

Educational Visions from Two Continents: What Tagore adds to the Deweyan perspective

FRANCIS A. SAMUEL

School of Education, Dowling College, Oakdale, New York

Abstract

In this global village, it is relevant to look at two educational visionaries from two continents, John Dewey and Rabindranath Tagore. Dewey observed that the modern individual was depersonalized by the industrial and commercial culture. He, thus, envisioned a new individual who would find fulfillment in maximum individuality within maximum community, which was embodied in his democratic concept and educational philosophy. Tagore's educational vision was based on India's traditional philosophy of harmony and fullness. It focused on self-realization within the context of international education. This article compares the educational visions of Dewey and Tagore and demonstrates that Tagore's international educational perspective adds to Dewey's concepts of social individual and democracy and that their perspectives have implications for contemporary education.

Keywords: democratic education, Dewey, individual and society, international education, Tagore

The world is flat and the technological advances have flattened it (Friedman, 2005). According to Friedman, with the arrival of computers, broadband connectivity, networks, teleconferencing, and dynamic new software, the world is shrinking and leveling. The global competitive playing field, therefore, is being flattened (Friedman, 2005, pp. 5–8).

This flattened world has become a global village (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990). In this global village, it is relevant to look at two outstanding educators from two important democratic countries in the world—John Dewey from the United States of America and Rabindranath Tagore from India. This article demonstrates that Tagore's international educational perspective complements Dewey's concept of social individual and democracy, and their views help to inform contemporary educational philosophy and practice.

On the ensuing pages, this article looks at the educational visions of Dewey and Tagore. First, it looks at their concepts of the individual and social dimensions of education as reflected in their seminal ideas of democratic and international education;

second, it delineates how their views converge and diverge, as well as complement each other's perspective; and finally, it discusses the implications of their views for today's education.

Dewey's Vision of the Social Individual and Democratic Education

In his book *Individualism Old and New*, Dewey showed how amidst the rapid growth of modern industrialization, the 'novel combination of machine and money' and 'quantification, mechanization and standardization', the individual was lost and depersonalized (Dewey, 1962, pp. 18, 24). Against this submerged and disenfranchised individual, Dewey stressed the importance of an individual in a dialectical relationship to the community.

Dewey emphasized the social nature of the individual: 'Society is a society of individuals and the individual is always a social individual. He has no existence by himself. He lives in, for and by the society, just as society has no existence excepting in and through the individuals who constitute it' (Dewey, 1897, p. 55). Dewey, therefore, stressed the importance of growth of the individual within community—the dialectics of maximum individuality within maximum community. This is best expressed and attained in a democratic society (Dewey, 1888).

Democracy, Dewey believed, expressed the individual and social dimensions of community and its moral foundation. In his article, 'The Ethics of Democracy', Dewey began his argument with the theory of social organism. This theory refuted the idea that human beings were an aggregate bound by social contract. They were not isolated social atoms but intrinsically and morally related to each other. Democracy, he noted, was such an organic relationship. An organism was unified by a common will and was founded on a moral order (Dewey, 1888).

Democracy, according to Dewey, should not be taken in its narrow sense. He remarked: 'It cannot be conceived as a sectarian or racial thing, nor as a consecration of some form of government which has already attained constitutional sanction' (Dewey, 1957, p. 206). Dewey's understanding of democracy is 'more than the American Founding Fathers' ideal of an educated public equipped to influence the machinery of government' (Hansen, 2007, p. 28). It is a way of life. It touches every aspect of human life: family, community, industry, government, school, and church. In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey stated that 'a democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living: of conjoint communicated experience' (Dewey, 1966, p. 87). He also noted: 'Regarded as an idea, democracy is not an alternative to other principles of associated life. It is the idea of community life itself' (Dewey, 1927, p. 148).

For Dewey (1966), education was growth; growth was self-realization through interaction with the environment (Roth, 1962). It involves both the individual and community. It is incorrect to consider growth as mere self-fulfillment in a narrow sense of the term. It is also social. When education fails to achieve social growth among its members, it ceases to be a wholesome education. A democratic education integrates both the individual and the social needs.

Democracy in education was one of Dewey's favorite themes and his book *Democracy and Education* was his favorite among his many publications (Hansen, 2006). The

democratic ideal rests upon the moral principles of the individual's right and social obligation. It is based on equal rights of all. Democracy tries to accommodate the individual as well as social growth. It protects the rights of the minority as well as the majority. In education, it means equal opportunity for all to achieve their maximum growth (Hook, 1939).

For Dewey, school was a form of community living and pedagogy took place in this social context. A teacher's place in the school had to be interpreted from this perspective (Dewey, 1888). In the traditional school, the teacher was like a patriarch or taskmaster. Everything came from the top; a student was *tabula rasa*, an empty receptacle, to be filled. There was limited interaction between the student and the teacher. On the other hand, if the school is considered to be a democratic community, interaction, communication, and cooperation are imperative. It also means an abiding commitment to 'an interest in learning from all contacts of life' not from just a selected few (Hansen, 2007).

The method of pedagogy, Dewey (1966) observed, should be based on the child's psychology and sociology. He noted that the child's natural instincts and interest should be used in education. 'An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance' (p. 137). Dewey, therefore, used the occupational method in his Laboratory School. Cooking, sewing, gardening and carpentry were some of the examples (Dewey, 1956). He saw occupation in relation to the fundamental need for food, clothing shelter, and the like (Dewey, 1897). Dewey viewed the occupational method as an effective way of incorporating direct experience in his school and also integrating the individual and social dimensions of education.

Dewey observed that introducing the child too abruptly to special studies such as reading, writing, geography and so on was doing violence to the child's nature and its experience in social life. He noted: 'The true center of correlation of the school subjects is not science, nor literature nor history, nor geography, but the child's own social activities' (Dewey, 1888, p. 89). He cited the expressive and constructive social activities that brought civilization into being, such as gardening, building, cooking, and other sorts of work; through the medium of these social activities, the child could easily be introduced to more formal subjects (Dewey, 1888).

The curriculum of Dewey's Laboratory School was designed around the child and the community. The child's experience was the starting point from where an overflowing stream continually enlarged its circle of knowledge. As the child grew, he or she became aware of social relations and moral responsibilities and became a responsible partner and player in the social world and democratic community (Brosio, 1972).

Tagore's Vision for International Education

Since Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) is not well known in the Western world, this article first provides some background information about him. Tagore was a man of international vision. He stands tall and towering among the modern educators of India. He was a multi-talented person: a poet, artist, musician, dramatist, philosopher, Nobel Prize winner for literature in 1913, and an extraordinary educator. He had a unique vision of life and education.

Tagore's (1985) philosophy of education was based on his philosophical vision of life—a life of harmony and fullness. Harmony and unbroken continuity with all existence involved nature, human beings, and the Infinite. Education, therefore, according to Tagore, should not create discord in the child's life; it should, rather, bring about harmony with all existence. 'The highest form of education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence' (p. 116).

Harmony was achieved, not for its own sake, but as a necessary fulfillment of the individual, social, and universal growth. In Tagore's educational vision, therefore, harmony was intended to promote fullness. Fullness is possible when the individual embraces the social and the universal dimensions. One of the important insights of Tagore's educational vision was his stress on human relationships and universality. The true meaning of living, according to Tagore, is outliving. It is ever growing out of oneself and encountering the other; and thus it achieves one's social, moral, and universal fulfillment (Cenkner, 1976).

Education, according to Tagore (1987), facilitated the growth of the individual, the development of the society, and the growth of the international community. School, he observed, was a happy place where the individual found joy in learning. Tagore's childhood experience, however, was different. He observed that the school was like a jail. During his childhood, the indigenous system of education had been eclipsed by British education, which was interested only in producing a cadre of people who would oil the colonial administrative and industrial machinery. 'The English medium of instruction and examination encouraged thoughtless cramming of ill-digested subject matter and joyful free pursuit of knowledge largely by default' (Jalan, 1976, p. 36). Tagore wanted to correct this malady and go back to the traditional education, which was based on the philosophy of harmony and fullness.

Tagore believed that the best way to turn his vision into reality was not through politics, but through educational institutions. To achieve this, he developed a philosophy of education and founded a school that eventually became a university with a global village consciousness. *Santiniketan*, which means 'The Abode of Peace', was the first school Tagore founded. The origin of the school also had a social and universal dimension. Tagore remarked that his school was a temple built for the service to humanity. Education, for him, was for complete living and it involved knowledge, enjoyment of life, creative work, and service to one another (Jalan, 1976). Tagore's concept of education for social development, however, was best expressed in another school he founded called *Sriniketan*, which means 'The Abode of Prosperity'. At the apex of Tagore's educational endeavor came Visva-Bharati University, where his vision of education for fullness, harmony, and international understanding became a reality. Its motto was: *A University where the world makes its home in a single nest* (p. 64).

Tagore had good insight into the mind of the child. He looked at children as children not as adults. He believed that for the first seven years a child's education should be under no pressure and that it is a time to learn about nature and one's environment. 'The children are in love with life and it is their first love', observed Tagore, 'we should not stifle their first love with school discipline' (Chakravarty, 1961, p. 220). School should be open, free, and spontaneous so that young people can grow to experience and express their creativity and realize their full potential.

Along with the individual, Tagore stressed the importance of the communal aspect of education and the social consciousness. Following the ancient Indian educational tradition, the teachers and students related to each other like an extended family. This encouraged social interaction, eliminated class and caste consciousness, and it brought about human fellowship and unity (Cenkner, 1976).

Tagore was against students learning by heart and regurgitating what the teacher taught. He promoted a more interactive teaching and learning process; and, therefore, he stressed the importance of experience and discovery method. Teachers were to be creative facilitators and moral guides (O'Connell, 2007). They were like gardeners who would nurture and nourish their plants with care and love.

Tagore knew that children were filled with instincts and a sense of curiosity; he catered to their natural instincts so that they could interact with nature and the community. He used to take them on field-trips and excursions as part of their educative process. He wanted all the children taken around the country so that they can learn first hand more about the land, people, and the culture (Salkar, 1990). This would help the students to learn, communicate, and interact with others and have a deeper and wider understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Curriculum, according to Tagore, embodied the idea of harmony and fullness. It meant an open, wide, and full course of study, which took into consideration the individual, social, and universal needs. At Santiniketan School, an open curriculum policy was followed. It permitted initiative, experimentation, and originality. It encouraged teachers as well as students to participate in developing a relevant curriculum. Besides the academic subjects, such as language, science, mathematics, history, and social studies, Tagore encouraged extra-curricular activities such as student government, physical exercise, excursions, and the celebration of festivals (Jalan, 1976).

Tagore's concept of the all-round development of the child and integration of the individual and social dimensions found its best expression in his curriculum in Sriniketan. It included not only the regular academic subjects but also subjects such as gardening, weaving, leather work, bookbinding, carpentry, health and sanitation, sports and games, literary society, social work, and moral education (Jalan, 1976).

Tagore discouraged parochialism and a myopic vision of life. Instead, he encouraged his students at Visva-Bharati, for example, to look at different cultures as the heritage of humanity, history as the story of human family, and the world as the home of humanity. He encouraged respect for all peoples, cultures, religions, and nationality. Through this international and universal curricular perspective, Tagore wanted to transcend provincial and national limitations and foster international friendship. He wanted to cultivate in the minds of the new generation the view that human beings were the residents of this common planet and their destiny was inextricably intertwined (Periaswamy, 1976). In this article, the term international education is used in this Tagorean sense.

Dewey and Tagore Compared

Dewey and Tagore were brought up in different communities and countries; they were from two sides of the globe. The context of their upbringing and experiences were

different. At the same time, there were some aspects in which they were similar or complementary, and in other aspects they were divergent.

Dewey was brought up in Vermont where his exposure to community life and democracy, industrialization and urbanization had an impact on his educational vision. Tagore was brought up in India, a country colonized by the British. His experience as a subject under British colonization, his grounding in Indian philosophical thought, and his exposure to the international community impacted his vision of education.

Dewey and Tagore would agree that the purpose of education was to promote growth. Growth for Dewey was self-realization through interaction with the environment; for Tagore, it was self-realization through harmony and fullness. Dewey's concept of educational growth was more focused on the individual and society; for Tagore, it extended to the international and the transcendental dimensions.

School was a miniature form of society for Dewey and Tagore. Dewey considered school as an embryonic society, which reflected the life of the larger society. In his book *Rabindranath Tagore*, Salkar (1990) commented on the similar view of Tagore: 'Tagore considered that education is the continuous social process and should be linked with the economic and social life of the community. His school really became a miniature community as propounded by Dewey' (p. 47).

Democracy and social consciousness were two subjects very close to Dewey's heart. The individual was a *social individual* and was fulfilled through social interaction. In a democratic educational system, according to him, there should be common interest and freedom of the individual. At the same time, the individual had the responsibility to contribute towards the well being of society, for these two dimensions were interconnected and interrelated.

Democracy, however, was not as important an issue for Tagore as it was for Dewey. Tagore died in 1941, six years before India's independence. Since India was under British colonialism and imperialism, he was more concerned about the individual and the national freedom and the emancipation of the society. He supported the struggle for independence; he subscribed to the democratic principles in governance and education. However, Tagore did not explore democracy and education in depth and breadth as did Dewey. At the same time, his understanding of democracy, his concept of *man in the universe* and the vision of international education complemented Dewey's perspective.

Dewey and Tagore understood the perils of nationalism and the importance of transcending myopic national interest. Dewey's concept of community was not restricted by parochialism. His concept of social awareness and community, according to Roth, included 'solidarity of all men based on a profound respect for the dignity of human person ... in whose hands is committed the awesome responsibility of furthering in a corporate way the ongoing process of the universe and especially of men' (Roth, 1962, p. 58).

Dewey himself was an international figure. Hook called him 'the unofficial intellectual ambassador of the United States to the world' (Hook, 1971, p. 9). Dewey's social concept, therefore, extended beyond the national boundaries. Commenting on the sovereignty of the state and the importance of the international community, Dewey acknowledged: '... internationalism is not an aspiration but a fact, not a sentimental ideal but a force' (Dewey, 1957, p. 205).

Although Dewey mentioned the need for going beyond the national interest, international education was not a major focus of his philosophy of education. He dwelt more upon the concept of society and democracy. Tagore, on the other hand, dwelt less on the concept of society and democracy and he focused more on the international community. He wrote and lectured on the need of East-West cooperation, the federation of international community, and international education.

Dewey and Tagore believed that democratic life in a society was impossible without educated and informed people. They founded their own schools to realize their educational visions. Dewey's Laboratory School was a revolt against the Platonic concept of education which, in modern times, found expression and adherents in Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. He wanted education to be more pragmatic and democratic.

Tagore's school at Santiniketan represented a revolt against British imperialism and colonialism, which intended to educate Indians for British governmental and commercial needs in India. Tagore attempted to break away from the British school system and its way of teaching; it was the beginning of a new vision of education in post-colonial India.

For Tagore, Sriniketan was not an experiment, but a way of life. Dewey's school, in contrast, was intended to be a laboratory. Dewey could leave his Laboratory School after his initial experiment, while Tagore never left his schools, which were part and parcel of his life's mission and the epitome of his vision. As a result, Tagore established Sriniketan in an effort to emphasize the importance of social service and community emancipation through education, and *Visva-Bharati*, underscoring the need for the international cooperation and understanding.

For both Dewey and Tagore, experience was central to a child's education. The student was not a passive recipient, but rather an active agent in the process of knowing and learning. Both of them viewed pedagogy from the child's perspective, not from the adult's. They also saw education as interactive and as well as integrating the individual and social dimensions, they stressed the psychological and social dimensions of education.

Dewey and Tagore did not subscribe to a ready-made curriculum. They each had a framework of curriculum, but it was flexible and open. It was adjustable to the needs of the individual and the community and thus opened to the demands of the individual and social dimensions of education. Curriculum for Dewey and Tagore was more than traditional subject matter. It went beyond the books and the classroom. For Dewey, curriculum was more than reading and writing, numbers and facts. It was life itself, which included the individual and social dimensions of education. For Tagore, curriculum included not only the traditional subject matter, but also the nonacademic aspects of life, such as artistic pursuits, social services, festivals, and other extracurricular activities. It included communing with nature, individual growth, and community development. The concept of curriculum for both Dewey and Tagore, then, went beyond the classroom to embrace life itself.

Dewey stressed the experiential and the experimental, the pragmatic and the scientific aspects. His approach to curriculum was that of a scientist and pragmatist. Life was a problem to be solved; it had to be constantly experimented with to arrive at solutions. Tagore, however, stressed the natural and the transcendental. His love of nature was reflected in his curriculum. He wanted his children to go to the natural world to learn

with great respect and love. His approach was not that of a scientist or pragmatist, but rather of an artist, a philosopher, and a mystic. Life was not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be approached with love and wonder.

Tagore's curriculum had an international and universal orientation. He wanted his students to go beyond their immediate communities and their natural interests. He insisted on students learning more about other countries, cultures, and religions so they could appreciate and respect others' as well as their own environments from a better and a richer perspective (Periaswamy, 1976). Such an emphasis would bring about international understanding, peace and prosperity.

Dewey's educational vision was very optimistic. According to Bruner, 'Its optimism is classically American in its rejection of a tragic view of life' (Bruner, 1969, p. 212). Dewey lacked the 'tragic sense' and 'existential' perspective of human nature (Bernstein, 1966, p. 176). The real world is not so; it is filled with revolution, wars, wickedness, tragedy, and skepticism. As one envisions a philosophy of education, all these aspects of human life have to be considered and addressed (Bruner, 1969, p. 213). Tagore's perspective on life and education too was very optimistic (Jalan, 1976). Mukherjee (1962) critiqued the idealistic aspects of Tagore's educational institutions. Both Dewey and Tagore, therefore, did not give enough attention to the existential and tragic nature of human beings.

Commenting on Dewey's curriculum, Lilge (1969) remarked that Dewey did not give enough importance to humanities and fine arts in his curriculum theory. For example, *Democracy and Education* contained chapters on science, geography, and history; however, it did not devote enough attention to literature and fine arts. It is interesting to note, however, that Tagore did the opposite; he stressed the importance of literature and fine arts in his curriculum and he did not give enough attention to scientific subjects (O'Connell, 2007).

In short, although they had their own limitations, both Dewey and Tagore contributed greatly towards the advancement of modern educational philosophy and practice. Dewey showed a balance between the individual and social dimensions of education in his democratic education. His attempt to integrate these two dimensions of education was reflected in his pedagogy and curriculum. Tagore's attempt to integrate the individual and social dimensions of education went further which was reflected in his international education. Hence, Tagore's concept of international education complements Dewey's concept of a democratic education.

Implications for Contemporary Education

In this section, the implications of Dewey's concept of social individual and democratic education and Tagore's concept of international education are discussed and the relevance of their ideas to contemporary education is delineated.

One of the implications of Dewey's concept of the social individual and Tagore's concept of 'the individual being in harmony with the society' is to avoid the two extremes: the tendency of swinging from rugged individualism to extreme socialism. Instead, there has to be a continuous integration of both the individual and the social dimensions in education. It is a task that needs constant attention and reconstruction (Giroux, 1988).

In pedagogy, the individual and the social dimensions have implications for the student, teacher, and methodology. Students have to be aware of their importance as individuals and, at the same time, be conscious of their social responsibility towards the community. They should be encouraged to know that they could never be their best selves when disengaged from society. The central task of education is to develop human beings who value both self and all humankind, who do not sin against themselves and their kind (Goodlad, 1997).

In this context, the importance of individual difference has to be underscored. Each child is unique because of her or his physical, emotional, and mental makeup and the environment in which the child is brought up. The socialization process in school, on the other hand, has a tendency to discourage traits of spontaneity, originality, and creativity and to accentuate conformity (Goodlad, 1997). Instead of forcing all children to conform to one rigid system, they can have opportunities to learn according to their talents and psychological readiness. This implies that children may work at different levels of subject matter according to their talents and needs.

A child needs freedom to be his or her best self. At the same time, this is not a license to do whatever he or she pleases. In this decade of *Egonomics* and *Me-ness*, the atmosphere in the school needs to be that of cooperation, social consciousness, and covenant concern for one another (Bellah *et al.*, 1985).

Children, by nature, are active and social. The methods used in educating children, therefore, must have the social dimension of interacting, cooperating, and communicating. The methods, such as cooperative learning, play-way, peer coaching, project method, field trips, multicultural projects, conflict resolution, debate, and the like would help the children to learn and interact with others better. These methods also cultivate fellow-feeling and concern for others.

In this context, teachers and administrators have to encourage dialogue among the racial and ethnic groups. With the problem of ethnic violence, religious intolerance, and social discrimination, interaction and integration need to be nurtured, especially in this post-9/11 world. Multicultural education, therefore, is an imperative. The role of teachers and administrators, in this respect, is paramount; their positive vision and proactive leadership can have a positive impact on education.

Another important implication is the relevance of democratic education today. In the modern world, democracy has taken deeper roots. The emerging civilization, according to Toffler, has been 'more democratic than any we have ever known' (Toffler, 1980, p. 3). Fukuyama argued that democracy 'had emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism' (Fukuyama, 1992, p. xi). The democratic ideal has brought about a *velvet revolution* in Eastern Europe. According to Muravchick, out of the 192 independent countries in the world, 121 countries have freely elected governments today (Muravchick, 2002). As people become more educated, the *velvet revolution* continues its impact on nations and the world.

According to Berger, democracy was the soul of Dewey's philosophy; it also accentuated his educational vision (Berger, 1969). Democracy in education is a continuous process. It is also an ideal. There would, therefore, always be room for improvement. All countries and their educational institutions have to work on the democratic ideal placed

before them by Dewey and Tagore; and they have to continuously challenge themselves to attain that ideal.

Discriminatory practice is undemocratic and unjust. It has taken subtle forms based on color, gender, ethnicity, social, and economic status. Jonathan Kozol (1991) delineated the inequalities prevalent in society, especially among the poor inner city children and minorities. This form of discrimination is undemocratic and immoral.

In pedagogy, a teacher's role is to be a guide or a coach, in order to help the children to realize their potentialities as members of a democratic society. The responsibility of a teacher is not to spoon-feed or impose her or his ideas on students, but to stimulate and assist them to think critically. He or she might give different points of view on an issue and encourage students to come up with their own. Let them argue, discuss, debate, and look at it from diverse perspectives and finally form their own critical point of view. Students, therefore, are free to question, criticize, make mistakes, and differ from other points of view.

It is the responsibility of the teacher as well as the administrator to create a democratic atmosphere in the school and the classroom. Students could be allowed as well as encouraged to participate in the management of the school; it is one of the best ways to educate them about the responsibilities of a democratic way of life. Student government is a good source of learning more about responsibility, *corporateness*, and democracy. One wonders, however, how much of responsibility and power is rendered to student government in our schools today.

In the classroom, discipline is to be maintained but not dictated. A teacher cannot expect the child to blindly obey, but can rather enlighten the child to make the right decision by using her or his free will and reason. Discipline dictated from outside may have a temporary effect; but a lasting discipline has to come from within, the students. They should understand the reason and the importance of discipline. Once they understand, they may take ownership, and the discipline will have a lasting effect. Hence, it is not the outer-discipline but the inner-discipline that matters in democracy. When some disciplinary issues arise, for example, teachers and administrators might encourage students and the student government to address the issues and to find solutions in a democratic way; thus, giving them opportunity to practice the democratic principles and take ownership of their own actions and their consequences.

Curriculum in a democratic school is dynamic; it is a cooperative effort from all sides. In other words, in the content area, for example, the teachers, administrators, scholars, students, parents, and community can have a voice and thus collectively work on the curriculum. This would reflect the needs of the community and the contemporary world.

An ethic of care and concern for others is imperative in a democratic education. Noddling recommended an ecological view of caring and pointed out: 'Caring for, about, and with others can add to our own happiness' (Noddings, 2005, p. 8). Students need to understand that their responsibility to the community is as important as the responsibility of the community towards them. Barbara Thayer-Bacon observed: 'Realizing this is the first step toward working to help build healthy democratic communities in our classrooms: communities full of loving, caring, reasonable people who help each other and teach and learn from each other' (Thayer-Bacon, 1996, p. 283).

Another important implication is the need for international understanding and education in our schools. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the information age have prompted people to think about a world without walls. Contemporary educational vision, therefore, has to transcend parochialism and nationalism. Today, more than ever, international education is an imperative (Jackson, 2004).

Dewey talked about internationalism and the need to go beyond national interest. But in his educational discourse, he did not devote much attention to international education. Tagore, however, foresaw the need for international education emerging on the horizon at the very beginning of the 20th century. From his Indian philosophical upbringing and international visits, he was intensely aware of the interdependence of reality and interconnectedness of humanity. He also knew that education was the best way to realize the global village consciousness.

Tagore believed that one of the root causes of war was misunderstanding. He, therefore, encouraged understanding and appreciation of others and their cultures. This was one of the objectives of Tagore's Visva-Bharati University. Periaswamy observed: 'Tagore strongly believed that only through international education would it be possible and feasible to develop mutual understanding among the peoples and their cultures' (Periaswamy, 1976, p. 44).

In the school curriculum, therefore, biased information about other cultures and one-sided view of history has to be avoided. Rather, one should have an honest discussion or debate of the issues, acknowledging its complexities and multi-dimensional perspectives and look at them with a critical mind. Teachers could also show the students what human misunderstanding, lack of communication, and cooperation has done to humanity in the past and today.

As a positive step, education has to focus on the benefits of international understanding and cooperation. International education can improve better understanding of other nations and bring about lasting peace. It could also produce tremendous progress and prosperity to humanity. If the human family works together it can eradicate hunger, homelessness, and other basic human deprivations from the world.

The international community coordinates and works together these days when some disasters strike any part of the world. A fine example is the Tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia or earthquakes and floods that take place around the world. This cooperation can go beyond these kinds of emergencies. The Post-Cold War era is a golden occasion for the human family to pool its resources on a global basis and use it more constructively to obliterate illiteracy, poverty, and disease and to create a healthy, safe world. Students can be made aware of these issues and be challenged to come up with constructive ideas to make this global village an ecologically better human habitat.

The concept of an ecological, organic relationship between human beings and the environment is nothing new. It has been the sacred tradition of ancient cultures (Sale, 1985). The modern human beings' experience of alienation and rootlessness, as observed by both Dewey and Tagore, derives from their separation from the environment and their lack of a deeper understanding of themselves. This involves 'getting in touch with the basic categories of existence—past, place, relationships, and future possibilities' (Bowers, 1987, p. 169).

Environmental concern needs to be a part of education (Noddings, 2005). Students can be made aware of the global impact of the abuse of the environment. Curriculum can reflect the love of nature and the importance of preserving a healthy environment for posterity. Educational institutions could have more programs on this issue, encourage the exchange of international students and teachers, and establish more centers for international study and research. International cooperation and ‘dynamic global interconnectivity’ can be nurtured by these institutions as envisioned by Tagore (O’Connell, 2007, p. 132). This would help students and faculties to cross boundaries, both academic and geopolitical (Pacheco & Fernadez, 1992).

Another significant implication of international education is that it helps people to cherish what connects human beings and to celebrate their common heritage. It helps not only to appreciate diversity among humanity but also celebrate their commonality.

Today, international interdependence and global consciousness is not only a fact but also a necessity. As a result of this growing interdependence and global consciousness, people could learn to tolerate differences and cherish commonalities (Periaswamy, 1976). International education, according to Swanson, would give humanity a common point of view and would improve human cooperation and common consciousness (Swanson, 1969).

Education could, as demonstrated by Dewey and Tagore in their own unique ways, transcend the barriers of nationalism and affirm the common heritage and the universality of humanity. ‘A major objective is that man would be aware of his identity as a resident of a common planet which he shares with other men’ (Periaswamy, 1976, p. 152).

As the world is becoming a village, even if there is no ethnic diversity in a school or a community, the curriculum could include other cultures. Along with an appreciation of their own ethnicity and nationality, students could be encouraged to go beyond their limited world and enter the family of humanity (Jackson, 2004).

With new technologies such as CD-ROM, email, the Internet, teleconferencing, computer simulation, and iEARN (International Education and Resource Network), international communication and education have become very easy today (Bosco, 1994). Through these networks, students, teachers, and parents, can be globally connected, thereby making it possible for them to communicate across geographical and cultural boundaries (Cummins & Sayers, 1995); they can virtually visit other countries and learn about other cultures (Howe, 2008).

Teachers and administrators have a significant role to play in the international educational vision. They can go beyond their petty and parochial visions. As excellent leaders and visionaries, they can embrace a global perspective. Hence they can show, as Tagore indicated, that an educational institution can be a place *where the world can make its home in a single nest*.

In conclusion, the *fall of the Wall* and a *flattened* world have prompted people to think more globally and democratically. In this global village the world is not profoundly divided rather intimately interconnected. As the world becomes more integrated and interdependent, educational visions of Dewey and Tagore emerge as more significant. Although Dewey and Tagore diverge in their educational perspectives, their ideas also converge and complement each other’s vision of education. Tagore’s concept of

international education, hence, adds to Dewey's concept of democratic education. Moreover, an educational vision that integrates the democratic and international perspectives of Dewey and Tagore is very relevant to the contemporary educational philosophy and practice.

References

- Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A. & Tipton, S. M. (1985) *Habits of Heart: Individualism and commitment in American life* (New York, Harper & Row).
- Berger, M. I. (1969) John Dewey and Progressive Education Today, in: R. D. Archambault (ed.), *Dewey on Education: Appraisal* (New York, Random House).
- Bernstein, R. J. (1966) *John Dewey* (New York, Washington Square Press).
- Bosco, A. G. (1994) Pasturing the School in the Electronic Global Village, *Momentum*, 25,1, pp. 14–16.
- Bowers, C. A. (1987) *Elements of a Post-Liberal Theory of Education* (New York, Teachers College Press).
- Brosio, R. A. (1972) *The Relationship of Dewey's Pedagogy to His Concept of Community*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Michigan.
- Bruner, J. S. (1969) After John Dewey What? in: R. D. Archambault (ed.), *Dewey on Education: Appraisal* (New York, Random House).
- Cenkner, W. (1976) *The Hindu Personality in Education: Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo* (New Delhi, Manohar).
- Chakravarty, A. (1961) *A Tagore Reader* (Boston, Beacon Press).
- Cummins J. & Sayers, D. (1995) *Brave New Schools: Challenging cultural illiteracy through global learning network* (New York, St. Martin's Press).
- Dewey, J. (1888) The Ethics of Democracy, in: *Early Work* (Ann Arbor, MI, Andrew & Co.).
- Dewey, J. (1897) Ethical Principles Underlying Education, *The Third Year Book of the National Herbart Society* (Chicago, National Herbart Society).
- Dewey, J. (1927) *The Public and Its Problems* (New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston).
- Dewey, J. (1956) *The School and Society* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press).
- Dewey, J. (1957) *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Boston, Beacon Press).
- Dewey, J. (1962) *Individualism Old and New* (New York, Capricorn Books).
- Dewey, J. (1966) *Democracy and Education* (New York, Macmillan).
- Friedman, T. (2005) *The World Is Flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux).
- Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York, The Free Press).
- Giroux, H. A. (1988) *Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life* (Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press).
- Goodlad, J. I. (1997) *In Praise of Education* (New York, Teachers College Press).
- Hansen, D. T. (2006) Introduction, Reading Democracy and Education, in: D. T. Hansen (ed.), *John Dewey and Educational Prospect* (Albany, NY, State University Press of New York).
- Hansen, D. T. (2007) John Dewey on Education and the Quality of Life in: D. T. Hansen (ed.), *Ethical Visions of Education: Philosophies in practice* (New York, Teachers College Press).
- Hook, S. (1939) *John Dewey* (New York, The John Day Company).
- Hook, S. (1971) *John Dewey: An intellectual portrait* (West Point, NY, Greenwood Press).
- Howe, D. (2008) Schools without Walls: Ohio created learning partnerships that reach around the world, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90, pp. 206–210.
- Jackson, J. (2004) Preparing Urban Youths to Succeed in the Interconnected World of the 21st Century, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86, pp. 210–213.
- Jalan, R. V. (1976) *Tagore—His educational theory and practice and its impact on Indian education*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida.
- Kozol, J. (1991) *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's schools* (New York, Crown Publishers).

- Lilge, F. (1969) The Vain Quest for Unity: John Dewey's social and educational thought in: R. D. Archambault (ed.), *Dewey on Education: Appraisals* (New York, Random House).
- Mukherjee, H. B. (1962) *Education for Fullness* (Bombay, Asia Publishing House).
- Muravchick, J. (2002) Democracy's Quiet Victory, *The New York Times*, 19 August, p. A15.
- Naisbitt, J. & Aburdene, P. (1990) *Megatrends 200: Ten new directions for the 1990's* (New York, William Morrow & Co.).
- Noddings, N. (2005) *Educating Citizens for Global Awareness* (New York, Teachers College Press).
- O'Connell, K. M. (2007) Art, Nature, and Education: Rabindranath Tagore's holistic approach to learning in: D.T. Hansen (ed.) *Ethical Visions of Education: Philosophies in practice*, (New York, Teachers College Press).
- Pacheco, M. and Fernandez, C. (1992) Knowing No Boundaries: The university as world citizen, *Educational Record*, 73,2, pp. 23–27.
- Periaswamy, A. (1976) *Rabindranath Tagore's Philosophy of International Education*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago.
- Roth, R. J. (1962) *John Dewey and Self-Realization* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall).
- Sale, K. (1985) *Dwellers in the Land: The bioregional vision* (San Francisco, Sierra Club Books).
- Salkar, K. R. (1990) *Rabindranath Tagore: His impact on Indian education* (New Delhi, Sterling Publishers Private Limited).
- Swanson, G. (1969) International Education: Portents for the future, in: F. R. Paulsen (ed.), *Changing Dimensions in International Education* (Tucson, AZ, The University of Arizona).
- Tagore, R. (1985) *Personality* (Madras, Macmillan India Limited).
- Tagore, R. (1987) *Reminiscences* (Madras, Macmillan India Limited).
- Thayer-Bacon, B. (1996) Relational Qualities between Selves and Communities, *Journal for a Just and Caring Education*, 2,3, pp. 283–303.
- Toffler, A. (1980) *The Third Wave* (New York, Bantam Books).

Copyright of Educational Philosophy & Theory is the property of Wiley-Blackwell and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.