



The Secrets of Culture

D. Paul Schafer

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Humanity's future depends on the adoption of culture as the central organizing principle of society.

Decades of investigation, reflection and research have led cultural scholar Paul Schafer to this conclusion.

Originally trained as an economist, Schafer came to realize that, despite all its benefits, the current "economic age" must soon give way to a new "age of culture" that places the highest priority on people and the natural environment, rather than materialism and the marketplace.

The Secrets of Culture describes Schafer's personal and professional journey toward this crucial conclusion.

Beginning with a lively account of his education in the arts as a child, Schafer discusses his academic training as an economist and how he came to realize that economics, however important and influential it might be, was in itself insufficient to serve as the sole framework for society.

Schafer argues that culture as a concept, as well as individual cultures, must now become the centrepiece of human development if the substantial gains of the current economic age are not to be lost in environmental and civilizational collapse. Only if the focus is on the development of the potential of all the world's cultures and peoples does humanity stand a chance of moving beyond its present Time of Troubles to a more fulfilling future.

The past several decades have seen the concept of culture achieve ever greater prominence throughout the world, culminating in "culture" being named Merriam-Webster's "Word of the Year" in 2014 because of its importance in both public and private discourse. *The Secrets of Culture* paints a compelling portrait of the new world that awaits us, while also providing revealing insights into Canadian and global cultural policy and development as Schafer recounts his many and varied experiences as a teacher, writer, policymaker, and futurist. The result is a book that is not only enlightening but also entertaining and intriguing.

As one ages, it becomes plain that only a few books are truly 'life changing.' ***The Secrets of Culture*** is one of these books. The book shifts one's values, behaviour, and ways of seeing and understanding the world. It demands a veritable realization that everything in a lifetime of experience should be re-examined and re-assessed. Paul Schafer has been a major force on the global and Canadian cultural scene for decades. His preparation in the arts in his childhood placed him in an ideal position to understand why culture is so essential to people and countries in all parts of the world and the world as a whole, as well as how it transformed his own life and soul. We travel with Schafer as he leaves economics and march with him as he seeks an articulation of culture that will convince his readers ... that they have a responsibility to move beyond the notion that culture is entertainment and address the full potential of culture as it relates to the very survival of the human species. --**Walter Pitman, former MP, MPP, and President of Ryerson University**

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