

Guiding Society Through Art and Science

UNESCO Its Purpose and Its Philosophy Part 4

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“The completeness of the resulting control over opinion depends in various ways upon **scientific technique**. Where all children go to school, and all schools are controlled by the government, the authorities can close the minds of the young to everything contrary to official orthodoxy.” – Bertrand Russell, 1952 [1]

As the first Director of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), Sir Julian Sorell Huxley (1887-1975) wrote a paper entitled *UNESCO Its Purpose and Its Philosophy* (1946) [2] in which he outlined his vision for the newly created international organisation (which grew out of the League of Nations’ Institute of Intellectual Co-operation). According to Huxley, the guiding philosophy of UNESCO should be what he termed, World Evolutionary Humanism. [Part 1](#) in this series described this philosophy and its relation to eugenics. The [second article](#) outlined the purpose of UNESCO, which is to mentally prepare the world for global political unification under a single world government. The [previous article](#) described the use of education by UNESCO, as an essential technique of forming the minds of the young as well as the old. This article will examine the importance of the creative arts and sciences in guiding society towards predetermined goals.

Julian Huxley, an evolutionary biologist, humanist, and ardent internationalist held many titles including: Secretary of the Zoological Society of London (1935-42), first president of the British Humanist Association (1963), Vice-President (1937-44) and President (1959-62) of the British Eugenics Society. He was also a founding member of the World Wild Life Fund, coined the term “transhumanism” (as a means of disguising eugenics) and gave two Galton memorial lectures (1936, 1962). Huxley also received many awards including the Darwin Medal of the Royal Society (1956), UNESCO’s Kalinga Prize (1953) and the Special Award of the Lasker Foundation in the category Planned Parenthood – World Population (1959) to name but a few. He is also the Grandson of Thomas Huxley (Darwin’s Bulldog) and brother of author Aldous Huxley.

Guiding Society with the Creative Arts

From *UNESCO Its Purpose and Its Philosophy*:

[*Italicised text* is original emphasis and **bolded text** is added by author.]

“When art is thus unrepresentative or is neglected by **the dominant class or the authorities**, the state of affairs is bad for the community, which lacks the outlet and sounding-board which it ought to have in art, and turns to escapism

or mere entertainment, to the sterile pursuit of the fossil past in place of the living present, or to bad art – cheap, vulgar, inadequate – instead of good. It is bad also for art, which tends to grow in upon itself, to become esoteric, incomprehensible except to the self-chosen clique, devoted to the sterile pursuit of art for art's sake instead of for life's sake, and so rootless that it ceases to have any social function worth mentioning. And, a fortiori, it is bad for the artist.

To remedy this state of affairs, we need to survey the whole problem of the patronage of the arts, most of which is inevitably, if in some ways regrettably, destined to swing over into public patronage by the State or the local community, and out of the hands of the private patron. Public, like private patronage, has its dangers for the artist and for his art; we must try to guard against them. We must study the problem of the young artist – first how he is to keep himself alive before recognition comes, and secondly how he is to be made to feel not only a vital part of his community, but in some degree its mouthpiece. And of course this must go hand in hand with the education of the general public and of the authorities, local and central, to understand the value and significance of art in the life of a society.

We have already pointed out some of the social functions of art. Another exists in the field of public relations. Every country has now woken up to the need, in our complex modern world, of public relations, **which is but a new name for propaganda**, that term which unhappily has grown tarnished through misuse. In a world which must be planned, governments must often assume initiative and leadership; and for this leadership to be effective, the general public must be informed of the problem and of what is in the government's mind. This is the essential function of "public relations" in the modern State. But it is only a few pioneers, like Tallents and Grierson, who have begun to grasp how public relations should be conducted. **Art is necessary as part of the technique, since for most people art alone can effectively express the intangibles, and add the driving force of emotion to the cold facts of information.** "It is the artist alone in whose hands truth becomes impressive." Perhaps especially it is the art of drama which is most essential in bringing life to the issues of everyday life – but that art can, of course, operate elsewhere than on the stage – most notably on the films. Whatever the details, it remains true that one of the social functions of art is to make men feel their destiny, and to obtain a full comprehension, emotional as well as intellectual, of their tasks in life and their role in the community. **Rightfully used, it is one of the essential agencies for mobilising society for action.**

Each of the creative arts has its own special role to play in life. **Music makes the most direct approach to the emotions**, without the intervention of any barrier of language **other than its own**. The visual arts, besides revealing in tangible form the intenser vision or the private imaginings of the artist, have a special role to fill in relation to architecture; and fine architecture has its own role – of giving concrete expression to the pride and the functions of the community, whether city or class or nation (or, let us add, the international community), and of adding much-needed beauty to everyday life, especially in great urban agglomerations. Opera and ballet, each in its special way, symbolises and expresses emotional realities and, as Aristotle said of the drama, **"purges the soul"** of the spectator. Ballet, through its nature, is capable of exerting a strikingly direct and **almost physiological effect on the mind.**" – 54

"[...] Unesco must be careful that creative side of the arts shall not elude it." – 48

"The physical provision of beauty and art must, in the world of to-day, be largely an affair of government, whether central or local. For this, it is necessary that the men and women in charge of public affairs shall be aware of

the value of art to the community. **This value lies** not merely in providing what is often thought of as self-centred or high-brow enjoyment, but **in providing outlets for powerful human impulses, and so avoiding frustrations which are not only a cause of unhappiness, but may contribute to unrest, waste and disorder.**" – 51

"No other United Nations agency deals with the important question of seeing that **the arts are properly and fully applied**[...] Nor is any other agency concerning itself with such important applications of the sciences as the disciplining of the mind to produce so-called mystical experience and other high degree of spiritual satisfaction; or with **the application of psychology to the technique of government**, or to preventing the abuse or the exploitation of democracy." – 28

"[... UNESCO] should study **the practical applications of science and art as a particular social problem, to discover what are the reasons which prevent, frustrate or distort them, what are the effects of undue speed or undue delay. Such a study should be of considerable help in promoting the technical efficiency of this process** – a problem which will become steadily more pressing with the increase of scientific knowledge and of social complexity. And the third objective, the most difficult though perhaps also the most important, **is to relate the applications of science and art to each other and to a general scale of values, so as to secure a proper amount and rate of application in each field.** If such a task were satisfactorily carried out, and if its findings were acted upon, **this would constitute one of the most important contributions towards discovering and pursuing the desirable direction of human evolution** – in other words, true human welfare." – 28

For more on the desirable direction of human evolution, as envisioned by Huxley, please read the first part of this series entitled: [World Evolutionary Humanism, Eugenics and UNESCO](#).

Scientific Technique

"However, it remains true that the scientific method is by far the most important means at our disposal for increasing the volume of our knowledge, the degree of our understanding, and the extent of our control, of objective phenomena; and further that the consequence of discovery in natural science may produce changes in human society (including often changes in our scale of values) greater than those brought about by any other means." – 35

"The scientific method has firmly established itself as the only reliable means by which we can increase both our knowledge of and our control over objective natural phenomena. **It is now being increasingly applied, though with modifications made necessary by the different nature of the raw material, to the study of man and his ways and works, and in the hands of the social sciences is likely to produce an increase in our knowledge of and control over the phenomena of human and social life,** almost as remarkable as that which in the hands of the natural sciences it has brought about and is still bringing about in regard to the rest of nature" – 34

For more on scientific technique please read this article entitled: [Scientific Technique and the Concentration of Power](#).

Conclusion

The [final article](#) in this series outlines UNESCO's use of the mass media and other forms of communication in pursuit of its goals.

[1] Quote from page 58 of Bertrand Russell, *The Impact of Science on Society* (1952). ISBN0-415-10906-X

[2] Quotes from Julian Huxley, *UNESCO Its Purpose and Its Philosophy* (1946). Preparatory Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. [pdf from UNESCO](#).

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