



Cultural Orientation of the New Era

Natalia Rojcovscaia-Tumaha

Composer, conductor, pedagogue, linguist, writer;
Board member of the Center for Russian Science and Culture

Abstract

In order to ensure security in the education system and, thereby, educate a creatively thinking and acting person, it is necessary to reform education, filling it with a cultural component. The modern educational program urgently needs cultural content and should include an in-depth study of ethics, aesthetics, world cultural traditions and heritage, examples of high classical and professional contemporary art, and the practical application of creative skills. Art is the highest manifestation of culture; imbued with it, we will become the creators of the best versions of ourselves, as well as the entire harmonious reality around us. It is necessary to adhere to the firm conviction that the security and harmonious progress of humanity must be based on the enhancement of the significance and value of culture. This should be a new cultural and creatively oriented era. And the builders of this new epochal time should embody the spiritual and moral principles, serving as the direct bearers of these principles.

Culture is the main thing that makes us truly Human. Only Homo culturalis or a cultural person, which means spiritually elevated, can build that perfect bright future to which we all aspire. A cultured person is a peaceful person in the world, who has positive, broad, unordinary and creative thoughts and who actively participates in building a peaceful and open society, acting in the interests of people and within the framework of global partnership and unity. Everything is created, projected and embodied by us, because a person has unlimited abilities. And in order to direct them for the good, we must look for a source for change within ourselves, starting with self-knowledge, self-improvement, self-discipline, self-control and selflessness in our thoughts and actions. All of us who want change must acknowledge our responsibility for the world in which we live, for those with whom we are close and for what is given to us by nature. It's a journey of self-discovery. Culture means cultivation, an act of creation, veneration of the world by a person, and above all this comes through upbringing, education, enlightenment and, as a result, knowledge of oneself, and through oneself while simultaneously comprehending the whole world.

And it is not necessary for every person to think globally, it is enough to organize our microcosm inside ourselves, our own lives, while adhering to the path of kindness, honesty, love and wisdom in order to achieve harmony, which, like diverging waves, will impact the lives of other people and the whole world order as a whole. Each of us has creative energy and everyone can make an important contribution to the construction, development and improvement of our common life in our beautiful home—planet Earth. Each of us can bring into this world something of our own—unique, inimitable and, therefore, invaluable.

Therefore, with every child's birth on this planet, prosperity should increase more and more. Every person is a bearer of a special purpose and a source of inspiration for other people. He is a necessary element of the micro- and macrocosm, interconnection, balance, consonance, unity and harmony of the entire Universe. We, along with everything that surrounds us, are united by one mind and together constitute the wholeness of the entire Universe.

“Culture is the basis of art studies, linguistics, political science, economics, ethnology, history, philosophy, psychology, pedagogy and everything else.”

The modern term “culture” is based on a term used by the ancient Roman orator Marcus Tullius Cicero in his *Tusculanae Disputationes*, where he wrote of the cultivation of the soul or “*cultura animi*”, using an agricultural metaphor for the development of a philosophical soul, understood teleologically as the highest possible ideal for human development. He also spoke about the culture of spirit and mind, which are equivalent to love of wisdom, the definition of philosophy. No wonder in ancient schools, along with the exact sciences and the humanities, rhetoric, music, painting, philosophy were obligatory. Without these subjects, it is impossible to form an integrated and harmonious personality. The modern educational program urgently needs cultural content and should include an in-depth study of ethics, aesthetics, world cultural traditions and heritage, examples of high classical and professional contemporary art, and the practical application of creative skills. And since art is the highest manifestation of culture, it allows us to become the creators of the best versions of ourselves, as well as the entire harmonious reality around us. Unlike the scientific method of cognition, which divides the world into separate parts for analytics, the artistic sphere follows the path of a holistic and synthesized display by creating some complex models, where the established accents of the opposition of “good and evil” are placed (that which contributes to the unification and understanding). Also, this is the atmosphere of high spirituality, beauty and creativity that is native to the child's soul, in which he feels happy, free, protected and confident. Also, when the child becomes more developed intellectually and spiritually, more emotionally responsive, sincere, sensitive, inspired, his insight and intuition develop highly.

Samuel Pufendorf took over this metaphor in a modern context, meaning something similar, but no longer assuming that philosophy was man's natural perfection. His use, and that of many writers after him, “refers to all the ways in which human beings overcome their original barbarism, and through artifice, become fully human.”

Because only an increase in the level of culture can stop the spiritual decline and discord in society. Culture is what makes a person civilized, highly spiritual and opens the whole breadth of his soul, expands his thinking, helps him realize the whole potential of the individual and unites all people on earth, making them loving and caring about each other and about his planet. A cultured person will be honest both to the outside world and to himself.

He will be reasonable and will take good care of the environment and climate; his choice will be a healthy lifestyle, rational consumption and responsible restoration of all resources of the earth, promoting the development of agriculture, caring for people.

“Culture and spirituality are inseparable; culture cannot separate people by pushing them against each other but should bring them together.”

All this will help to make the world humanistic, which by itself will solve the problems of violence and save present and future generations from the threat and scourge of war, this will eradicate crime and inequality within and between countries, including gender inequality, and will be expanding rights, freedoms and opportunities for women of all origins, religions and ages.

Therefore, only an increase in the level of culture can stop the spiritual decline, discord in society. A cultural person will be honest both to the outside world and to himself. He will be reasonable and his choice will be a rational consumption and responsible restoration of all resources of the earth and caring about people. All this will help to make the world truly humanistic, in which the problems of violence will be solved by themselves and this will save present and future generations from the threat and disaster of aggression and destruction.

This is where culture leads and this is the surest way and key to all the challenges facing humanity today. And if we underestimate or lose sight of the fundamental importance of culture, we will never fully achieve and realize the noblest goals, which are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. And there is such a danger. In due time, Immanuel Kant saw the rapid development of civilization, already then alarmingly noted its separation from culture, which also goes forward, but much more slowly. According to him, it is this disproportion that is the cause of many of the troubles of mankind, since the cultural space is essentially inextricably linked to the social.

Culture is a comprehensive notion that has an enormous amount of meanings in various areas of human life and has an unusually beneficial effect on all aspects of our life. And the source of culture is thought activity, spirituality and creativity, which, in turn, is a source of individual and social well-being.

Culture is the basis of art studies, linguistics, political science, economics, ethnology, history, philosophy, psychology, pedagogy and everything else.

The modern educational program urgently needs cultural content and must include examples of high art with the addition of arts subjects to the educational program, since art is the highest manifestation of culture, this is what makes us creators of ourselves and of all the reality around us.

A humanistic approach is key to solving not only security problems, but also raising the level of education and student engagement. I would like to add a small but important clarification related to the question whether culture is a divisive or unifying force.

“At the global level, there are extraordinary individuals, geniuses, who serve as messengers of higher knowledge and through their exceptional art, enlighten and connect us on a profound spiritual level.”

Indeed, culture is a very broad concept and can include both local cultures and traditions, and the concept of a global order. In the first sense, culture is one of the main features, which makes people different. Different countries have different national peculiarities, according to which people differ, but these differences should not be the reasons for divisive attitude towards other nations. Due to a misunderstanding of the importance of this diversity, intolerance towards each other, or the conscious manipulation of it, multi-ethnic conflicts can arise, dividing countries, breaking nations. But this is actually unnatural for culture. In fact, all existing national cultures create a diversity of beauty and grandeur of the entire human society as a whole. And this leads to a unifying culture of the human spirit. Culture and spirituality are inseparable; culture cannot separate people by pushing them against each other but should bring them together.

On the contrary, it teaches them the basic moral values that are universal in the world. So, culture is not division, but diversity! It is people who want either to unite or to divide nationalities, not cultures. There are some countries which do their best in uniting different nationalities under one culture in the measures of one state. For example, my multinational country is also like such countries. Every culture has its own peculiarities, but these different features should first of all unite people in the sense that opportunities to understand the other culture should serve as the adhesive factor in the relation between cultures.

And, above all, education helps to understand this. It is impossible to be regarded as an educated person if only one culture is studied, and the peculiarities of other nations are omitted. All ethical and religious programs teach students to live together peacefully, without conflicts and wars. The very educational process comprises programs where students are taught to live and work together, they are taught to respect the culture of other students and to support others in their desire to study. There are a lot of international Universities where students from different countries get their education. Is this not proof of the cultural unifying function of education? I strongly believe it is! People’s aspiration to explore the mysteries of other cultures serves as an argument in favor of a universal culture as a unifying factor of different nationalities. Culture is unifying, and the aforementioned reasons do not provide any confirmation of its divisive nature.

So, culture is what distinguishes people, but it does not necessarily have a divisive nature, as some people may believe. Education, books, state policy—all these are reasons for uniting people of different nationalities and their safe and harmonious Commonwealth.

“Our brighter future lies with our children, who, inspired by our wisdom, will embrace our ideals, carry forward our important endeavors, and pass them on to subsequent generations in a world filled with prosperity. This vision can be realized through heightened awareness and global recognition of the profound significance of culture worldwide.”

In support of the above, as a musician, I can say that there are many national schools of composers from different countries, where there is a centuries-old heritage, traditions and continuity of generations among talented composers, but not all of them have reached the level of world classical music, although we all respect and honor them. At the global level, there are extraordinary individuals, geniuses, who serve as messengers of higher knowledge and through their exceptional art, enlighten and connect us on a profound spiritual level. And that is why we, speaking from such a high platform, which the World Academy of Art and Science has so generously provided us with, must raise themes to a global creative level in order to move towards UNIVERSAL progress.

As someone who works in the Guild of Young Art Creators, I can say that our educational activities are aimed at teaching people of all ages, particularly at a young age, to think creatively, broadly, and peacefully. And, of course, we support them in realizing their fullest potential, opening new horizons for them, and fostering their ability to act collectively for the benefit of people and our planet. We organize interdisciplinary and multi-cultural educational projects and events related to the interaction of different types of art. Additionally, we develop new methods to effectively study and understand our complex and diverse world in its entirety.

Working with like-minded people, we have achieved tangible positive results in this direction. For example, the culture-oriented ArtWay method for learning languages through music has established itself very well. This approach helps reduce the time required for language learning, enhances the retention of acquired knowledge, and provides aesthetic, spiritual, and moral enlightenment.

We are improving all the time and increasingly include international cooperation in our activities. This primarily concerns our cooperation with the MusiCaribe Project International and the International Alliance for Women in Music based in the United States. As part of these initiatives, we managed to implement many valuable educational and cultural projects that only strengthened the mutual understanding, solidarity and consent in the minds of people, as well as human security as a whole.

Our brighter future lies with our children, who, inspired by our wisdom, will embrace our ideals, carry forward our important endeavors, and pass them on to subsequent generations in a world filled with prosperity. This vision can be realized through heightened awareness and global recognition of the profound significance of culture worldwide. At its core, culture is the cultivation of the soul. It gives us the ability to hear, deeply understand and feel each other and the nature around us, returning us to our main purpose—to be here, on this earth, as CREATORS. Art is called to serve this, which from the first educates us, elevates our consciousness, developing our individual and leadership abilities.

Almost all prominent figures, scientists, activists were related to music, and this says something in its favor! For example, Nobel laureates. We need to pay more attention to creative, cultural-educational projects that will be based on the entire cultural heritage of mankind along with modern achievements and innovations. It is necessary to involve people around the world in them, especially young people.

Art, by definition, is a form or a specialized sphere of culture, the functional tasks of which include the intellectual and sensual reflection of being in artistic images. Unlike the scientific method of cognition, which divides the world into separate parts for analytics, the artistic sphere follows the path of a holistic and synthesized display by creating some complex models, where the established accents of the opposition of “good and evil” are placed (that which contributes to unification and understanding).

Art in all its diversity is necessary for mankind, especially in development and education, and music should play a particularly important role in this.

Everything has a wave nature and sound vibrations are the building material of reality. The perfection of the world depends on their harmonies. And in this eternal striving, music is born. The music of our life, our planet, which grows into the sounding of the entire visible and invisible Universe. Albert Einstein’s words: “I see my life in terms of music”, “It occurred to me by intuition, and music was the driving force behind that intuition. My discovery was the result of musical perception.” The more enlightened and elevated the soul is, the more subtle it feels, the closer it is to God and through music it is able to speak with Him... and receive knowledge... and create. Each person is created in the likeness of God and is essentially the Creator from the very beginning. “The vibrations on the air are the breath of God speaking to man’s soul. Music is the language of God. We musicians are as close to God as man can be. We hear his voice, we read his lips, we give birth to the children of God, who sing his praise. That’s what musicians are”, – so Ludwig van Beethoven said.

Music reflects our whole life and all the laws by which it moves.

All children are born musicians, endowed with excellent musical inclinations. This is a scientific fact. Any child, even in his prenatal development, responds to the sound of his mother’s and father’s voices, and after his birth, long before he learns to speak, he reacts to music, its rhythm, melody, tonality, etc. That is why many adults intuitively communicate with children using various sounds and melodic intonations.

But music is not only for pleasure, it is a powerful tool for child development. Engaging with music is a special sensory experience. Scientists have found that there is no separate area in our brain responsible for the perception of music. Therefore, when we study music, both hemispheres of the brain work. When we learn music, we stimulate the activity of a huge number of nerve cells—neurons, as well as establish interneuronal and interhemispheric connections.

Even in antiquity, people knew that the letter and the note are the sisters of education, which are united by sound. In ancient Greece, music was included in the compulsory curriculum. The traditional subjects of the ancient school are rhetoric, dialectics or logic, dance, philosophy, astronomy, where music also takes the main place. According to the ancient Greeks, the seven liberal arts of the “*Artes liberales*” taught the cultivation of a worthy citizen of the polis—mentally, morally and physically developed, striving for perfection in everything.

According to Pythagoras of Samos, music creates the same order and harmony within a person as in the Universe. And Plato believed that music brings harmony to the souls of people and makes them beautiful. The sooner children start learning about art, the better. Music, singing and dance classes have the most beneficial effect on a child’s psychological state, mental activity and physical health. This is the atmosphere of high spirituality, beauty and perfection that is native to the child’s soul, in which he feels happy, free, protected and confident. It creates a fertile ground for his self-expression, creative experiments, improvisations and, as a result, amazing discoveries and achievements. It’s such a joy to know the world through art! Through direct communication with music, he comprehensively develops as a personality, expands his worldview, deepens his intellect, fully reveals his potential, which is the key to successful educational activities throughout all further school and student years, and then successful professional and personal self-realization.

Here are just a few of the qualities and abilities that a child acquires when receiving musical education:

- multilateral intellectual and spiritual development;
- acquisition of ethical skills and aesthetic perception of the world, culture of behavior;
- kindness, emotional responsiveness, calm and peaceful nature;
- figurative, logical and extraordinary thinking;
- spatial and temporal representations;
- high auditory and visual memory;
- control and execution of many tasks simultaneously;
- insight and intuition;
- disciplined manner with increased workability;
- ability to concentrate and relax;
- correction of speech defects, development of articulation and diction;

- good coordination of movement;
- social skills (through collaboration in music-making process, in choral singing and co-creation);
- acquisition of the qualities of a leader;
- the ability to set high goals for oneself and achieve them;
- cultivating positive emotions, attitudes and self-confidence;
- being in harmony with the world and with oneself;
- a spiritual state and a desire to create.

We, adults, those who have already embarked on our own path, must help the child remain a miracle, feel him and guide him to the world of beauty. Then the little man will open his heart, and it will never become callous even during periods of major challenges, he will be filled with noble and high ideas and will be able to create a happy life not only for himself and loved ones, but also make his contribution to improving the life of all mankind. It is especially important to give this main impulse from childhood, maintaining in the child the pure, divine light of his soul throughout his life. This is the main task and responsibility for people.

The arts are a mystery. And music is the highest of all arts. I tell the students from the first lesson: music is vivid; it has a beating heart. Music can speak, it has its own special language, understandable to the soul. Treat music as a friend, listen to it, feel it, and empathize with it and it will tell you a lot. For a child, this attitude to the world is natural. He easily enters into kinship with things, toys, animals and plants, reviving and spiritualizing them. With age, this valuable natural property, unfortunately, hides in the depths of the soul or leaves us forever.

Under what conditions is it possible to awaken the artist in a child? Knowledge and skills are extremely important things, but only as an aid to the most important thing—to encourage the awakening of a Human Being through creativity. Because at the moment of creation only one law acts on us, the paramount law—the law of Love.

By contributing to the spiritual growth of young people through art, especially music—as the highest and most powerful of all arts, together we can make possible the most beneficial, positive and sustainable changes in the life of all society on a global level.

To fully comprehend this vision, children need integrated school subjects where teachers of various specializations talk about the same phenomenon from different perspectives, demonstrating different planes of the same subject of discussion and thereby showing all the multidimensionality and interpenetration of the factors of this phenomenon or historical period, etc. For example, they can talk about what is common between music and physics, poetry, painting, literature, psychology, geometry, chemistry and much more. When students see it in understandable forms, as well as in similar patterns everywhere, the concept of dry theory disappears, knowledge enters into them naturally, deeply and forever.

Thanks to this approach in training, we achieve:

- elimination of information fragmentation, often requiring useless mechanical memorization of the material;
- interpenetration and complementarity of each other's educational disciplines, contributing to a better understanding of the subjects of study;
- single subjects are being replaced by integrated lessons in interdisciplinary synthesis. As a result, children receive logically connected highly variegated knowledge, where everything is collected in a single historical, scientific and cultural layer.

In addition, children freely experiment in practice with the knowledge gained, independently attracting a wide arsenal of tools from various fields to achieve their goals, learn to think outside the box.

Our joint efforts will make possible many transformations in the upbringing and education of children and youth, give them even greater incentive and motivation for the most complete creative personal realization and professional growth.

So, it is precisely culture in the broadest sense of the word, all kinds of art led by music and innovative education based on them, like nothing else, that are capable of intensively stimulating global Sustainable Development:

- to establish a deeper contact, understanding, interpenetration and mutual enrichment of cultures and traditions of peoples by organizing a larger and more diverse number of intercultural events;
- to help build peaceful, inclusive and participatory societies;
- contribute to the improvement of the legal field and public order, ensuring openness and security;
- develop, enrich and transform the education system into a comprehensive, fair, high-quality and accessible for people of all ages and capabilities, making it flexible and responsive to the needs of the modern world;
- actively stimulate the creation of conditions for the growth of innovation, including the development of reliable, environmentally friendly and affordable energy sources for all, as well as sustainable infrastructure and industrialization;
- to balance consumption and production, achieve economic stability in countries, having eradicated hunger, unsanitary conditions and poverty everywhere, and finally resolve the problem of lack of employment opportunities and social inequality;
- to provide a worthy place of work and stable housing for every person, because creative skills and the ability to think flexibly, quickly and innovatively are extremely important and necessary, especially in our time.

So, let's summarize that:

Any of the Sustainable Development Goals—17 Goals to Transform Our World, drafted and adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 can be most effectively achieved by building on culture.

Culture is meant here both as a global heritage and as a culturally oriented inhabitant of our planet, individually and as a whole. In such a broad, all-embracing form, culture creates a “cultural field” that connects us, establishing our harmonious interaction with each other and with the outside world.

If we introduce the catalytic transformative word “culture” into each of the Goals, then thanks to this, each Goal will become closer, which will put into it an even greater energy impulse for progressive movement, and a guaranteed positive charge of success. The word “cultural” here can be interpreted in the broadest sense, including such words as: “reasonable”, “competent”, “intelligent”, “humanistic”. After all, everyone knows paradigms such as “food and drink culture”, “culture of life”, “culture of relationship”, “cultural behavior”, “cultural economics”, “culture of work”, “management culture” and much more. In relation to art, there are also many similar reference concepts and benchmarks: “art of communication”; “art of business”, “art of education”; “art of thinking”; “art of self-expression”, “art of being Human.”

By connecting culture with each of the Goals, we will see how the crucial “fifth element” will be added to it, linking everything together. And it is imperative to build all the concepts and strategies that prioritize the integration of the cultural component within each Goal.

I am absolutely sure that if we urgently activate the work of the Department of Culture in collaboration with all other UN Departments, where culture will serve as a unifying force, facilitating cross-cultural understanding, then we can achieve full success and meet the timelines outlined in the 15-year plan until 2030, which was adopted by all United Nations Member States to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals.

Author's Contact Information

Email: natrojcovscaia@gmail.com