy. Karen

In learning to contact congress, senators, and legislators, I felt overwhelmed. There were so many issues to address; I felt contacting them about everything would cause them to close their ears to all the issues. When I picked an issue to address, I chose HB2 in North Carolina. I called George Holding’s office to repeal HB2, but he is my federal representative. Turned out HB2 is a state issue, and I had contacted my US representative! I felt good that I had made contact, but it was the wrong representative. Lesson learned. Jean
One year ago today I was basking in the freedom of retirement. I had lots of plans for my expected free time—travel, book clubs, cooking classes, volunteer work, more time with grandchildren. Then things changed on November 8, 2016, around 11 pm. Along with millions of people across this great nation, and the world, I was devastated. My initial feeling of helplessness morphed into asking “What can I do?” I could return to Canada and opt out of this particular American experience, or true to my nature of not being a “quitter,” I could use my new free time to actively resist Trump’s agenda. “Indivisible” is allowing me to be part of a movement with citizens who are bound together by the values that built this great nation, along with care and concern for the environment, climate change, and the values written on the Statue of Liberty that welcomes others. I feel empowered by joining others in marches, Town Hall meetings, phoning federal and state representatives by expressing my concerns with issues, attending local precinct meetings, and regular Indivisible meetings to plan our activities.

We face a long, tough road but a very necessary one in order for our democracy to remain “with the People, for the People.” Donald Trump and his team create mayhem every day; therefore, along with other “resistance” groups, I intend to let my voice be heard daily so together our voices amplify to a “roar.” I could never have dreamed a year ago I’d be calling myself an “activist,” but Donald Trump has unleashed in me a call to action that gives me hope. Sylvia

I went to the Town Hall my Democratic representative David Price held in the northeastern wing of his very-gerrymandered district. About fifty people were there, and I thought the questions presented were excellent. When asked a blatantly political question about Trump by one person, Price declined to comment. He said the ethics of a Town Hall required us to discuss only the issues before the country. He told the audience that his interest and expertise going back decades is fair housing and the budget. He said, “That’s what matters. If you want to do more low-income housing, then the Appropriations Committee (on which he serves) determines how much money is available. The budget is not amenable to ideological arguments.” Attendees asked about immigration policy. His response was, “It doesn’t make the US safer at all. It plays into the Isis agenda.” When the scheduled hour was over, he said, “I can stay another 15 minutes if people have more questions,” so the meeting continued. I attended because he’s my representative and I want to know how he’s representing me. Dan

I found myself feeling full of despair and fear after learning the EPA will become ineffective, and our environment is at unbelievable risk. I’ve never been an activist, but I felt the need to do Something! After participating in The Women’s March on January 21, and wanting to continue to be part of a community of those who care about the environment, I attended the first meeting of Indivisible. We encourage each other to make phone calls to our local and US congressmen, requesting them to support (or not) current legislation we feel is important; attend town halls and rallies at local legislators’ offices; and even “vent” to each other when necessary. It’s a good feeling to be part of a group trying to effect the change we desperately need. Ingrid

Find an Indivisible group near you: https://www.indivisibleguide.com/groups-nav
IN UNSETTLED TIMES POEM AND PROSE
by Sue Tideman

1

A plant’s way of sensing itself at home is
sidling or seeding its way to nurturing
soil,
neighbors,
sun and water.

Our plant selves
find our way to nurturing
beliefs,
stores of food and sources of water,

and
feel safer.

2

An animal’s way of sensing itself at home is
scanning for relevant signals and
pauselessly responding, while
living its everyday life.

Our animal selves
by nature
stay alert for signals,
hone social and physical skills for
instant responses, while
going about our days,

and
feel more ready.

3

When we
look for what needs doing,
listen for what we’re called to do,
and do it

all with
simplicity and peace,
integrity and community,
equality and sustainability,
and gratitude for what
grounds us,
supports us,
enlivens us,

we and those
near to us and
far from us,
feel
more settled,
more at home.

In the language of science and engineering, there are two kinds of equilibrium: static and dynamic. A parked car is in static equilibrium. A car being driven “straight” down a highway is in dynamic equilibrium—bumps on the roadway and movements of other vehicles are being compensated for by small tugs on the steering wheel.

I think of static equilibrium as being plant-like. In a stressful time, a plant might grow wider or deeper roots or grow more nuts or seeds. A similar human response to uncertain times might be “spreading fine roots” to family and friends by visiting in person or sending letters, “sending down a deep taproot’ to what grounds and enlivens us (perhaps by learning by heart the texts that speak to us), or, more tangibly, setting up stores of water and freeze dried food. Establishing a rich root system is a way of feeling more safe.

I think of dynamic equilibrium as being animal-like. On a windy day, a bird can ride a swaying branch by keeping a little crouched in the knees and a little loose in the wings. A similar human response to unsettled times might be for us always to keep an ear open for relevant, trustworthy news sources (and be those ourselves), to get stronger and more limber physically, or to make a point of getting to know new people and new people-skills and any other skills. Maintaining ourselves in a mental and physical balance similar to the crouch-like dance that tennis players do when they are about to receive a serve is a way of feeling more ready.

Humans are resilient and resourceful; there are many useful responses to unsettled times. And, as my father would say, they’ve repealed the law that we have to adopt only one of these living strategies.
TRUMP IS A DANGEROUS ANOMALY
by Herman Greene

Donald Trump is an anomaly in that he presents a unique danger that would not be presented except for his highly unlikely election as President of the United States and his conduct in that office.

Consider these questions:

- What were the odds that Trump would run against 17 Republican contenders and win nomination by receiving 20-30% in most of the Republican primary votes?

- (While not an anomaly, why is it that the US system allows the Republican Party, which represents 21% of registered voters, to pick one of two main presidential nominees and the Democratic Party, which represents 31% of registered voters, to pick the other? If Trump won 20% of the Republican vote in the early primaries and Republicans were 20% of the registered voters in the states that held the primaries, then 4% of registered voters were choosing the next president because 20% of 20% is 4%.)

- What were the odds that the Russians would help Trump’s campaign or that FBI Director Comey would speak out in the way and time that he did on his department’s investigation of Hillary Clinton’s emails?

- What were the odds that Trump would run against what turned out to be a weak Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, who was a nearly ideal candidate for his populist rhetoric?

- What were the odds that Trump’s unorthodox and untested approach to campaigning using new channels of communication would win a majority of the Electoral College?

- What were the odds that a person who lost the popular vote by 2% (approximately the winning percentage in recent US presidential elections) would win the presidency?

I know Hitler comparisons are questionable, but I find myself making some. The unlikelihood of Trump coming to power has similarities with Hitler’s rise. If you consider all the unlikely coincidences that had to occur for Hitler to come to power, you will see he, like Trump, had a highly unusual, almost preposterous route. Both pursued a populist path and gave dark warnings about the future that required radical change.

Keep in mind that political power does not depend on consensus, it depends on working within the political system that exists to gain power. Even in democratic systems this can happen with minority support and power can be sustained through minority support.
Trump is distinctly different from all the other 2016 Republican presidential contenders and all the Republican leaders in Congress, notwithstanding that to a large extent Republican leaders are circling the wagons around Trump.

What’s unusual is that he has departed from neoliberalism. Moving away from free trade to economic nationalism is one way he has departed. Consider the words of Pat Buchanan, as quoted in Marc Fisher’s \textit{Washington Post} article, \textit{“The Political Lexicon of a Billionaire Populist”}:

\begin{quote}
Bannon and Trump’s message of economic nationalism is the opposite of what Republicans have been preaching for 20 years,” said Patrick Buchanan, who ran for president twice in the 1990s as a populist Republican. “But what we saw in the speech to Congress was amazing: [House Speaker Paul D.] Ryan and those guys, standing and cheering for economic nationalism! Cheering for enormous public-works undertakings — the Republicans! It’s Trump’s party now.”
\end{quote}

But what I think is really different about Trump is that while US conservatives have resisted acting on climate change and other progressive causes, Trump rages against these concerns and is out to destroy the influence of intellectuals and journalists who, and government structures which, support them or are seen by Trump as doing so. Consider the words of Michael Hayden quoted in Michael Gerson’s \textit{Washington Post} op-ed, \textit{“Reality Will Get Its Revenge on Donald Trump.”} Hayden characterizes Trumps activities as

\begin{quote}
a systematic effort to invalidate and delegitimize all the institutions, governmental and nongovernmental, that create the factual basis for action . . . so they won’t push back against arbitrary moves.”
\end{quote}

Trump may seem continuous with past conservative advocacy of free markets, reduced regulation, and lower taxes. What is new and different about Trump and not a part of a logical progression is the extent to which Trump, refusing the customary regard for conflicts of interest, brings his personal and family business interests into the White House. On March 8, 2017, Eric Trump proudly stated, “I think our [Trump] brand is the hottest it has ever been.” See Eric Lipton and Susanne Craig in the \textit{New York Times} article \textit{“With Trump in the White House, His Golf Properties Prosper.”} Membership at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago Club now requires a $200,000 fee, a fee that increased by $100,000 after his election. See Drew Harwell’s \textit{Washington Post} article, \textit{“At Trump’s Mar-a-Lago, the Price for Joining the ‘Winter White House’ Has Doubled.”} Further, while engaging in politics almost always requires a strong ego, Trump stands out for his narcissism, vindictiveness, and perhaps megalomania.

Trump rails against the system and the “deep state.” He makes a mockery of rational discourse and is intent on creating perpetual chaos and distraction while filling government with the people who disdain the agencies to which they are appointed. Like a child he churlishly rebels against all restraints, including ecological restraints, except the ones that please him which he is determined to enforce, such as the travel ban, the refugee restrictions, the border wall, and his understanding of law and order.
He has peculiar and uninformed ideas of what promotes the public welfare. For example he promised a “sensational” health plan that would cover everyone only to find out that health care is complicated. See Kevin Liptak, CNN, “Trump: ‘Nobody Knew Health Care Could Be So Complicated.’” Now he backs a plan he did little to craft, one that promises universal “access” rather than universal coverage; provides “roughly $157 billion [in tax cuts] over the coming decade to those with incomes of $1 million or more according to a congressional analysis,” see Jesse Drucker, New York Times “Wealthy Would Get Billions in Tax Cuts under Obamacare Repeal Plan”; would restore “choice” by allowing interstate health insurance sales, which would deprive states of the ability to regulate what is covered in the plans (except as required by the federal law); would take away the Affordable Care Act’s subsidies to lower income earners and substitute a fixed refundable tax credit by age group for people making under $75,000 ($150,000 if married) that is not adjusted for the cost of insurance or income level; and would keep the Affordable Care Act’s requirement for insurance companies to disregard pre-existing conditions as a condition for enrollment, but not require uninsured people to obtain coverage, which will presumably lead to higher premiums for the insured. He proposes a trillion dollar infrastructure plan which isn’t a government spending plan at all but rather tax incentives for private companies, many of which would no doubt use the tax cuts (on top of the further corporate tax cuts Trump proposes) for projects that they would do anyway and not use them for projects that are undesirable from a profit standpoint. See Ronald Klain’s Washington Post op-ed, “Trump’s Big Infrastructure Plan? It’s a Trap.”

Whatever Trump’s weaknesses in policy are, however, he is a skilled pied piper. His ostensibly pro-business, pro-growth, pro-tax cuts orientation has fueled a surge in stock prices and possibly employment (though on employment it’s too soon to tell because US employment has been expanding every month for more than six years). He feeds his base with distorted information, such as that 122 people released from Guantanamo Bay by Obama returned to the battlefield (113 of those were released by Bush and 9 by Obama, see Rebecca Shabad, CBS News “Trump Incorrectly Claims 122 Gitmo Detainees Released under Obama Returned to Battlefield”) and unsupported claims (most recently that he had been wiretapped by Obama, see Eugene Kiely in USA Today, “Fact Check” Examining Trump’s Wiretap Claim”) and is, in part because of the information and claims, perceived by them as a man of conviction and decisive action. As one of my Facebook friends wrote, “Trump has brought us into the 21st century with pride.”

With regard to Trump, we can see some parallels with populist leaders and movements elsewhere, but this is the United States. The United States has a history of strong democratic institutions. Trump is testing the limits of those institutions. For the populist leader, the existing government structures are corrupt and they must be changed in a radical way to achieve the desired end for the forgotten people. Ronald Reagan and other American presidents have had a populist orientation, but there has never been a populist president of the United States of the kind that Trump is with the possible exception of Andrew Jackson. See Geoffrey Kabaservice’s article in The Guardian “Wild Populism Has a Long History in US Politics, but Trump Is Surely Unique.”

Speaking as a citizen of the United States, I think Trump is sowing the seeds of the potential destruction of our democracy, our economy, and our ability to participate in and influence
the world in a meaningful way just when it is most needed in the long emergency of climate change and global social disorder. The way he is responding is, in my opinion, the opposite of what is needed and will dearly cost all of us globally, including other species and future generations.

One can only wonder what the end game is. Here’s my best shot at that: Trump is not respected by the New York business community despite his considerable wealth and fame. He wants to build his own wealth and that of his family to become unmistakably great as he sees it. He wants constant attention and to be seen in the company of those who matter to him. He wants the United States to become a protective fortress for white patriarchal nationalists. He wants a world order that serves America first. He wants it understood that selfishness and self-interest are the basis of social order and lavish excess is the reward for virtue.

There are other people who could have arisen in Germany in the wake of the difficulties of the Weimar Republic, but only Hitler could have done what Hitler did.

In the United States, only Trump can do what Trump is doing. He is a dangerous anomaly.

Fortunately Trump is not Hitler.

I do not expect Trump to perform horrendous acts of the type performed by Hitler, though Trump’s potential for brutality (in light of his avowed support for torture and his determination to bomb the s______ out of ISIS) if provoked by a terrorist or other assault that is disturbing to him is untested. His violence may come not so much from what he does as from what he leaves undone (such as America’s commitments under the Paris Peace Treaty), what he blocks (such as scientific information on climate change), and what he permits others to do (such as build oil pipelines, frack natural gas, and perpetrate violations of human and animal rights).

Trump attends to the impulses of the present, while disregarding the imperatives of the future. He is oblivious to the continuing devastation of Earth’s life systems and the reasons for the deterioration of the global social fabric. What will come of all this is not foreseeable, but the probable outcomes I see are not good.

For some Trump is an extension of recent trends. For me, however, Trump is a dangerous anomaly.

He changes my calculus of what needs to be done. I will speak to this in a later article.
THE ARTS: KEY TO A FULL AND FULFILLING CULTURAL LIFE*
by D. Paul Schafer

The evidence is overwhelming and convincing. If we want to live a full and fulfilling cultural life, make the arts a fundamental part of it.

When the American psychologist Rollo May asked many years ago, “What if art and culture are not the frosting at all, but rather the fountainhead of human existence?” he put his finger on the crux of the matter. For the arts, like culture, are not frills, luxuries, or the icing on the cake, but rather the elixir that is needed to live a happy, contented, and meaningful life at every stage in the life process from the earliest signs of life to the final years of life.

Our encounter with the arts begins before we are born. Regardless of where we are born in the world, we are exposed to some of the most important aspects of the arts when we are still in the womb. This is true not only for language and the language arts—one of the most important arts of all but usually taken for granted because they are so commonplace—but also for music, literature, and other art forms. Many mothers sing to their babies and read stories to them before they see the light of day, knowing consciously or intuitively how essential the arts are for getting a good start in life. This is why many parents want music lessons, art lessons, or dance lessons for their children, even if they have been deprived of such opportunities themselves.

When we are born, our encounter with the arts escalates rapidly. This is especially true for the material arts, since this is when babies and toddlers manifest a keen desire to have tactile experiences by touching, holding, and feeling everything they come into contact with, including dolls, pillows, blankets, fingers, and hands. Not long after this, they begin to play with blocks and other materials. They also begin to dance, perform, and clown around, either by themselves or with others. They also experiment with paint, applying it to paper with their hands, feet, and brushes, as well as throwing it against walls or curtains to see what this will look like, much to the consternation of their parents.

This is an ideal time to capitalize on children’s fascination with the arts and numerous other activities. As Fraser Mustard, a prominent Canadian educator and advocate of early childhood education stated in his book *The Early Years Study*, formal education should start much sooner than it customarily does because this is when children’s capacity for learning is greatest. This is why more and more educators are coming to the conclusion that the first three or four years in life are the most important of all in a child’s education despite the fact that most children do not begin their formal education until later.

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One person who had a consuming interest in the education of children and especially their education in the arts was Sir Herbert Read, the distinguished British scholar and author. He produced a powerful rationale for arts education in childhood and youth—and indeed throughout life—in such books as Education through Art, Culture and Education in a World Order, and many others. He also participated in the establishment of the International Society for Education through Art as an executive arm of UNESCO in 1954. One organization that has capitalized on Read’s remarkable vision in this area and carried it further is the International Child Art Foundation, which was created in the United States several years ago. This valuable organization employs the power of art in all its diverse forms to nurture children’s creativity and imbue it with empathy and compassion. As a promoter and protector of children’s imagination, it produces the Arts Olympiad and World Children’s Festival, publishes the ChildArt Magazine, and provides many Peace Through Art programs.

If educators and educational institutions had capitalized on Read’s far-reaching vision, arts education would not be in the difficult position it is today in many parts of the world. But it was not to be. When C. P. Snow’s The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution was published after the Second World War, a chain of events was set in motion that eventually led to a strengthening of science education and a weakening of arts education in numerous schools.

While Snow was trying to come to grips with what he felt was too much emphasis on the arts and humanities in the British educational system and too little emphasis on science, he made such a powerful case for science, the sciences, and the scientific revolution going on in the world at that time that it tended to steer things in a different direction.(1) Along with many other developments taking place in the world at the same time—including linking up science with industry, technology, and governments—this had the effect of reinforcing the trend towards treating the sciences as “hard disciplines” and the arts as “soft disciplines” in most educational jurisdictions. This led to a marginalization of the arts in many schools, the cutting of countless courses in the arts from the curriculum, and treating the arts as secondary rather than primary subjects of study in the education of children and young people.

Despite this, the arts have started to make a comeback in recent years and appear destined to play a much stronger role in educational systems in the future. A particularly important development in this regard was the creation of the Seoul Agenda, which resulted from the Second World Conference on Arts Education convened by UNESCO in Korea in 2010. The most important goals and strategies established for the Agenda were to ensure that arts education is accessible as a fundamental and sustainable component of a high quality renewal of education; apply arts education principles and practices to contribute to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing today’s world; support and enhance the role of arts education in the promotion of social responsibility, social cohesion, cultural diversity, and intercultural dialogue; and affirm arts education as the foundation for balanced creative, cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and social development of children, youth, and life-long learning (italics added).

What is significant about the Seoul Agenda and the specific goals and strategies established for it is not only the high priority placed on the arts in the educational system—essential as
this is—but also the priority placed on the dual role the arts are capable of playing in educational systems as “ends in themselves” as well as “means to other ends.”

In a traditional sense, the arts have almost always been treated as ends in themselves in most educational systems throughout the world. This has caused educators to focus the bulk of their time, energy, and attention on the many benefits that can be derived from taking courses in the arts. From the visual, material, and architectural arts, for instance, there is much to be learned about mass, density, shape, texture, form, proportion, colour, and perspective; from dance, drama, and literature: balance, movement, muscle control, physical coordination, tragedy, comedy, satire, and pathos; and from music: sound, rhythm, harmony, counterpoint, composition, and orchestration. There is also a great deal to be learned about discipline, largely through learning to play a musical instrument, paint pictures, act in plays, write poems, and tell stories. The underlying assumption is that most children will not be artists or have artistic careers when they grow up, but can still enjoy the arts as hobbies and experience a great deal of satisfaction from them as forms of entertainment later in life.

In contrast to this, there is a rapidly evolving awareness in many parts of the world that the arts can play a powerful role as means to other ends and not just ends in themselves, as is made abundantly clear in the Seoul Agenda and other developments taking place throughout the world. This results from the many other benefits that can be derived from having a solid education in the arts, such as cultivating creativity and excellence, developing a battery of skills and techniques that are useful in other areas of life, acting responsibly, mastering other disciplines, being compassionate, and contributing to the realization of a better world.

Clearly learning about the arts in all their diverse forms and manifestations is imperative if children and young people are to be prepared properly for life. There is little that can compare with it if the task is to make it possible for children and young people to experience fulfillment and well-being during the later stages of their lives.

There is more. While some art forms are more individual in nature—the visual and material arts for example—others are more collective in nature, such as drama, dance, music, and opera. It is impossible to put on a play, perform a symphony, or stage an opera or ballet without engaging in a great deal of cooperation and teamwork. This ranges all the way from working with others on the creation of sets and props and the rehearsal of scenes and movements to polishing up specific parts and putting on final performances. Through the preparation and presentation of works of art, people learn to work together in the realization of common causes, thereby developing collaborative skills and abilities that are in great demand today. This also produces more human interaction and social engagement, thereby counteracting the isolation that comes from contemporary technology and is such a major problem in the world at present.

Recognition of the two distinct strengths of arts education as means to other ends and ends in themselves results largely from the work of UNESCO and other international organizations, the involvement of many artists in a variety of social causes and humanitarian concerns, the advocacy of distinguished experts in the arts, culture, and creativity such as Sir Kenneth Robinson, and recent research and major assessments of arts education.
throughout the world. Without the ability to create, innovate, work together, think critically, respond imaginatively, stay out of trouble, deal with a host of internal and external problems, and apply what they have learned from the arts to other areas of life and other disciplines, children and young people will be at a considerable disadvantage in the future.

When the arts are seen from a holistic rather than partial perspective, there is little in the world that is not concerned with the arts in one form or another. This includes nature, the natural environment, other species, people, groups, institutions, communities, cities, countries, cultures, the past, the present, the future, and virtually everything else. This affirms that there is an enormous amount to be learned from the arts about life, living, reality, the human condition, and the world at each and every stage in life. This explains why Rollo May thought art and culture are “the fountainhead of human existence,” and why Jean Cocteau said “art is not a pastime, but a priesthood.” In doing so, he stretched a point to make a point like many good artists.

Taking the arts seriously should cause us to open up a commanding place for the arts in adulthood and not just in childhood and youth. This yields many benefits in our adult lives, such as the development of our personalities and our careers, the raising of children, the enjoyment of family life, the cultivation of friendships, and much more. Not only should we reach out to the arts whenever possible, but also we should allow the arts to penetrate into the interior of our being and our consciousness. There is simply no better time to explore the many different ways the arts can broaden, deepen, and enrich our lives, enhance our understanding of ourselves and others, contribute to our identity, personality development, and wellbeing, and strengthen our relationships with other people, nature, and the world around us. It doesn’t matter whether this happens on a part time, full time, casual, or intense basis. It can still lead to many transformative experiences and transcendental possibilities.

First and foremost, the arts bring a great deal of joy and happiness into our adult lives. This results from listening to beautiful music, watching superb plays, enjoying exciting opera and dance performances, looking at memorable paintings, cherishing fine craft objects, reading enlightening books, savouring outstanding stories, poems, and films, and seeing majestic monuments, especially if we open our hearts, minds, souls, spirits, and senses to these experiences. Surely this is why Walter Pater said, “Art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass.”

There are billions of people all over the world who are enjoying experiences like this as audience members, active participants, or both. While these forms of involvement in the arts are very different - with different outcomes, implications, and consequences - they bring an enormous amount of pleasure into our lives as adults, as well as help us to deal more effectively with the pressures, tensions, stresses, and strains of modern life.

One of the most fascinating things about the arts is that most of these experiences can be enjoyed through remarkable advances in technology and not just through live performances. Virtually every person in the world today can access everything that exists in the arts in both the historical and contemporary sense through the miracle of modern communications. They can enjoy the finest popular and classical music, see the most outstanding plays and paintings, and walk through the finest museums, galleries, and
buildings through You Tube, iPhones, iPads, virtual reality, and many other devices owned by family, friends, libraries, schools, community centres, or by themselves. This is a phenomenal achievement, one that promises to be even more phenomenal in the future.

As our involvement in the arts intensifies during our adult lives, it becomes apparent that every art form possesses some particular quality that makes it distinctive and unique. In music, it is sound, rhythm, and melodies, such as those created by Chopin, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, the Beatles, and a host of other composers and melody-makers. This is what gives music its special quality and universal appeal, which is why some people think music is the highest art form of all and Hans Christian Andersen said, “Where words fail, music speaks.”

Music, however, is not the only art form that possesses a special quality that makes it distinctive and unique. In painting, it is visual representation, perspective, and the use of colour, as evidenced in the work of landscape painters like Joseph Mallord William Tuner, Thomas Gainsborough, and myriad others. In poetry, it is the capacity to say profound things with a minimum number of words, such as when Keats said “A thing of beauty is a joy forever,” Blake said “To see a world in a grain of sand/And a heaven in a wild flower,” and Shakespeare said, “All the world’s a stage/And all the men and women merely players.” Talk about saying powerful things with the utmost simplicity!

Then there is dance. What sound, rhythm, and melodies are to music and simplicity is to poetry, movement is to dance. Here also, many examples abound, such as Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake and Sleeping Beauty with their graceful solos and elegant duos set to the most wonderful music imaginable. Architecture exudes a similar quality through the use of form, texture, materials, and mass, which is why some people refer to architecture as “frozen music.” This is understandable in view of the fact that some buildings are so elegant, majestic, and ornate that they really do look like music that is frozen in time and space, such as the Taj Mahal in Agra, the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, the Jameh Mosque in Isfahan, and Kinkaku-ji or the Golden Pavilion in Kyoto.

In much the same way, theatre, opera, the literary arts, and film use stories as their special device and most identifiable characteristic. Theatre and literature are outstanding illustrations of this. They use stories to communicate things that are momentous and mundane, simple and profound. Take the works of Shakespeare referred to earlier. His stories are full of valuable insights into the human condition, different personality types, diverse social, political, and societal situations, and human triumphs and tragedies. And what is true for Shakespeare and his works is true for many other authors and their works, including George Bernard Shaw, Molière, Miguel de Cervantes, Dante Alighieri, Charles Dickens, Omar Khayyám, Molana Jalal-Din Rumi, and Paulo Coelho.

If the arts bring an immense amount of joy and happiness into our adult lives through the many different qualities, characteristics, and capabilities they possess, they also help us to express ourselves and our feelings and emotions in humane and sensitive ways. This makes it possible for us to feel better about ourselves, as well as connect with others on a deeper, richer, and more personal level. While the arts can be provocative at times—and must be if they are to fulfill one of their most essential functions in society—the feelings and emotions
evoked through the arts are much more positive than negative. The arts seldom injure people, destroy things, or involve violent and destructive behaviour.

They also help us to cultivate our capacity for creativity and excellence to a much greater extent. As a result, they are ideal vehicles for helping people in general—and adults in particular—to respond imaginatively, intelligently, and energetically to the demands of modern life, as well as the rapidity of local, regional, national, and international events.

At one time, people were trained for a single job or profession during their adult lives. Education was focused on learning specific skills and specialized abilities. With the high rate of occupational turnover and technological change today—it is now estimated that people will have fifteen to twenty jobs over the course of their lives and in very different fields—this understanding of education is changing. Narrowly trained and highly specialized people will have difficulty dealing with employment situations where jobs that are regularly being transformed, downsized, or eliminated.

More attention will have to be paid in the future to helping people become more creative and entrepreneurial in their work, careers, and lives. In other words become people who are able to respond quickly and cleverly to whatever problems loom up in their paths because they have learned to use their mental, physical, and emotional powers in highly inventive ways. It is creativity, not conformity that will enable people to perform effectively in jobs in the future, as well as to create jobs and fashion the new types of employment situations that will be necessary. Nothing may do this better than involvement in the arts, the kind of involvement that brings out the best in people and makes it possible for them to express themselves in innovative and original ways.

What is true for creativity is also true for excellence. Regardless of what occupations or professions we end up in during our adult lives, achieving excellence will be mandatory in all occupations and professions in the future.

The arts tend to value excellence more highly than other activities because this is essential to master artistic challenges and perform aesthetic works. No one likes to watch an artistic performance that is inferior or mediocre. In order to prevent this, it is necessary to aspire to and achieve excellence in all artistic endeavours, which often turns out to be the key to realizing excellence in other areas of life. There is a reason why we use such terms as “the art of science,” “the art of politics,” and “the art of business,” since each of these are art forms when they are performed with excellence. Henry David Thoreau went a step further in this regard when he said, “The highest condition of art is artlessness.”

The same holds true for diversity. The arts are incredibly diverse because they are constantly changing, thereby exposing us to new, better, and different ways of doing things. While many techniques in the arts must be repeated numerous times in order to master them, one of the most significant things about the arts is that they are always evolving and mutating, not only in time but also in space. What is commonplace today will likely not be commonplace tomorrow, as the history of music, drama, the visual arts, and literature reveals. The arts are always on the move, so to speak, thereby helping us to deal more effectively with diversity, complexity, and a world that is in perpetual motion and dynamic flux.
The arts are also capable of strengthening perceptual and sensorial abilities in our adult life. This should begin with cultivating the art of seeing, which Goethe thought was the most important sensory ability of all because it was with the eye more than any other sense organ by which he learned to know and understand the world. This ability is cultivated most effectively through the visual arts, going to art galleries and museums, and so forth. This enables us to develop our capacity for perception and perspective, comprehend foreground and background relationships, discover links and connections, and focus on details and parts.

This is merely the first in a whole series of steps that are required to strengthen our other perceptual and sensorial abilities. The arts improve our ability to hear, smell, taste, and touch, and not just to see. These other abilities can be cultivated through music, sculpture, the material, culinary, and literary arts, and others. While it may not be realized at the time, people who take craft lessons, modern or ballroom dancing, or cooking classes in their adult lives are more likely to have better developed sensorial abilities than people who do not engage in these activities. For involvement in activities such as this makes it possible for us to write more clearly, speak more coherently, express ideas more simply, hear more acutely, touch more gently, and see more precisely.

The arts also have an important role to play in bringing people, groups, communities, societies, and countries together. They do this through the ability of artists and arts organizations to create music, poems, pictures, stories, plays, and the like that can be shared. This does more than anything else to create strong bonds and a sense of belonging between people, regardless of whether they live in small towns or large cities. This ability to create social cohesion is urgently needed in the world. A good example of this is the work achieved by Gareth Malone, the distinguished British choral conductor who has created many choirs in England and other parts of the world over the last few decades, most notably in schools, communities, corporations, and among military personnel, most recently in connection with the Invictus Games initiated by Prince Harry.

There is another ability buried deep in the arts that is of vital importance to our development as adults, one that may be the most important of all. It is the capacity for holism. It derives from the fact that every work of art is a whole composed of many parts. While this is most apparent in the visual arts, it is also apparent in all other art forms. For regardless of whether it is a painting, a play, a musical composition, a poem, or a story, every work of art is a whole made up of many parts that are woven together in specific combinations and arrangements to form wholes that are greater than the parts and the sum of the parts. This is because new entities are brought into existence when the wholes are created that are not in the parts taken separately. This makes the arts ideal vehicles for seeing and understanding things as wholes and not merely as parts.

This has major implications for our development as adults, since it addresses one of the biggest problems of all in the modern world. While we have become remarkably skilled at breaking things up into parts in order to study the parts in detail, we have lost our capacity to put the parts back together again to form wholes. This is true not only with respect to people, but also with respect to communities, regions, countries, and the world, thereby making this one of the biggest challenges in the world today. We neglect it at our peril.
Since the arts involve the body, mind, heart, soul, spirit, senses, emotions, and intellect, they make it possible to bring all our human faculties together to create wholes composed of many interrelated parts. This explains why artists, arts organizations, and the arts have been in the vanguard of the movement to create “the whole person” ever since Matthew Arnold, the great nineteenth century poet and culture critic, emphasized the need to attend to the *harmonious development of all the faculties that comprise human nature*. Not only was Arnold opposed to the development of any one of these faculties to the detriment, exclusion, or dominance of others, but also he was devoted to the pursuit of perfection and the necessity of the arts and education, or “sweetness and light” as he called it. Not bad advice for people living in a fragmented and disconnected world and desperately searching for meaning and fulfillment in life.

This capacity in the arts to teach us a great deal about holism is not limited to ourselves and the development of our personalities and lives as “whole people.” It also teaches us a great deal about the world around us, especially with respect to all the diverse cultures and civilizations of the world. This is because cultures and civilizations, like people and artistic works, are wholes made up of many parts, albeit on a much more colossal scale. The problem here, of course, is that we cannot see cultures and civilizations as wholes because they are composed of far too many parts, and it is not possible to see the organizing principle that is used to combine all the parts together to form wholes.

How, then, is it possible to know and understand cultures and civilizations in the holistic sense? In order to do this, it is necessary to turn to artists and arts organizations. This is because artists and arts organizations create many of the signs, symbols, myths, legends, metaphors, stories, and the like that are necessary to shed light on cultures and civilizations as wholes or total ways of life. Artists and arts organizations are able to do this because one of their greatest assets is the ability to select parts that are most symbolic of cultures and civilizations as wholes and therefore epitomize cultures and civilizations in many ways. The old adage “a picture is worth a thousand words” is a cliché, but it speaks volumes about the ability of artists and arts organizations to convey an incredible amount about the character of cultures and civilizations as wholes that cannot be communicated in any other way at all, or cannot be communicated nearly as effectively using any other device. This point was driven home with clarity and conviction by Robert Redfield, who spent the bulk of his life studying cultures and civilizations as wholes:

> The characterizations of the artist... are of course not precise at all; but very much of the whole is communicated to us. We might call them all portraits. They communicate the nature of the whole by attending to the uniqueness of each part, by choosing from among the parts certain of them for emphasis, and by modifying them and rearranging them in ways that satisfy the “feeling” of the portrayer.” (2)

There are many examples of this. There is a great deal to be learned about the cultures of France, the United States, China, Cambodia, and Australia as wholes, for example, from the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty, the Great Wall, Angkor Wat, and the Sydney Opera house, since these internationally known landmarks are symbolic of these cultures in the holistic sense in many ways. It is through symbolic parts like this—as well as through many other parts that are symbolic of these cultures as wholes such as musical, visual, and literary
works - that comprehensive portraits of these cultures begin to take shape, much as they do for all other cultures in the world in exactly the same way.

What does all this have to do with our adult lives and the desire to live a full and fulfilling cultural life? Actually, a great deal. Developing knowledge of the diverse cultures and civilizations of the world not only makes it possible for us to understand and appreciate these cultures and civilizations as wholes or total ways of life, but also enriches our lives in countless ways. There is a wealth of information and insight to be gleaned from broadening and deepening our knowledge and understanding of the world’s cultures and civilizations in the all-encompassing sense if we are wise enough to realize this, especially with respect to different ways of seeing, acting, and valuing things in the world, accepting and appreciating others, expanding our consciousness and mindfulness, enhancing our well-being, and improving our individual and collective behaviour.

This is also true with respect to our awareness and appreciation of nature, especially during adulthood. While the arts are not the only vehicles that are capable of doing this, it is remarkable how much can be learned about nature, the natural environment, and other species from the arts, as well as how imperative it is to revere nature and make it an integral part of our lives.

It never ceases to amaze me how many artistic works are concerned with nature. Artists have been concerned with nature in all its complexity, diversity, and grandeur for centuries, and have consequently created a vast array of works that deal with nature and its many diverse elements. In the Western tradition alone, there are millions of artistic works that are concerned with the sun, the moon, stars, clouds, landscapes, seascapes, planets, morning, afternoon, evening, mountains, forests, and many different types of animals, as works by the French Impressionists, Canada’s Group of Seven, Chinese brush painters, Beethoven, Debussy, Respighi, Richard Strauss, Vincent d’Indy, Alan Hovhaness, and numerous others confirm. One manifestation of this that is very symbolic and powerful is Dvorak’s hauntingly beautiful *Song to the Moon*, particularly when it is sung by Anna Netrebko, Rénee Fleming, or any other well-known artist.

What is true for nature and its diverse elements is especially true for rivers. In fact, rivers have probably received more attention from artists than any other element in nature, perhaps because rivers involve flow and movement and flow and movement are essential at all stages in life but particularly in the adult and final stages. Some of the most obvious examples of this are *The Moldau* by Smetana, *The Blue Danube* by Johann Strauss Jr., and *Flow Gently, Sweet Afton* by Robert Burns and Jonathan Spilman, with its exquisite melody and enticing words in the first verse: “Flow gently, sweet Afton, Among thy green braes, Flow gently, I’ll sing thee a song in thy praise; My Mary’s asleep by the murmuring stream, Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.”

To these examples should be added Bruce Springsteen’s popular song *The River* and *The Rivers of Babylon* by Brent Dowe and Trevor McNaughton of the Jamaican Reggae group The Melodians. There are also the many musical works written about such rivers as the Yellow River in China and the mighty Mississippi in the United States, as well as favourites like *Ol’ Man River* and *Shenandoah*. And what about Handel’s *Water Music*? While it was not written with a specific river in mind, it was written to be performed on a barge floating
down a river - the Thames River in England - and had to be repeated many times because King George I was so fond of it.

And this brings me, via a circuitous route, to the ability of the arts to motivate, uplift, and inspire us, as well as to reach above and beyond ourselves in the search for spirituality and the sublime. Along with holism, these two final abilities may be the most important of all during the adult and final stages of our lives because they make it possible for us to do things that seem impossible to do and achieve things that seem impossible to achieve.

Take the ability of the arts to motivate, uplift, and inspire us. I have discovered over the course of my adult life that there are many artistic works that do this, which I suspect is true for all people. While I recognize that particular works and specific art forms do this in different ways for different people, I must confess that I am motivated, uplifted, and inspired whenever I hear the last movement of Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony, Sibelius’s Finlandia or the last movement of his Fifth Symphony, John Stanley’s Trumpet Voluntary, Max Bruch’s Scottish Fantasy, Chopin’s Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, Opus 23, Don Besig’s Flying Free, and many others. This is also true when I look at landscape paintings by Vincent van Gogh, Tom Thomson, Arthur Lismer, and Lawren Harris, or watch the Gandhi movie. Whenever I see or hear any of these works, and many others I might mention, my instant reaction is to get up and get going, as well as to tackle things that I have left undone for days and possibly weeks and months.

These experiences are multiplied many times over by artistic works that cause me to reach above and beyond myself in the search for spirituality and the sublime. My experiences in this area have been especially exhilarating because they have propelled me to very lofty heights. The majority of these works are in the field of music, although here as well, I am aware that other people have similar experiences in other art forms and with different works of art.

In an earlier article, I wrote about a profound experience I had one night after I had gone to bed, turned on my radio, and fallen fast asleep. I don’t know how long I was sleeping, but I slowly became aware that I was hearing one of the most spiritual and sublime pieces of music I have ever heard in my life. I actually thought I had died and gone to heaven, at least until I heard an announcer say, “You have been listening to ‘Grant Us Peace by Felix Mendelssohn.’”

Much more recently, I had a similar experience with another piece of music, but this time it was early in the morning rather than in the middle of the night, but still on my radio. While I set my alarm to let out a loud “beep” at exactly 6 o’clock every morning, for some curious reason I was awoken on this particular morning by another piece of music that was incredibly spiritual and sublime. When it was over, I listened attentively to hear what the piece was and who composed it. Unfortunately, I only caught about half of this. It sounded like “you have just heard a piece by Robert Han - or was it Hand? - for oboe and orchestra.”

I immediately jumped out of bed, went to my computer, and began the frantic search for the title of this piece and its composer. After a long and arduous search, I discovered it was À Chloris by Reynaldo Hahn, a composer I had never heard of before. It is usually performed by a solo singer or oboe player with piano and small orchestra. Do you know this beautiful
piece of music? If not, you may want to listen to it, along with the fascinating introduction that accompanies this particular version of the piece (You Tube “Ah Chloris”-Reynaldo Hahn; Susan Graham, mezzo-soprano; Jake Heggie, piano).

I narrate these two experiences to you because there are many pieces of music that I find extremely spiritual and sublime, including Handel’s Minuet from Bernice, Fauré’s Cantique de Jean Racine, the second movement of Beethoven’s Fifth Piano Concerto, Rachmaninoff’s Second Piano Concerto, the Adagietto from Mahler’s Fifth Symphony, the Cavatina from Emil von Sauer’s Piano Concerto No 1, The Holy City, Bless This House, and many others.

I would definitely add The Lost Chord to this list. I discovered this piece quite by accident several years ago and it has been a favourite of mine ever since. It was composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan in 1877 during the illness and passing away of his brother. I was very surprised by this because Sullivan was part of the Gilbert and Sullivan duo that wrote many comic operettas, including The Pirates of Penzance and The Mikado.

The Lost Chord has been recorded many times by some of the world’s greatest singers, including John McCormack, Webster Booth (You Tube-Webster Booth-The Lost Chord is a personal favourite), and Enrico Caruso, who sang it at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on April 29, 1912 to raise money for families who lost loved ones and family members when the Titanic sank off the coast of Newfoundland. One of the most remarkable things about this piece is not only the exquisite and memorable music, but also the evocative and captivating words. They are from a poem by Adelaide Anne Proctor. I quote them here at length because they are symbolic of the ability many artists and arts organizations possess to open the doors to spirituality and the sublime in profound and powerful ways, as well as to demonstrate the herculean heights to which the arts can soar in our adult lives and indeed throughout our entire lives:

Seated one day at the organ, I was weary an ill at ease,
And my fingers wander´d idly over the noisy keys;
I knew not what I was playing, or what I was dreaming then,
But I struck one chord of music like the sound of a great Amen.
It flooded the crimson twilight like the close of an Angel´s Psalm,
And it lay on my fever´d spirit with a touch of infinite calm.
It quieted pain and sorrow like love overcoming strife,
It seem´d the harmonious echo from our discordant life.
It link´d all perplexed meanings into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence as if it were loth to cease;
I have sought, but I seek it vainly, that one lost chord divine,
Which came from the soul of the organ and enter´d into mine.
It may be that Death´s bright Angel will speak in that chord again;
It may be that only in Heav´n I shall hear that grand Amen!

With these inspirational words, I come to the final two stages of life. The first is usually called “the retirement stage,” although surely we must find a better term for this because it sounds like life is more or less over by this point, which is anything but the case. For this is an ideal time to be engaged in the arts if we did not have the good fortune to be involved in
them to any significant extent in our childhood, youth, and adulthood, as well as to get more actively involved in them if we were engaged in them earlier in life.

This involvement can be achieved by ourselves or through organizations such as seniors’ homes, zoomers’ groups, community centres, and so forth that are rapidly increasing their courses and programs in the arts for people in the final stages of life. This is primarily because this is a perfect time to take up a musical instrument, paint pictures, make craft objects, have fun, fill in time, dance, engage in comedy and humour, and seek all the pleasures the arts can bring at this particular stage in the life process. I have found this a fruitful time for taking brush painting classes, singing in a choir, practicing the piano, learning more about the artistic and cultural heritages of humankind, reacquainting myself with wonderful works of art, and perhaps most importantly, discovering outstanding works of art for the very first time.

What is most interesting about the last or final stage of life is that recent research is revealing that the arts have an indispensable role to play at this specific stage in the life process. This is true not only for people who are getting older but still enjoy reasonably good health, but especially for people who are suffering from such debilitating illnesses and diseases as cancer, strokes, deep depression, dementia, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, M.S., ALS, and so forth. In recent years, there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of institutions, books, research studies, and other developments devoted to coming to grips with these illnesses and diseases. What is being discovered in countless hospitals, palliative care centres, organizations like The Society for the Arts in Dementia Care, Partnerships in Dementia Care Alliance, the National Ballet School of Canada, and many others as well as researching books like The Creative Arts in Dementia Care: Practical Person-Centred Approaches and Ideas by Jill Hayes and Dementia Arts: Celebrating Creativity in Elder Care by Gary Glazer is that the arts can be very helpful in assisting people with these illnesses and diseases during the last stages of life. They can help people to hear better, remember more, express their creativity, improve their balance, and interact more effectively, largely by listening to music, singing songs, dancing alone or with others, recalling favourite tunes and artistic experiences from the past, and much more. While the arts are not the only activities that can do this and cannot provide cures for these illnesses and diseases, they can make it easier for people to deal with these problems, as well as care givers and family members who are struggling to help people cope with some of the greatest ordeals in life.

When all the benefits to be derived from the arts at every stage in the life process are added up and considered collectively in childhood and youth, adulthood, retirement, and the final years of life it is apparent that the arts must be seen in a totally new light. After decades of downplaying the arts in many educational systems, governments, and countries throughout the world, it is clear that the arts deserve a prominent place at all stages in life. Not only is this the solution to achieving the balance, harmony, and parity between the arts and the sciences that C. P. Snow so desperately sought, but also it is the key to living a full and fulfilling cultural life. There is simply no substitute for this.

Endnotes

1. It should be noted that C. P. Snow modified his position on this subject in a second book he wrote later in life. It was The Two Cultures: And a Second Look: An Expanded Version of
The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1965). This resulted from the strong reaction that occurred to what was called “the Snow thesis,” namely the conviction that a high priority should be placed on science education in the school system because Snow believed this was the best way to deal with the problems that existed in the world at that time. He also believed it was the best way to correct the imbalance he felt existed between the arts and humanities on the one hand and science and the sciences on the other hand in the British educational system and British society generally, as well as in many other educational systems and societies throughout the world.

One organization that has achieved the parity, balance, and harmony that C. P. Snow sought between the arts and the sciences and is demonstrating this in fact is the Scientific Research Institute of Spiritual Development of Man and UNESCO Chair “Spiritual and Cultural Values of Upbringing and Education” in the Ukraine. For many years now, it has been applying well-established scientific facts, principles, and practices to understanding the crucial role that the arts and culture play in the education of children and youth, as well as the development of people’s values, personalities, and spirituality at all stages in the life process.


D. Paul Schafer is founder and Director of the World Culture Project based in Markham, Canada [www3.sympatico.ca/dpaulschafer]. He has worked in the arts and cultural field for more than five decades as an author, advisor, educator, administrator, and researcher. He was Assistant Director of the Ontario Arts Council from 1967 to 1970, a founder and Director of York University’s Programme in Arts and Media Administration from 1970 to 1974, and Coordinator of the Cooperative Programme in Arts Administration and the Cooperative Programme in International Development at the University of Toronto from 1984 to 1990. Paul has taught arts administration and cultural policy at York University and the University of Toronto, undertaken a number of missions for UNESCO, and executed many projects for Canada’s Department of External Affairs and other government departments and organizations in Canada.
THE PEOPLE’S CLIMATE MARCH, APRIL 29, 2017
Join the People’s Climate March in Washington DC on April 29 or one of the sister marches on the same day.

Here’s the announcement from peoplesclimate.org:

On the 100th Day of the Trump Administration, we will be in the streets of Washington DC to show the world and our leaders that we will resist attacks on our people, our communities and our planet.

We will come together from across the United States to strengthen our movement. We will demonstrate our power and resistance at the gates of the White House. We will bring our solutions to the climate crisis and the problems that affect our communities to our leaders in Congress to demand action.

We invite you to join the Peoples Climate Movement on Saturday, April 29th as we march to:

- Advance solutions to the climate crisis [that are] rooted in racial, social and economic justice and committed to protecting front-line communities and workers.
- Protect our right to clean air, water, land, healthy communities and a world at peace.
- Immediately stop attacks on immigrants, communities of color, indigenous and tribal people and lands and workers.
- Ensure public funds and investments create good paying jobs that provide a family-sustaining wage and benefits and preserve workers’ rights, including the right to unionize.
- Fund investments in our communities, people and environment to transition to a new clean and renewable energy economy that works for all.
- Protect our basic rights to a free press, protest and free speech.

March with us on April 29th as we come together to resist and march for our families, our communities and our planet.

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