

Overall, this is not a very encouraging picture. The contribution to the first and second levels should ensure that there will always be mass support for simple forms of lighting but the failure to be an essential component in the next levels suggests that attempts to develop mass aesthetic appreciation of lighting will meet with limited success. The one ray of hope in all this is a growth in our understanding of how exposure to light influences human health. The concern with health operates at the first or second level and so could generate mass support for developments in lighting practice.

The other possibility for mass support is to form an alliance with the groups who are concerned with the consequences of lighting rather than lighting itself. This increases the number of people for whom lighting operates at the third level. In a sense, lighting practitioners should be flattered by the attentions of these other groups. It means that like war and generals, lighting has become too important to be left to lighting practitioners alone. Further, using emerging technologies and knowledge to meet the desires of groups concerned with sustainability and light pollution represents an opportunity for lighting practitioners to demonstrate added value. Of course, such a course of action will require compromises from all parties but surely it is better to use our wits to work together rather than to defend the indefensible.

So, how will lighting evolve? There will always be a niche market for sophisticated lighting, but for the bulk of lighting practice, the answer is one of two directions. In one direction the prospect is of lighting as a commodity driven solely by price with a limited range of standard equipment and designs. In the other the prospect is of a more sophisticated approach in which new technology, new understanding and new objectives combine to produce lighting better suited to the needs and concerns of mankind in the 21st century. Which of these directions lighting moves in will depend on the willingness of lighting practitioners to take advantage of new knowledge and technology and to cooperate with rather than confront apparently conflicting interests.