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Nature, Freedom and Pedagogy-A Comparative Analysis of Rousseau and Tagore

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Introduction- Naturalism, the philosophy of Nature which subordinates mind and spirit to matter denies belief in the Supernatural and the Spiritual. While Idealism idolizes the 'Mind' or the 'Self', Naturalism emphasizes 'matter' and the physical world. Unlike the Idealists' claim substantiating that "God alone is the true agreement of concept [*Begriff]* and reality [*Realität*]; all finite [*endlichen*] things involve some untruth [*Unwahrheit*], they have a concept and an existence [*Existenz*] which are incommensurable"[1], the Naturalists say that the ultimate reality is 'matter' which manifests itself in the form of 'Nature'. According to this philosophy 'the material world' or 'the physical world' or 'Nature' is the only real world that can be comprehended through human senses and unfurled through scientific investigations. 'Atom', 'Empty' space and 'Motion' are the three postulates on the basis of which the entire Nature and the phenomena of the Universe can be explained. As Ernest Hocking writes:

> Naturalism denies the existence of anything beyond nature, behind nature and other than nature such as supernatural or other-worldly. If they are asked what causes nature? their answer is Nature is the total system of causes.

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Nature, Freedom and Pedagogy- A Comparative Analysis of Rousseau and Tagore

Dr. Ayanita Banerjee

In Fond Memory of Tagore's 160th Birth Anniversary.

Introduction

One impulse from the vernal wood,
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Then all the sages can. [1]

Naturalism, the philosophy of Nature which subordinates mind and spirit to matter denies belief in the Supernatural and the Spiritual. While Idealism idolizes the 'Mind' or the 'Self', Naturalism emphasizes 'matter' and the physical world. Unlike the Idealists' claim substantiating that "God alone is the true agreement of concept [*Begriff]* and reality [*Realität*]; all finite [*endlichen*] things involve some untruth [*Unwahrheit*], they have a concept and an existence [*Existenz*] which are incommensurable"[2], the Naturalists say that the ultimate reality is 'matter' which manifests itself in the form of 'Nature'. According to this philosophy 'the material world' or 'the physical world' or 'Nature' is the only real world that can be comprehended through human senses and unfurled through scientific investigations. 'Atom', 'Empty' space and 'Motion' are the three postulates on the basis of which the entire Nature and the phenomena of the Universe can be explained. As Ernest Hocking writes:

> Naturalism denies the existence of anything beyond nature, behind nature and other than nature such as supernatural or other-worldly. If they are asked what causes nature? their answer is Nature is the total system of causes.[3]

Naturalism refutes illusory concepts like 'insight', 'intuition', 'divine inspiration' 'revelation', 'strength of prayer', 'power of soul' misleading the human mind. Experiences, imagination, thinking, reasoning are the processes of mental activity that can be studied through senses They do not consider human knowledge as something transcendental or spiritual, but as something empirical and experimental. The physical world is 'objective'; 'factual' and 'primary'; the natural laws are sufficient to explain the reality. Naturalists believe that both Reality and Nature are identical and beyond Nature there is no reality. To authenticate the *Theory of Reality* we need to concentrate first on the *Naturalist's Theory of Knowledge.* Francis Bacon initially advocated that by viewing Nature in its virgin form and by accumulating observations one by one, man builds up the knowledge of the world. This acquired knowledge is more dependable and useful than knowledge deduced from generalities., Hobbes, in this regard propounded his postulations on the 'sense impression' or 'phantasm developed through human-nature interaction:

> The Object, or Something flowing from it, preſſeth the outermoſt part of the Organ, and that Preſſure is communicated to the innermoſt Parts of the Organ; where, by the Reaction of the Organ, cauſing a Preſſure outwards contrary to the Pressure of the Object inwards, there is made up a Phantaſm or Image: which is the Sensation itself. [4]

It is this photographic reconstruction of sensation according to which objects yield replica of themselves in the mind of the onlooker.

Naturalists, thoroughly de-cry their faith in spiritual values. On the contrary, they believe that values can only be re-sacralized in proportion to the harmonizing life with Nature, bestowing peace of mind and goodness of soul. In other words, the *summum bonum* or the 'highest good' for the Naturalists defines the most abiding and refined pleasure. The Naturalists earnestly believe that by living in accordance to Nature is the best form for the 'interpretation and inspiration of life' echoing their unified motto 'Follow Nature'.

Naturalism, is not a modern philosophy with its inception traced back to the earliest history of Western Philosophy. Philosophy in the West, was supposed to have initiated with 'wonder.' Man wondered about the phenomenon of his existence. An attempt was made to search the residual permanent substance that underlies all changes in the environment. Thales of Miletus, the Father of Western Philosophy in the 6th century stated that water is the single common substance within Nature. Likewise, Anaximander and Anaximences in

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[1] Wordsworth, William. Intro. *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*. By John Morley. London: Macmillan &Co., 1888. Poem - 24. Print.
[2] Hegel, G.W.F. *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Trans. Humphrey Palmer. London: OUP, 1971 Vol-1, Note- 2:24. Print.
[3] Hocking, William Ernest. *Types of Philosophy* .New-York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959. 25. Print.
[4] Clarke, Samuel. "A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God" in *The Works of Samuel Clarke, D.D,…Late Rector of St. James's Westminster…containing sermons on several subjects: with a preface giving some account of the life, writings and character of the late rector of the author*. London: John and Paul Knapton, 1738.561. Print.

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alliance with Thales explained Reality in terms of one substance found in Nature. For Anaximences it was air, but for Anaximander it was some un-named underlying substances which constituted the essence of Reality. Likewise in ancient India there were some famous philosophers of Naturalism such as Charvak and Brihaspati who were considered the inceptors of Indian Naturalism. However, in Medieval period no significant Naturalists prospered since religion had a wide influence upon thinkers. During the latter part of the 17th C and the beginning of the 18th C lifeless formalism prevailed in religion, literature, education, thought, action and morals. The societal norms degenerated and oppressive influence of monarchs, absolutism in politics and authority of the church tortured the people. There was rampant outspread of hypocrisy, cynical skepticism and displeasure. Artificialities reigned supreme. Revolt movements such as Reformation, Realism, Puritanism and Pietism sprang up challenging the authority of dogma and absolutism in social and religious life. In midst of this dark and deplorable social and political state of life philosophers like Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesque took up leadership to fight against all sorts of absolutism in government, artificial social constitutions, economic and educational conditions. In protest they started the Naturalistic Movement. Rousseau was the pioneer of the campaign. In the opening section of his *Social Contract,* rebelling against formalism and artificiality of the French society Rousseau stated that "Man is born-free, and everywhere he is in chains."[5] His belief as stated in the Foxley translation quotes that "Everything is good as it comes from the hands of the Maker of the world but degenerates once it gets into the hands of man."[6] He wanted to replace and rejuvenate the old, traditional and artificial civilization by a natural civilization. He protested "against all established systems that have become stereotyped and always plead[ed] for greater simplicity seeking to banish sophistication by sweeping paraphernalia."[7] According to Bayles, Rousseau preached natural life and his Naturalistic Philosophy aimed at protecting man from "his artificial -made surroundings-science and civilization."[8] Instead of an educated man being guided by societal norms[9], Rousseau desired for a child to have no other guide than his own reason so that "his innate tendencies would have the opportunity to grow and unfold in accordance with his own nature."[10] Pounds stated that "Rousseau emphasized the necessity for the child to be free to develop according to his own natural impulses."[11] In the Foxley translation of *Ėmile* we find a plea for the rights of children to be children, not miniature adults:

> Nature would have them children before they are men. If we try to invert this order we shall produce a forced fruit, immature and flavorless fruit which will be rotten before it is ripe; we shall have young doctors and old children.[12]

Rousseau assigned the job of protector to education, but believed that in order to be
suited for this task education has to be radically different from that of his generation.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau preferring to take the risk of presenting himself as a 'man of paradoxes' rather than remaining a 'man of prejudices' confronted the historians of educational thought with a considerable paradox. In the 18th century Rousseau launched a bitter offensive against all traditional forms of formal education practically killed by the oppressive weight of tradition, stern discipline and colourless pages of dry curriculum. Rousseau pleaded that

> what is to be thought of the cruel education sacrifices the present to an uncertain future, and burdens a child with all sorts of restrictions and begins to make him miserable, in order to prepare him for some far-off happiness which he may never enjoy.[13]

The educational institutions were regarded as the instruments of a vast process of manipulation designed to entrench the power of the strongest. Rousseau violently reacted against this system of education that produced men of cold reason and made learning machines of children. The indictment contained within him continued to influence the thinking of the Western thinkers' right from the beginning. The work that indisputably had the deepest and most lasting impact on teaching methods is his *Émile*. In the words of Pestalozzi, the book had been a focal point of development in both the Old and the New Worlds in matters of education. The book was written in total

[5] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Basic Political Writings.* Trans. Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987. 141. Print.
[6] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Ėmile or on Education by Jean-Jacques Rousseau*.Trans. Barbare Foxley. New - York: E. P. Duttson & Co., 1911. 57. Print.
[7]---. *Basic Political Writings.* Trans. Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987.145. Print.
[8] Bayles, Ernest E. and Hood, Bruce L. *Growth of American Educational Thought and Practice*. New-York: Harper & Row, 1966. 82. Print.
[9] Rousseau, Jean- Jacques. *Ėmile or on Education by Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. Trans. Barbare Foxley. New York: E. P. Duttson & Co., 1911.35. Print.
"Dependence on things being non-moral is not prejudicial to freedom and engenders novices: dependence on men being capricious engenders them all. The only cure for this evil society would be to put the law in place of the individual, and to arm the general will with a real power that made it superior to every individual will."
[10] Ibid. 82. Print.
[11] Pounds, Ralph L. *The Development of Education in Western Culture*. New-York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, 1968. 176. Print.
[12] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Ėmile by Jean Jacques Rousseau*. Trans. Barbare Foxley New York: E. P. Duttson & Co., 1911. 54. Print.
[13]Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Ėmile by Jean Jacques Rousseau*. Trans. Barbare Foxley New York: E.P. Duttson & Co., 1911.54. Print.

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> the work of the *Ėmile* was by necessity primarily and destructive and it performed a great service in cleaning the ground of much educational rubbish preparatory to laying a new foundation….It is so full of suggestiveness concerning the aims, context and process of education as to be the starting point of a new education.[14]

The stroke of Rousseau's originality perceived education as the new form of a world seeking to cast man in a new-mould, driven by his immediate interests and neither by instruction or formal education. Freedom and necessity, heart and head, the individual and the state, knowledge and experience, each of the terms of the antinomy finds sustenance in this work. It is here that with *Èmile* as the starting point, the major current constituting the history of the modern pedagogical movement begins. Emile, the paradigmatic child of nature's education, is from his earliest days and as far as possible exercised in *self-sufficiency*. He is independent from others and can learn what is immediately around him without being disturbed. "Rousseau's belief in Nature and the right of the child to grow untrammeled by society"[15] foreshadowed his focus on the three axes designated by the triad-*Heart, Head and Hand*. He emphasized on the continuation of immediate learning by the natural interests of the child and not by the offerings of situations. Braun commenting on Rousseau's impact on education states that

> the spirit of Rousseau may have been interpreted variously over the years, but certainly *Ėmile* has had an incalculable impact on education.[16]

In the move towards greater freedom and development of creative individuality, Rousseau's doctrine undoubtedly created a deep-rooted impact. His educational theory prophecised the earnest need of Nature to take its natural course and protect the child from the well-meaning adults and the vices of the society.

Educational thoughts of Tagore combine many elements found in Rousseau. Tagore was much acquainted with Rousseau's educational philosophy, as on March 4, 1921, he gave a talk about his school at the Jean-Jacques Institute in Geneva which was "perhaps a graceful, albeit indirect, way of paying tribute to the great Genevan world citizen."[17]Rousseau, who was a political and social philosopher had a poetic way of viewing Man and Nature and their 'intimate kinship'. Tagore had much in common with Rousseau on this aspect, as both of them considered Nature as a great friend, an ornate philosopher and a traditional guide. Nature's love was a common feeling shared by both Tagore and Rousseau, and both of them excelled in the profundity of their communion with it and its application in the field of education.

Rousseau stated that the "progress of education is bound to the order of nature and not to the will of education."[18] Apart from Nature there is no need for educational will[19] i.e., the intentions of educators that define the future of the child. Nature is timeless, thus "education can happen without a framework of future, provided that the ways of education will not contradict nature.[20] Only this will grant that education does not "agir au hazard"[21] -acting by chance. Educational will is not only too weak; it is too corrupt to be really put into nature's route.[22] Education is not habituation; the only habit a child should fall into is the habit of not accepting habits.[23] He explains that the child should form no habits so as to "[p]repare him early for the enjoyment of liberty and the exercise of his powers.[24] Rousseau granted that the self-development of the child is driven by "immediate interests"[25] and neither by instruction nor by formal education. The otherwise strange idea that reading books is "the whip (*le fléau*) of childhood"[26] becomes very suggestive if it is taken in harmony with what Rousseau states as the 'order of nature.' Rousseau nowhere defines 'nature' or 'natural',[27] but it is clear that the idea of habit free spontaneity driven by disdain of all educational practices. Stephen Duggan states that:

[14] Duggan, Stephen. *A Student's Textbook in the History of Education.* New-York: Appleton-Century Co., 1936. 214. Print.

[15] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Èmile by Jean Jacques Rousseau*. Trans. Barbare Foxley New York: E. P. Duttson & Co., 1911. 43. Print.

[16] Braun, Samuel .J, and Edwards, Esther P. *History and Theory of Early Childhood Education*. Washington, Ohio: Charles A. Jones Pub Co., 1972. 43. Print.

[17] Radhakrishnan, S. "Tagore, as Poet Educator" in *Rabindranath Tagore: A Centenary, Volumes, 1861-1961*. New-Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1961. 205- 10. Print.

[18] Rousseau, Jean -Jacques. *Oeuvres Complétes.* Ed. par B. GANGNEBIN/M.RAYMOND.T.IV: *Émile. Education-Morale -Botanique.* Paris: Gallimard. (*O.C.*IV/311). Print.

[19] Ravier, A. L'éducation de l' homme nouveau. Essai Historique et Critique sur le Livre de l'Ėmile de J.-J. Rousseau. Tome I/ II. Issoudun: Editions Spes.1941. Vol-II/S.508f. Print.

[20] Rousseau, Jean -Jacques. *Oeuvres Complétes*. Ed. par B. GANGNEBIN/M.RAYMOND.T.IV: *Émile. Education-Morale -Botanique*. Paris: Gallimard. (*O.C.*IV/312). Print. "*La nature a, pour fortifier le corps et le faire croitre, des moyens qu'on ne doit jamais contraire*." (*O.C.*IV/312). Print.

[21] Ibid. 324 - 325. Print.

[22] Ibid. 290. Print.

[23] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Oeuvres Complétes*. Ed. par B. GANGNEBIN/M.RAYMOND.T.IV: *Émile. Education-Morale-Botanique*. Paris: Gallimard. (*O.C.*IV/312). Print. "*La nature a, pour fortifier le corps et le faire croitre, des moyens qu'on ne doit jamais contraire*." (*O.C.*IV/282). "*La seule habitude qu'on doit laisser prendre á l' enfant est de n'en contracter aucine.*" (*O.C.*IV/282). "Contracter" *is taking and accepting*.

[24] Ibid. 80. Print.

[25] Ibid. 358. Print.

[26] Rousseau, Jean -Jacques. *Oeuvres Complétes*. Ed. par B. GANGNEBIN/M.RAYMOND.T.IV: *Émile. Education-Morale -Botanique*. Paris: Gallimard. (*O.C.*IV/312). Print. "*La nature a, pour fortifier le corps et le faire croitre, des moyens qu'on ne doit jamais contraire*." (*O.C.*IV/357). Print.

[27] Both terms were established within discourses of education long before Rousseau. (Mercier 1961). Rousseau used and sharpened the common meaning, so it was not ROUSSEAU who "discovered" natural education.

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"natural interests"[28] fascinated him and his followers' thoroughly. He contends that a child can attain his freedom and independence of thought through Naturalistic Education. The child-grown-man with his developed reason learns to heed his natural inclinations and ignore the ills of society. As one scholar puts it:

> Education [for Rousseau] must conform to nature, and must be a means of not preparing for citizenship in any particular government, much less for an occupation, but of developing manhood and fitting for the duties of human life.[29]

The love of beauty and colour which Tagore entertained was an inborn instinct in his native being. Drawing upon his own experiences he argued that education should seek to develop sensitivity in a child through a direct experience of Nature when her/his consciousness is at its freshest level. Tagore stated that:

> children are the lovers of dust-their body and mind thirst for sunlight and air as flowers do. Their active subconscious mind, like the tree, has the power to gather food from surrounding atmosphere.[30]

Nature, present in ample, diverse and beautiful measure takes charge of human children and nourishes them in their all-round development. In his *Reminiscences*, Tagore writes

> children are to be allowed to run and play about and satisfy their curiosity in nature. Insoluble problems are created if [we] try to confine them inside, keep them still or hamper their play.[31]

He therefore recognizes early childhood education as the most critical time for developing empathy and the ability to connect with one's surroundings. Dr. Weir, a well-known British educationalist wrote in *The Pall Mall Gazette* that:

> real education does not consist, in merely, acquainting oneself with ancient or modern books. It consists in the habits which one knowingly or unknowingly imbibes from the atmosphere, one's surroundings and the company one keeps.[32]

Rousseau in *Ėmile* has said:

> education comes from nature, from men or from things. The inner growth of our organs and faculties is the education of nature, the use we learn to make of our growth is the education of men, what we gain by our experience of our surroundings is the education of things.[33]

The acquired knowledge "does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence."[34] Thus while Weir makes "atmosphere" the source of education, Rousseau and Tagore emphasize the mutual relation nurtured between education and Nature. The educational ideology based on the Natural phenomenon aiming to explore the co-relation between education and especially the natural features of the place in question is termed as the *Green Education*. Evidently education and Nature are inseparably related to each other. Every human being acquires knowledge through the various experiences of "nature." Even mere passive observation of Nature imparts us with a kind of 'informal learning.' The emotional attachment and commitment to a place thus influence a "person's experience and shape his personhood, inspiring him to live and prosper ecologically."[35]

Education for Rousseau comes from three sources: "from nature, from men or from things."[36] These three sources must "coincide and lead to a common goal"[37] if the individual is to become well-educated. Not all of the sources educate man in the same manner. Education from Nature acts independently of man's action. Rousseau contends that since man cannot control Nature, the latter should determine the course of the other two in cultivating children. Thus, he justifies Naturalism as a guide to education. The essence of his teaching recifies "education as a process of natural growth that has influenced most theorizing upon the educational ideology since his time."[38] In 1915, Dewey stated that Rousseau's theory of "natural growth" was read with the eyes of protagonists of child-centered education:

> The child is best prepared for life as an adult by experiencing in childhood what has meaning to him as a child; and further, the child has a right to enjoy his childhood. Because he is a growing animal who must develop so as to live successfully, in the grown up world, nothing should be done to *interfere with growth* and everything should be done to further *the full and free-development* of his body and his mind.[39]

Like Rousseau, Tagore's fascination for Nature was deeply rooted in his poetic heart and it was circumscribed positively in the field of education. Nature's love was a common feeling with Tagore and

[28] Rousseau, Jean -Jacques. *Oeuvres Complétes*. Ed. par B. GANGNEBIN/M.RAYMOND.T. IV: *Ėmile. Education-Morale -Botanique*. Paris: Gallimard. (*O.C.*IV/358). Print.
[29] Graves, Frank Pierrepont. *Great Educators of Three Centuries*. New-York: Macmillan, 1912. 87. Print.
[30] Tagore, Rabindranath. "A Poet's School" in *Visva-Bharati Bulletin*. No-9(1928):18. Print.
[31] Sen, Probodh Chandra, ed. "Education" in *Rabindra Rachanabali*. (The Collected Works of Tagore). Calcutta: West Bengal Government, 1961. Vol-11:569. Print.
[32] Dr. Weir. *The Pall Mall Gazette* (May 18, 1999): 24. Print.
[33] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Ėmile or on Education by Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. Trans. Barbare Foxley. New-York: E. P. Duttson & Co., 1911. Par.25. Print
[34] Tagore, Rabindranath. *Personality*. Delhi: Macmillan India, 1980.116-117.Print.
[35] Selvamony, Nirmal. "Education through the Environment" in *Peace Education* II 3(1989): 41-44; *Madras Christian College Magazine*. LV (1988-89): 46-49. Print.
[36] Rousseau, Jean- Jacques. *The Ėmile of Jean Jacques Rousseau*. Trans. William Boyd. York: Columbia UP, 1965. 11. Print.
[37] Ibid.11. Print.
[38] Dewey, J/Dewey, E. Intro. "Schools of To-Morrow" in *The Middle Works of John Dewey.1899-1924. Vol.8: Essays on Education and Politics*. Ed. J. A. Boydston, By S. Hook. Carbondale/Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985. 222. Print.
[39] Rousseau, Jean- Jacques. *Ėmile, Julie and Other Writings*. Ed. R. L. Archer. New-York: Barron, 1964. 80.

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Rousseau, but Tagore excelled him in the profundity with its application in the field of education. He envisaged a type of education through 'stimulating atmosphere' breathed in an intellectual attempt, saturated with wisdom and values. Education, for Tagore was not a material to be poured into the mind of the child from without, but a continuous growth of the inner self: "the conscious process of filling but the subconscious process of absorption."[40] Real and permanent knowledge infiltrates the mind of a child through his enjoyment of absolute and unrestricted freedom in nature. Tagore attached much importance to the *free -development* of children in their early formative years. He eloquently advocated their free spontaneous movements and play in joyous natural surroundings:

> even if they learnt nothing, they would have had ample time for play, climbing trees, diving into ponds, plucking and tearing flowers, perpetuating thousand and one mischief on Mother Nature. In this they obtain the nourishment of the body, happiness of the mind and the satisfaction of the natural impulses of childhood.[41]

Nature, the source of unparallel inspiration and timeless revelation guides the child with his first lessons of freedom, enthralls him with a sense of immense delight. Freedom nurtured amidst benevolent magnanimity of Nature is highly educative. The process of acquiring knowledge from Nature's bounty is essentially a life of joyful spontaneity for the children. For them "nature is more important than rules and methods, building appliances, class teaching and text-books."[42] Further developing the theme of education, Tagore speaks of the desirability of direct experience in Nature which should remain unimpeded by excessive book reading:

> Have not our book, like most of our necessities come in between us and our world……At any rate during the early period of education, children should come to their lesson of truth through natural processes-directly through persons and things.[43]

Thus, the greatest gift of children, he writes is that they are able to come directly to the intimacy of Nature with the freshness of their senses and "they accept it naked and simple and must never lose their communion with it."[44]

Real education should therefore necessarily facilitate the understanding of one's immediate environment, enabling one to live in one's own atmosphere. The objectives of such education are not human centered, but more inclusive. It inspires a 'deep ecological' sense of "identification which goes beyond humanity to include the non-human world."[45] This maturity implies the ability to relate to the immediate environment shedding the nature/culture dichotomy and corresponding values. A person attains full maturity when he/she realizes "self-in-Self" where "Self" stands for "organic wholeness and union with nature."[46] This process of the full unfolding of the Self can also be summarized by the phrase:

> No one is saved until we are 'all saved', where the phrase 'one' includes not only…….an individual human, but all humans-whales, grizzly bears, whole rainforest ecosystems, mountains and rivers, the tiniest microbes in the soil and so on.[47]

Tagore's educational philosophy aiming to promote this ontological realization that all life is inter-related reaffirms the ideology of 'bio-centric equality.'

The Naturalists base the principles of progressive education mainly on the theory of Human-Nature interaction, for which they have profound reverence. Nature, provides them the interpretation and inspiration of life. It is therefore essential that the education of a child must accord with his environment. Unlike the Idealists propagating that mind is the only source of knowledge, the Naturalists declare that "knowledge is omnipresent in nature and can be comprehended through senses." Senses are the gateways of knowledge, and the importance of their training has been recognized by both Rousseau and Tagore. Modern principles of early childhood education stress the involvement of the child in an activity based curriculum through the apt use of the senses. Rousseau argues that children should "learn through their senses, through investigating and exploring the natural world."[48] If the educators let the child always be himself attending only what touches him immediately, only then they will find the child learning, capable of perceiving, memorizing and even reasoning:

> *Pour mon élêve, ou plûstôt [49] celui de la nature, exercé de bonne heure à se suffire à Luimêne autant qu'ilest possible, il ne s' accountume point à recourir sans cesse aux autres, encore moins à leur étaler son, grand savoir. En revanche il*

[40] Taneja, V.R. *Educational Thought and Practice.* New-Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1985.6th Edition.152.

[41] Tagore, Rabindranath. *Rabindranath Tagore: A Centenary Volume. 1861-1961.*Ed. Sisir Kumar Das. New-Delhi: Sahitya Academy Press, 1961.253-255. Print.

[42] Tagore,Rabindranath."A Poet's School" in *Visva-Bharati Bulletin*. No-9 (1928):18. Print.

[43] Tagore, Rabindranath. "The Teacher" in *The Religion of Man*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1931. 178- 179. Print.

[44] Ibid. 173. Print.

[45] Bill, Devall and George Sessions. *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*. Salt Lake City: Utah Perigrine, 1985. 67. Print.

[46] Ibid. 67.Print.

[48] Ibid. 67. Print.

[48] Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *The Ėmile of Jean- Jacques Rousseau*. Trans. William Boyd. York: Columbia University Press, 1965. Print.
Rousseau contends that this education is best for children on the basis of empiricism: "Since everything that enters into the human understanding comes through the senses, the first reaction of man is a reason of the senses. On this the intellectual reason is based. Our first masters of philosophy are our feet, our hands and our eyes."

[49] The *Edition Pleiade* of Rousseau's Work does not eliminate grammatical mistakes.

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juge, il prévoit, il raisone en tout ce qui se rapporte immédiatement à lui.[50]

John Amos Comenius in a translation of the *Great Didactic* "General Postulates of Teaching and Learning" stated that:

> whatever makes an impression on the organ of sight, hearing, smell, taste or touch stands in the relation of a seal by which the image of an object is impressed upon the brain.[51]

Comenius advocated learning through the senses, which we in modern context interpret as learning through experience. The 'activity method' of learning aims at making the child a technician in charge of his own knowledge and training-through-work experiments. To ensure the fulfillment of this requirement courses are to be structured as an educational project that is both explicit and explained to the child. Instructions are to be mediated through the 'necessity of things', beyond the reach of man's will before he is exposed to them.

Both Rousseau and Tagore reflect ideological resemblance to Comenius's theology. They proclaimed the need of unrestricted freedom to reconstitute the academic curriculum of a child from his environmental situations, and not merely gather knowledge through compartmentalized subjects. Tagore developed a suitable curriculum for his educational plan. He was dissatisfied with the existing curriculum, as he saw it was purely academic and lacked direction to attention to the needs of the child. Like Rousseau, he too thought that the prevailing educational framework dismissed the natural interests, likes and dislikes of the child. It was a mere imposition on the tender brains of the child. Tagore's task was to devise a suitable curriculum for school children by giving it an entirely new orientation. Education must aim at a harmonious coalesce between nature and balance between different subjects of study. Comenius believed that "acquisition of knowledge is essentially based on building understanding of what his senses contact."[52] Tagore's idea of peripatetic education thus bears a reflection to this point. Knowledge acquired in due course will be real and the process of acquiring it will be enlivening. He strongly recommended excursions and tours forming an inseparable part of school curriculum. He suggested that during "frequent excursions and tours the pupils with their senses might observe and learn numerous facts of interests."[53] This galvanizes their spirit of curiosity inspiring them with a feeling of joy in discovery by themselves. Tagore admits that education "divorced from the streams of life and confined within the four walls of the classroom becomes artificial and loses its value."[54] He advocated undertaking free and independent activities like gardening, regional study, laboratory work, drawing, original composition, with co-curricular activities like games, social-service, student-self art. Tagore sought out to work out a system that would give due consideration to the inherent tendencies and potentialities of the child by devising activities that would gradually shape his personality. He considered education as a continuous social process to be linked with the economic and social life of the community. His school resembled a miniature community where sense training, face-to face communion with nature, channelizing of emotions and discovering the spiritual and creative base of the child remained an integral aspect of education. Tagore supported the cause of the total development of a child under the benevolent tutelage of nature. The ideas of respect for the child, dignity of human personality, love and manual work, love of nature, patriotism and brotherhood of men are the coming legacies that Tagore left for us and for the coming generations in the future times.

We find Tagore's ideas concerning multifaceted intelligence, subconscious learning and the need to educate the affective side of the personality supported in the contemporary writings of Howard Gardner's *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences.* The book delineates multifarious levels of intelligence such as verbal, mathematical-logical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal and intrapsychic. Gardner, like Tagore, argues for a holistic learning environment within which children can achieve mastery of skills in a pleasurable manner suited to their own natural progression. In support of Gardner's work, Daniel Goleman in his *Emotional Intelligence* focuses on the inadequacy of the IQ model to measure overall intelligence and predict successful performance in life. Goleman argues that since emotions are educationally potent in the development of the total personality of an individual, they should be properly guided and suitably trained. The more academic and cognitively oriented subjects are to be added progressively as the child advances. In Tagore's scheme of education, the development of aesthetic senses like poetry, music and arts were given high priority to enhance a child's imagination and to integrate the various aspects of his personality. Tagore therefore advocates an educational curriculum that emphasizes the need for the education of intellect (*jnaner siksa*)[55] as well of the senses (*indriyer*

[50] Oelkers, J. Die. "Geschichte deer Pedagogic und hire Problem" in *Zeitchrift für Padägogik*. Lausanne: Editions Payot, 1999. 361. Print.
[51] Keating, M.W. *The Great Didactic of John Amos Comenius*. London, England: A&C Blake, 1921.44-45.Print
[52] Tagore, Rabindranath. "A Poet's School" in *Visva-Bharati Bulletin*. No-9(1928):18. Print.
[53] Sen, Probodh Chandra, ed. "Education" in *Rabindra Rachanabali*. (The Collected Works of Tagore). Calcutta: West Bengal Government, 1961.Vol-11:569. Print.
[54] Ibid.Vol-11:569. Print.
[55] Tagore, Rabindranath. "Tapaban" in *Siksha*. Calcutta: Visva-Bharati University, 1971.96. Print.

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siksa).[56] Such an educational process does not merely give us information but makes our "life in harmony with existence in all its forms, colours, sounds and movements."[57]

In this high-tech world, environment does not get due attention in the academy. Most Western philosophers, except for some environment-oriented ones are highly anthropocentric. Cosmopolitan perspectives have adversely affected the human existence, uprooting the present generation from its environment, particularly natural environment. Tagore was concerned about environment from his early days and created ceremonies to celebrate nature and create ecological awareness. One such ceremony, 'Briksha Ropana', a part of the 'Rain Festival' was introduced in1928. In the course of the ceremony, Tagore planted trees and encouraged each child to adopt a tree. It was in his words "a ceremony of the replenishing of the treasury of the mother by her spendthrift children."[58] In the villages, he celebrated the harvest cycle with Hala-Karshana, a festival celebrating the cultivation of the land and a Harvest Ceremony the 'Nabanna', welcoming the new rice crop.

It is likely that Rabindranath was he living today, would be at the forefront of those trying to save our fragile ecosystem. He would also be writing about the urgency of promoting the educational priorities of creativity, ecological interdependence and survival in our schools. Concerning the environment and the role of science in today's world one feels that Tagore would express the same sentiments as the Canadian environmentalist David Suzuki stating that "education which prepare students for a high-tech future and competition in a global economy misses the fact that we are completely dependent for survival and the quality of our lives on the integrity of the planetary biosphere that we intent on destroying."[59] In conclusion if we pose the question 'does Rousseau's theory of "natural education" and Tagore's 'educational vision' has relevance for the 'modern education', the answer must be an emphatic 'yes.' Both contemporary educators and thinkers equivocally promote Rousseau and Tagore's concern for developing a *Humane Educational Model* (my italics) which extends beyond the narrow bounds of fragmentary bookish knowledge, to the opening doors for creative consciousness and mutuality harmonizing with the principle of biocentric to promote the spirit of reconciliation with all aspects of Nature.

[56] Ibid. 96. Print.
[57] Tagore, Rabindranath. *Creative Unity*. London: Macmillan &Co., 1962. 35. Print.
[58] Mukherjee, Himangshu. *Education for Fulness. A Study of the Educational Thought and Experiment of Rabindranath Tagore.* Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962.235. Print.
[59] Suzuki, David. "*A Buddhist Way to Teach Kids Ecology*" in Toronto Star. (June-18, 2007):C6. Print.

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ABBREVIAT1ONS: E.T. = English translation; A.T. = Another translation;
B. = Bengali original.
The Bengali calendar month and era have been given whenever a Bengali periodical is referred to, or when such dates are found in books under reference.

Bengali

Books and Pamphlets

- *Siksha.* 1315 [1908]. Second enlarged edn, 1342. New edn, Vol. I, 1351.Contents 1351 edn, Vol. I; '*Sikshar Herpher'* (E.T. 'Topsyturvy Education',*The Visva-Bharati Quarterly,* November 1946-January 1947); '*Chhatrader Prati Sambhasan*'*;* '*Siksa-Samskar';* 'Siksa-Samasya'; '*Jatiya Vidyalaya.*'*;* '*Avaran*'*;* '*Tapovan*'; '*Dharmasiksha*' (E.T. 'Notes and Comments', *The Visva- Bharati Quarterly,* October 1923); 'Religious Education', *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly,* November 1935); '*Sikshavidh*'*;* '*Lakshya* O *Siksha; Strisiksha*; '*Sikshar Vahan*' (E.T. 'Medium of Education', *The Modem Review,* October *1917):* '*Chhatra Sasantantra*' (E.T. 'Indian Students and Western Teachers', *The Modem Review,* April 1916); '*Asantosher Karan'; Vidyar Jachai*'*;* '*Vidyasamavaya*'*;* '*Sikshar Milan*' (E.T. 'The Union of Cultures' *The Modem Review* November 1921); '*Visvavidyalayer Rup'; 'Slkshar Vikiran'* (E.T. 'Diffusion of Education', *The Modem Review,* July 1939); '*Siksha O Samskriti*'*;* '*Sikshar Svangikaran*' (E.T. 'Making Education Our Own', *New Education Fellowship* Bulletin no. 1, Santiniketan); '*Asramer Siksha*';'*Chhatra Sambhasan*' (E.T. Address at the Annual Convocation, Calcutta University, 1937).
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- '*Acharyer Abhibhasan*'. Visva-Bharati, 1926. Chairman's Address, Visva- Bharati Varsika Parisat, December 1925. Reprinted from *Santiniketan,* Phalgun, 1332.
- '*Visvavidyalayer Rup*'. Calcutta University, 1933. An address delivered to students and teachers of the University, Reprinted *Siksha* 1351 edn, Vol. I.

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- '*Sribhavan Samvandhe Amar Adarsha*'. *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly,* 1341. E.T. 'My Ideals with Regard to the Sreebhavana' (see list of Books and Pamphlets, English).
- *Praktani.* Asramik Samgha, Santiniketan, December 1936. Reports (6) of addresses to former students of Santiniketan.
- *Chhatra-Sambhasan.* Calcutta University, 1937. Address at the Annual Convocation, Calcutta University, February 1937. E.T. *Address at the Annual Convocation* (see list of Books and Pamphlets, English).
- *Asramer Rup* O *Vikas. The Visva-Bharati Quarterly,* Asadh 1348 [1941]' Visva-BharatiBulletin no. 29. Two Papers on (i) Ideals of an *Asrama* School and (ii) History of the Santiniketan School, (i) being reprinted from *Siksar Dhara,* '*Asramer Siksha*'.
- *Santiniketan Asramer Siksha-Niti.* March 1947. E.T. 'To The Students', *Abridged Syllabus and Recommended Books, Patha-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati* Bulletin no. 19, January 1935.

Text-Books

- *Samskrita Siksha,* Parts 1 & 2. [1896]. Part 2 reprinted in *Rabindra Rachanabali Achalita Samgraha* II.
- *Ingraji Sopan,* Vol. I, introductory chapter and part 1 [1904]. With a note by the author on the use of the book. Introductory chapter revised and reprinted as *Ingraji Srutisiksha* (see below).
- *Ingraji Sopan,* Vol. II, parts 1 & 2. [1906]. With an appreciation by Brajendranath Seal.[60]
- *Ingraji Path,* Vol. I. [1909] 18 lessons. Reprinted *Rabindra Rachanabali Achalita Samgraha* II.
- *Ingraji Srutisiksha.* [1909?] New edition of *Ingraji Sopan,* Vol. I, introductory chapter. With a note by the author for teachers. New edition 1336.
- *Chhutir Pora.** [1909]. A collection of essays, stories, and poems.
- *Patha-Sanchay.* 1319 [1912]. Essays and stories.
- *Vichitra Path.** [1915]. Essays and stories.
- *Anuvad-Charcha,* 1324 [1917], (2) Selected Passages For Translation, [1917]. (1) 224 Passages translated, in collaboration with others, from English into Bengali, for re-translation into English. (2) Original English Passages, to serve as model translations, compiled by Tagore from various sources. The revised edition of (1) is prefaced *by* a long note for teachers.
- *Ingraji Sahaj Siksha,* Vol. I. 1336. Revised edition of *Ingraji Sopan ,* Vol. I part 1.
- *Ingraji Sahaj Siksha,* Vol. II. 1336. Thoroughly revised edition of *Ingraji Sopan*, Vol. II, part 2.
- *Patha-Prachay II*,* III & IV. 1336. Essays, stories, and poems.
- *Sahaj Path I.* 1337. A child's first book: in poetry and prose.
- *Sahaj Path II.* 1337. A child's second book: in poetry and prose,
- *Kuru-Pandav.* 1338. Abridged and adapted from Surendranath Tagore, *Mahabharata.*
- *Adarsa Prasna.* [1940]. Model question papers for examinations held by the Visva-Bharati Loka-*Siksha-Samsad*. For question papers set by Rabindranath Tagore for examinations held in 1906 and 1907 by the National Council of Education, Bengal, see *Calendar* 1906- 08 issued by the Council: reprinted *Rabindra Rachanabali, Achalita Samgraha* II, pp.700-15.
- *Grantha Samalochana. Bharati,* Jaistha 1305. See pp. 185- 7, a review of Hemlata Sarkar's *Bharatvarser Itihas,* a textbook of Indian History; pp. 188-9, a review of Syamacharan De's *Susrusa,* see remarks on education of women.
- *Samayik Sahitya. Bharati,* Asadh 1305. See p. 286, a note on Krisna-bhavini Das's article in *Pradip,* '*Ajkalkar Chhelera*'.
- *Samayik Sahitya. Bharati,* Sravan 1305. See p. 381, a review of *Anjali,* an educational journal.
- *Siksha* O *Samskriti. Vichitra,* Sravan 1342. Reprinted *Siksa* 1342 edn.*Chhatrader Prati. Prabasi,* Agrahayan 1342. An address to students of Visva-Bharati. *Bhasha-Sikshay Sampradayikata. Prabasi,* Paus. Two letters.
- *Siksha* O *Samskriti-te Sangiter Sthan. Prabasi,* Phalgun 1342. Reprinted *Siksha.* E.T. 'The Place of Music in Education and Culture', *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly,* May-October 1937.
- *Siksha. Prabasi,* Asadh 1343. Reprinted *Siksar Dhara; Asramer Rup O Vikas;* chapter i.
- *Visva-Bharati. Prabasi,* Magh 1345. Chairman's Address at t he Annual Meeting of the Visva-Bharati.
- *Bankura-y Chhatra-Der Uddyese. Prabasi,* Vaisakh 1347. To the students of Bankura.
- *Asramer Adana. Prabasi,* Bhadra 1347. An address delivered at Santiniketan.

[1] Brajendranth Seal wrote…. "As far as I know; this is the first book of its kind published in Bengali. It has followed the right principle-men like Otto, Ollendrof and Saner, who have written books of language teaching, have succeeded by following this method to some extent. Bengali will remain forever in debt to your creative genius; you have acted as a pioneer also in the matter of teaching English…" [translated]

*Books marked with an asterisk include some prose pieces by other writers.

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- *Siksha. Prabasi,* Bhadra 1347. A letter to Sri Anathnath Bose.*Chithhipatra. Prabasi,* Asvin 1348. See letter dated 24 Chaitra 1308 to Sri Brajendrakishore Deb Burman.
- *Santiniketan-er Sisu Bibhag. Desh,* 20 Agrahayan 1348. Report of an address to students of Children's Department, Santiniketan, 24 Chaitra 1338.
- *Rabindranath-er Patravali. Desh.* 26 Vaisakh 1349. Letters to Sri Dhirendranath Mukhopadhyaya. See, in particular, letter dated [1920].
- *Rabindranath-er Chithi. Desh,* 23 Sravan 1349. Letters to Sri Bhupendranath Sanyal. See letters dated 10 Asvin and 24 Paus 1314.
- *Rabindranath-er Chithi. Desh,* Puja Number, Asvin 1349. Letters to Sri Bhupendranath Sanyal. See, in particular, letters 2, 20, 22, 30, & 31.
- *Patrabali. Visva-Bharati Patrika,* Agrahayan 1349. A selection of letters to the teachers of the Santiniketan School.
- *Patrabali. Visva-Bharati Patrika,* Magh 1349. See, in particular, letter dated Phalgun 1304 [1904?] addressed to Mohitchandra Sen on the Santiniketan School.
- *Patrabali. Visva-Bharati Patrika,* Chaitra 1349. See, in particular, letter dated 30 Jaistha 1311 (the second one), to Mohitchandra Sen.
- *Rabindranath-er Chithi. Desh,* Puja Number, Asvin 1350. Letters to Santoshchandra Majumdar. See letter 10.
- *Patrabali. Prabasi,* Asvin 1351. See letter dated 23 Vaisakh 1320, addressed to Nepalchandra Roy, 2nd paragraph; same as '*Bilat-er Vidyalay*', *Bharati,* Asvin 1320.
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*Miscellaneous***[61]

- *Sikshar Andolan.* [1905]. An account of the agitation for the introduction of 'National Education' in Bengal during the Swadeshi Movement- in 1905.Compiled by Surendranath Das Gupta and published by Kedarnath Das Gupta. See introduction by Rabindranath Tagore; reprinted *Rabindra Rachanabali* XII, appendix, '*Sikshar Andolaner Bhumika*'. See also reports of Rabindranath's addresses to students, pp.4- 5, 10, 12- 13 , Gha-Chha; reprinted *Rabindra Rachanabali* XII, pp.623-9.
- *Calendar,* 1906- 08. *National Council of Education, Bengal,* 1908.
  See (i) Appendix B, pp. 15- 23, Report of the inaugural ceremony of the Bengal National College and School, 14 August 1906, Srijut Rabindranath Tagore's speech. Also in *Bangadarsan,* Bhadra 1313 and *Bhandar,* Asvin 1313, '*Jatiya Vidyalaya*'. Reprinted *Siksha;* (ii) Appendix E, pp. 4- 7, 25 - 8, 60- 2, 85- 8, Examination Papers, 1906 and 1907, Bengali, set by Rabindranath Tagore. Reprinted *Rabindra Rachanabali Achalita Samgraha* 11, pp. 700-15.
- *Santiniketan* 1- 17. [1909-16]. Philosophical sermons (of which only '*Tapovan*' has been specially mentioned elsewhere in this list) included in these volumes.
- *Russia-R Chithi.* 1338 [1931]. Tagore's letters on Russia, most of which are on educational experiments in Russia. E.T. *Letters from Russia, Visva-Bharati.*
- *Education Naturalised:* in Bengali. *Visva-Bharati,* February 1936, Bulletin 20. See'*Sikshar Svangikaran*' ***[62] a paper read at the Bengal Education Week Conference, Calcutta, February 1936. Reprinted *Sikshar Dhara* and *Siksha,* 1351 edn, Vol. I. E.T. 'Making Education Our Own', *The New Education Fellowship* (Santiniketan) Bulletin no. 1.
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- *Prasad. Asramik Samgha,* Santiniketan, December 1939. A reprint of two essays contributed by Tagore to an earlier volume of the same title, being a

[61]**In the 'Miscellaneous' sections are catalogued such works of Rabindranath Tagore as include only a few items of educational interest, and compilations of essays etc., by various authors, in which the poet's contributions are also included.

[62] ***Includes a letter to the then Education Minister of Bengal urging the necessity of founding examination centres all over the country for those who are not in a position to attend schools and colleges. This suggestion, not taken up by the government or the University, rook shape in the Visva-Bharati Loka-Siksha-Samsad(1938) which holds annual examinations and awards diplomas on the lines suggested by the poet, who wrote *(Visva-parichaya; Bangla Bhasha-parichaya)* and edited *(Bangla Kavya-parichaya)* text-books for these examinations, and framed a set of model questions *(Adarsa Prasna:* see list of text-books).

This list of published writings of Rabindranath Tagore on education does not pretend to be exhaustive. The editor wishes to acknowledge earlier bibliographical works by the late Sri Pulin Bihari Sen, foremost scholar-bibliographer of Tagore's works, the late Nirmalchandra Chattopadhyaya, and Sri Kanai Samanta who pointed out how the views advocated by the whimsical teacher, in a story published in Tagore's *Se,* reflected the poet's own ideas on the subject.

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collection of tributes to Prasad Chatterjee(Mulu), a former student of Santiniketan. See '*Chhatra Mulu*'.
- *Smriti.* 1941? For private circulation only. Letters written to Sri Manoranjan Bandyopadhyaya. See, in particular, pp. 10, 14- 15, 18, 22.

Essays and Letters

- '*Sikshar Herpher*'. *Sadhana,* Paus 1299. A paper read before the Rajshahi Association. Reprinted *Siksha.* E.T. Topsy-turvy Education', *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly,* November 1946-January 1947.
- *Prasanga-Katha.* Includes three letters, supporting views expressed in '*Sikshar Herpher*', from Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Gooroodas Bandhopadhyaya, and A.M. Bose. *Sadhana,* Chaitra 1299. Reprinted *Rabindra Rachanabali* XII notes, pp. 616- 23.

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