

Comprehensive Knowledge and Critical Acumen: The Tagore - Geddes Correspondence in 1922

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Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore and Patrick Geddes had much in common, not least in their polemical thoughts on education. They met between 1918 and 1930 and were connected till Geddes' death in 1923. Being critical of the education around them, they emphasized close bonds with nature and regeneration of the land and the lives of the villagers. In their letters the two polymaths discussed approaches to education, and emphasized its harmony with nature. This essay will be a study of the epistolary exchange between Tagore and Geddes in the year 1922. While Geddes through his letters extended a concrete plan of his University – 'a germ of the life'¹ both of them were seeking, Tagore substituted it through his ideas on 'inner-growth, in which the sub-conscious has ever been bursting with the conscious plan'². This study of four important letters exchanged between them in 1922 will vindicate their critical cosmopolitan point of view to create 'habits of coexistence'³ through an approach of acknowledging cultural alterity. The essay will reveal how Tagore's letters to Geddes embody the poet's ideas to bring the East and West closer together through coordination and cooperation to unite the minds of the East and the West in mutual understanding, and Geddes' letters to Tagore weave the poet's principles through scientific ideas of a sociologist, town planner - synthesis, sympathy and synergy. Therefore, through their epistolary correspondence, the two pioneers emphasized that

Synthesis in thought [for] collective action – to Synergy in deed: and Imagination concentrates itself to prefigure, for this Etho-Polity in Synergy, [facilitates] its corresponding Achievement.⁴

Therefore, emphasizing the need to leave the cloister of life and embrace the deep chord of the inward life and thought involving a proper assimilation of the 'spiritual', 'temporal', 'transcendental', 'material and mechanical' with comprehensive sympathy, imagination, knowledge, and critical acumen.⁵

Keywords: Tagore, Geddes, Education, Nature, Land regeneration, Inner-growth



The Inner Growth of the Germ of Life: The Tagore – Geddes Correspondence in 1922¹

Introduction: The Meeting of Two Great Minds

Man is a self-revealer, who on realizing his inherent divine dignity, the great human truth embedded in her/his self amidst the sphere of spontaneity, comprehends the intrinsic desire of existence (*Angel* 20) by travelling beyond the portals of one's own self to unravel the wider world where the fathomless sea of knowledge and wisdom are an inspiration 'to strive, to seek and not to yield'. Man must be aware of this knowledge for engineering it towards the positive aspects of life enriching the home and the world, ensuring a 'pure enjoyment of his knowledge' as 'knowledge is freedom' upon which 'his science and philosophy thrive' (*Personality* 7, 8). This manifestation of consciousness through 'science, philosophy and the arts, in social ethics' bear an 'ultimate value in themselves' as they are coordinated through

one great religion of Man, representing his ceaseless endeavour to reach the perfect in great thoughts and deeds and dreams...revealing his aspiration for rising in dignity of being. (*The Religion* 46)

It facilitates the glow of the 'lamp of mind as its part in the illumination of the world' (*The Centre* 1, 2) through which humanity explores the inherent universal faculties ("East and West" 530) which are

to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing. (*Angel* 18, 19)

It is an enlightened realisation as Tagore stated, *Ya etad vidur amritas te bhavanti* (*The Religion* 55), enabling Man to transcend his own self beyond the conventions and beliefs, and the limits of mortality to emerge as 'the world-worker' (*The Religion* 55) indoctrinated in *Ātmano mokshārtham jagad hitāya cha*. Such a consciousness ushered a socio-cultural, psychological and intellectual realisation, piloting the advent of the spirit of reawakening in the society and the hearts of the people of the nineteenth-century Bengal involving an active initiation and participation of social thinkers, philosophers, humanitarians, educationists and missionaries both from the home as well as from the world. This revolutionary awakening initiated an acculturation of the cultures of India and the West (*Awakening* 3) through an active participation of some large-hearted foreigners and enlightened natives. One of the primary motifs of the Bengal Renaissance was the necessity to spread education among the general masses for their encyclopedic enhancement. The selfless role of Rabindranath Tagore and Patrick Geddes, the polymaths from India and Scotland, towards education was cosmopolitan in their perspectives; being committed to the fullest development of an individual's personality (Ray 6); they proved to be 'umo universale'² being

not locked into his environment – his imagination, his reason, his emotional subtlety and toughness, make it possible for him not to accept the environment but to change it...[through an] unfolding of his different talents...[as] his ideas express what is essentially human in nature. (Bronowski 20, 22)

Besides several other spheres, Rabindranath Tagore and Patrick Geddes had much in common in their ideas and thoughts on education and ecology. Their paths crossed



between 1918 and 1930 and this friendship continued till Geddes's death in 1932. Besides their mutual respect to each other, a study of the letters they wrote to each other establish their critical outlook towards the prevailing modes of education, which they desired to be amidst the close proximity with nature, associated with a regeneration of the land facilitating a comprehensive development of the villagers. Though different in their methods of approach, the Poet believed that the centre of India's culture depends upon true education which illuminates the lamp of the human mind by

the deliverance of man's soul from the grip of self, its communion with the Infinite Soul through its union in *ânanda* with the universe...a spiritual truth and beauty of our attitude towards our surroundings, our conscious relationship with the Infinite, and the lasting power of the Eternal in the passing moments of our life... [through an] intimate touch with nature. ("An Eastern University" 85)

And the Scientist approved the Poet's philosophy as the 'foresight and vision' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 68) necessary for the effectiveness of the former's plan. His sincere acknowledgement to the Poet is well vindicated in one of his letters to the Poet discussed in this essay, i.e. 17 May 1922, where he concludes stating

The difference between us is that while I work out (the equivalents of) musical notations, the prosody of thought, you can make songs as well as poems! (*The Tagore – Geddes* 66)

In spite of their attention towards the local they were international in their perspectives especially in their thoughts on education where through their own ideals they nurtured the 'germ of the life' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 62) to facilitate 'an inner life-growth' where 'the subconscious meets with the conscious' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 64). Rabindranath Tagore was a creative artist, and Patrick Geddes was a scientist and a town planner. Though Tagore wanted science to be a core subject in his university along with the arts, but he was cautious with Geddes' love for diagrams and plans. Geddes was a scientist, an unusually gifted 'evolutionist' who perceived everything through his theories as part of an endless process subscribing the Hegelian theory of 'Becoming, Being and Having been'. He saw

a plant, an animal, a human type, a social organisation, a historic crisis, not merely as something which had evolved, but as something that had evolved in a particular way and was still evolving. (Bharucha 225)

It was an important contribution towards the laws of social evolution, placing him after Comte and Le Play. Besides being an ecologist, Geddes was a Professor of Civics and Sociology at the University of Bombay. Tagore through his school set up in 1901, and later a university established in 1921, and Geddes through his international summer schools in Edinburgh, sought towards a holistic approach to education in harmony with nature. Geddes was a strong Scottish patriot but his mind transcended all frontiers (Mairet 62) embracing cultures as a humanist intellectual. Introduced by C. F. Andrews, the meeting of Geddes and Tagore was a creative assimilation of scientific ideas carrying ahead the legacy of an intellectual exchange between the two pathfinders of Scotland and India. As a socio-ecologist Geddes had the scientist's accuracy and the artist's perspective to make his ideas obvious through symbols (*The Tagore – Geddes* 12). His ideas on effective education, necessity of a close association with Nature, village reconstruction and regeneration of the land brought him close to Tagore and this confluenced their lives through a 'fullness of their personality' ("Rabindranath Tagore and Patrick Geddes" 9).



Both of them believed the need for the harmony of education and environment – a holistic approach towards education where the student is taught interdisciplinary over compartmentalized study of humanities and sciences. The common pursuit of truth that Geddes pursued, like Tagore, was universal education through an ideal International University where the minds would meet and encourage an academic exchange through mutual respect, ‘coordination and cooperation’ (“Rabindranath Tagore and Patrick Geddes” 13). *The Tagore – Geddes Correspondence*, compiled, edited and introduced by Bashabi Fraser was published for the first time from Edinburgh in 2002.³ This astounding archival collection of letters exchanged between these two seers of India and Scotland is highly commendable and introduces their signal association and perspectives towards education, environment, rural reconstruction and land management. This essay will study four epistolary exchanges between the two polymaths in the year 1922 charting out their insightful ideals regarding education and university planning.

Patrick Geddes to Rabindranath Tagore

Geddes critiqued the existing system of education and the British system of standardizing schools through his ideas on regional and occupational education (“The Fifth Talk” 125). The three letters he wrote to Tagore in 1922 are the blueprint of his University planning. If the letters were the work plan the theory to be used in it was framed through his essays on education: ‘The World Without And The World Within’, ‘The Education of Two Boys’, ‘The Fifth Talk from my Outlook Tower: Our City of Thought’, ‘The Notation of Life’, and ‘Scottish University Needs and Aims’. In his letter written on 15 April 1922, besides his regular activities, Geddes details the plan of his University and the Department of Sociology and Civics. He emphasizes the need to mobilize the resources of the University for ‘mending the old lives’ (*The Tagore – Geddes* 60) and ‘starting the new’ in a special manner. Geddes emphasized the need of ‘thinking lesson’ (*The World Without* 1) instead of rote learning and interrogated an education system devoid of humanism. A lesson which encourages the student to cogitate will nurture their creative faculty and enable them to connect their thoughts with the outer world (*The World Without* 2). Geddes assured the need of the sciences and the arts for the ‘true progress’ – ‘the unity of Life’ (*The Tagore – Geddes* 60, 61) facilitating ‘good education’ (*The World Without* 17) through which the students will develop to be ‘thinking machines’ (*The World Without* 16). It will, therefore, instigate within them the ‘germ of the life’ (*The Tagore – Geddes* 62) in order to be effective in connecting the whole circle of operations where there is the In-World of memories and plans with the Out-World of facts and acts schematically portrayed in two halves and four quarters (*The World Without* 9).⁴ That ‘sciences bespeaks not only a return to nature, but the indispensable renewal of education’ (“The Fifth Talk” 120). The theory devised by Geddes was executed through the following plan which he shared with Tagore in this letter:

Logic	(as Science)	evolving together as
”	(as Art)	
Mathematics	as Science	“thematic metrics”
”	(Art, metrics, graphics, etc.)	
Physics (energies)		
Technics		

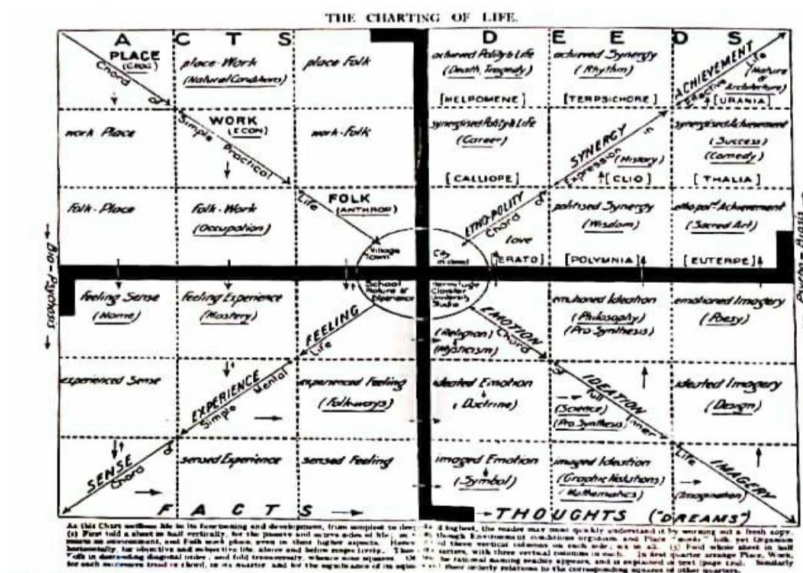
Esthetics Fine Arts Biology Biotechnics	(Agriculture Horticulture Medicine and Hygiene etc.)	” ” ” Eutechnics
Psychology Education Economics Politics		” ” ” Psychorganics
Ethics ”	as Science in practice (with Religions)	” ” ” Etho-polity/ics
Life	as “Conduct” (“Dharma”	(Social) = Etho-polity i.e. economics now at one, “duty” and “efficiency” together the concave-convex of the same curve and thus inseparable.
Righteousness Life	“Duty” etc) as “Behaviour” (Individual)	= Psychorganics; i.e. with psychology and biology – mind and body “sanity” and “health” together.
Life as “Activity”	(Practical & applied in social service)	= Eutechnics: i.e. with esthetics and physics, art and industries at one, “gesture” and “grasp” together (<i>The Tagore – Geddes</i> 60, 61).

Geddes believed that true ‘change’ and ‘progress’ of a society can be attained through a proper biological and sociological education and observations, i.e. an actual understanding of the sciences essential for life to be simpler and more evolved through growths and phases (“The Fifth Talk” 119), thereby healing the ‘poverty of average intelligence’ (“The Fifth Talk” 124). This idea is further augmented in his next letter to Tagore written on 17 May 1922 where he admits his plans to be ‘dry’ for the creative poet but affirms its aim towards attaining ‘Good, True and Beautiful’ through education, similar to Tagore’s ideas. In this letter Geddes discusses the need to learn from one’s surroundings, and documents his own experiences with his Zionist friends in Jerusalem. Though he had developed the architectural style of the dome of the great hall of the University but it was originally conceived by his Zionist friends – an exchange of knowledge derived from ‘synthetising,

in graphic forms' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 65) all in harmony. Therefore, Geddes justified the need of a 'living teacher' who would be able to guide her/his students regarding the continuity of 'life's immediate experience, taking stock of one's surroundings and deriving knowledge from them' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 23) in the form of a 'personal survey of the learner's own immediate environment' (Mairet 72). As a scientist Geddes found science [knowledge]

meaningless unless it could be utilized for the advancement of man...[to] cultivate its higher faculties...[to] constantly and consciously seek, strive for, and achieve mastery over 'things of the earth, earthy' and liberate more and more the spirit...[to] pursue its eternal course towards infinite self-perfection. (Bharucha 225)

The third letter written on 10 November 1922 by Geddes initiates a discussion with Tagore regarding his International University. As a planner, Geddes takes recourse to Tagore's 'foresight', 'vision' and 'ideal' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 68) as the necessary yardsticks for guiding an entire scheme. However through several interrogations in this letter Geddes would like to know regarding the necessities of an International University as conceived by Tagore. This letter is almost a check-list for Tagore from a dear friend, lest there remains a void within a great endeavour. As an unusually gifted 'evolutionist' Geddes perceived everything through his theories as part of an endless process subscribing to the Hegelian theory of 'Becoming, Being and Having been'. The scientific perspective expressed through his letters echo "The Notation of Life" embarking the necessity of assimilating all subjects 'into a living unison' ("The Notation of Life" 140) which he had self-illustrated through a diagram called "Thinking Machine"⁵ establishing the inter-relatedness of Place – Work – Folk with Geography, Economics and Anthropology respectively to be 'united into a compact outline of Sociology' ("The Notation of Life" 140).



Through this diagram we can perceive the connection between Sense, Experience, Feeling with Place, Work and Folk. Geddes wanted to hark in the education system that an 'increasing clearness and interests with increasing syntheses with other thoughts, ideas



become emotionalized towards action' emulated as Synthesis + Synergy + Imagination = Collective Action + Deed + Prefigure leading to Achievement ("The Notation of Life" 142). As a sociologist, Geddes justified his thesis through his letter to Rabindranath Tagore on 15 April 1922 where he details the 'special theories and technical applications...the mobilization of the resources of the University' [as the] 'miniature outline of the University's resources, applied towards clearer social thought, and better civic practice' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 59–60). Tagore perceived 'unity' through a different perspective involving

the power that confers unity and significance on all the joy and sorrow and circumstance of my [his] life, weaving onto one strand the myriad forms of myself [himself] and my [his] chain of lives, through which I [he] can feel the unity within the universe (*Of Myself* 7)

i.e. *Jiban Debata*, the Lord of his Being. As a result in his reply to Geddes on 9 May 1922, Tagore stated his university to be 'a living growth' where the *mantra* is 'to emancipate children's minds from the dead grip of a mechanical method and a narrow purpose' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 64). However, Geddes perceived the 'Achievement' as the 'new Chord of Life', ensuring his idea of the 'unity of Life' to be the action of a truly educated individual 'reshape[ing] the world anew, more near to the heart's desire' and successfully attaining the unity with his surroundings through his deeds ("The Notation of Life" 142). It was the meeting of two perspectives on education by the two seers of Scotland and India leading towards the enrichment of humanity.

Rabindranath Tagore to Patrick Geddes

The three letters which Patrick Geddes wrote to Rabindranath Tagore in 1922 echo the biologist's scientific perspectives regarding education and planning. The ideas stated in the letters vindicate Geddes's evolutionary philosophy discussed widely in his essays on education. Rabindranath Tagore replied Patrick Geddes on 9 May 1922. This letter shares the poet's opinion to Geddes' plan. Apparently unable to reflect from the scientist's point of view, but Tagore stated that all plans possess 'a living growth [which] has surmounted the difficulties and taken its own shape' and emphasized the need of a 'semi-passive medium' through which the 'living truth's gradual self-unfoldment' takes place (*The Tagore – Geddes* 63). This was the founding principle on which Shantiniketan developed with an emphasis on education that was never dissociated from life – where self motivation was important over discipline, and fostering intellectual curiosity over competitive excellence (Sen 114). Unlike Geddes, Tagore began his endeavour with the pursuit of the life force, 'an intuition [that] grew with the growth of [his] own mind' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 63). It involved a process of perpetual struggle which eventually strengthened the principles of the work. More than the scientific and logical planning, the poet sought the freedom of the mind, an ambience of education where children and their innocence blooms freely and with a creative pursuit, and idyllic Shantiniketan facilitated Tagore with its unimpeded expanse and ambience. During Tagore's first visit to America, while residing near the university campus in Urbana, Illinois, 'that the idea of a campus university in India took root in Tagore' (Fraser 145). While in Japan, in 1916, Rabindranath Tagore had written to Rathindranath Tagore stating

The Santiniketan School must be the thread linking India with the world. We must establish there a centre for humanistic research concerned with all the world's

peoples. The age of narrow chauvinism is coming to an end. For the sake of the future the first step towards this great meeting of world humanity will take place in these very fields of Bolpur. The task of my last years is to free the world from the coils of national chauvinism. (Uma Das Gupta 33)

Tagore's ideas were based on the unity in truth where the intellectual, spiritual and the physical merge in the common pursuit of truth, from which 'the imparting of truth naturally flows', which he believed,

will help India's mind to concentrate and to be fully conscious of itself, free to seek the truth and make this truth its own wherever found, to judge by its own standard, give expression to its own creative genius, and offer its wisdom to the guests who come from other parts of the world. ("An Eastern University" 560)

Therefore, though he did not refute Geddes' scientific vision, yet stated that his educational endeavour is 'not a perpetual repetition of a plan perfected once for all' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 63). In his essays on education, 'The Vicissitudes of Education', 'The Problem of Education', 'My School', 'The Centre of Indian Culture', 'An Eastern University', 'A Poet's School', 'The Parrot's Training', 'Sriniketan', and 'The First Anniversary of Sriniketan' Tagore emphasized the need of a dynamic spirit in education which nurtures the creative impulse in every individual as human beings

cannot do without the knowledge and information provided by science, but at the same time he cannot do without truth. Knowledge and information of science is required by him, but his asset is the truth. The ultimate use of this asset is not to satisfy needs but to make him know of his glory. (*Selected Essays on Aesthetics* 261)

Therefore, Tagore's point of view was the poet's insight towards the principles necessary for a comprehensive development of an individual through an effective education which develops a creative life and connects human beings with Nature.

Rabindranath Tagore's *Visva Bharati* - *visva* (universe) + *bharati* (knowledge) sustained a unity with India's rich history, locating 'its impetus in Indian philosophy, culture and knowledge, while being rooted in the contemporary world' (Fraser 146). It aimed to emancipate 'children's minds from the dead grip of a mechanical method and a narrow purpose' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 64) to define true effective education which 'acknowledges the mind to be a living thing, and therefore stimulates it to give out more in quality and quantity than is imparted to it from outside' (*The Centre* 15). His satire 'The Parrot's Training' critiques the prevalent system of education where it nurtures no insight and imagination. The necessity which Tagore embodied in his ideas on education, was that of an atmosphere of creative learning which facilitated the development of knowledge and values governed by an 'inner life-growth, in which the subconscious has ever been bursting up with the conscious plans' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 64). It is rooted in the tradition of India, the local, in spite of being open to the ideas of the world as the 'mission of all education is to lead us beyond the present date' where the 'coordination of the cultures of the world' take place (*The Centre* 21, 50). With culture acknowledging 'the excellence whose criticism is in its inner perfection, not in any external success' ("An Eastern University" 76), Tagore's *Visva Bharati* grew to foster the 'spiritual unity of the human races' (*The Tagore – Geddes* 64) through which the 'resources of knowledge and thought, Eastern and Western, [will] unite in perfect harmony' (*The Centre* 53). Geddes's



ideas were similar to Tagore's but through a different locution. Similar to Tagore's ideas on unity, his plans and diagrams followed the scientific policy of

Synthesis in thought [for] collective action – to Synergy in deed: and Imagination concentrates itself to prefigure, for this Etho-Polity in Synergy, [facilitates] its corresponding Achievement. (“The Notation of Life” 142)

Likewise, Tagore attempted to bring the East and the West closer together through coordination, cooperation, and mutual understanding. In this process of connecting cultures for a ‘spiritual freedom’ and ‘final perfection’ Tagore initiated the necessity to cultivate the aesthetic life of human beings to develop the real standard of aesthetic taste which will help our own

art-expression [to] grow in strength and riches, enabling us to judge all foreign arts with the soberness of truth and to appropriate from them ideas and forms without incurring the charge of plagiarism. (*The Centre* 63)

Having shared his thoughts on education, Tagore concludes his letter with a note of warm acceptance towards Geddes’ ‘vast comprehensive sympathy and imagination, a wide range of knowledge and critical acumen’ which characterize his ‘architectural immensity’ (*The Tagore – Geddes* 64). The Poet and the Planner with their different points of view necessarily joined hands in their endeavour to bring the world together embodying the importance of human beings’

obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship...which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance...the cosmopolitan knows, and there is much to learn from our differences. (Appiah xiii)

Therefore, while Geddes considered Tagore's insight as the visionary company to his endeavours, the poet believed the evolutionist's planning to be the necessary life-force extending a proper outlook to the poet's vision. The confluence of the two minds is vindicated when Tagore states:

All my activities have the character of ‘play’ in them – they are more or less like writing poems, only in different media of expression. Your own schemes also, in a great measure, have the same element which strongly attracts me, but they have a different idiom, which I have not the power to use...you formulate your ideas, and my mind is the vastness of their unity... [your ideas] are stored in my conscious memory waiting for living assimilation with my own thoughts. (*The Tagore – Geddes* 64)

This assimilation of ideas emerged as a means to worship ‘the manifestation of Brahma, the creative truth...through the creative principle which all human beings possesses’ which Tagore would identify as his *Jiban Debata*, the Lord of his Being, which he has explored and described in *The Religion of Man* (Fraser 115, 116).

Conclusion

Rabindranath Tagore and Patrick Geddes addressed the socio-cultural and educational challenges of their times in Bengal and Scotland through their visionary endeavours. These are their ‘webs of significance’ which ensured continuity through their evaluated tradition in order to welcome modernity. It

proved extremely effective in protecting and nursing the sapling of renaissance...encompassing a whole sub-continent and inspiring subsequent generations. (Chakravarti 118)

They urged the necessity of a mighty national revival in every department of thought through a proper education which encourages individuals to realise their own self. Through their different perspectives they aimed towards a sustainable future of humanity through harmony and sympathy; through a union that connects man with nature, interrogates the divisive forces of life through educational institutions which play an engaging role towards the development of humanity through universal education. It fostered a way of thinking, feeling and living quite opposite to the *status quo* both in society and in education. The confluence of ideas between Tagore and Geddes, or with any other person with whom there was a cultural exchange vindicated that

Geographical boundaries have lost their significance in the modern world. Peoples of the world have come closer. We must realize this and understand that this closeness must be founded on love. I don't deny that nations are hurting one another, that they are exploiting one another. Still, the East and West must join hands in the pursuit of truth. (*My Life* 199)

The epistolary correspondences between Tagore and Geddes in 1922 vindicate their ideals about the society along with the necessity of an understanding that education should be qualitative. It should aim towards nurturing human beings of integrity who would undertake the challenges of modern life without panic, and facilitate, each in his own manner, to discover one's own self and act towards the benefit of everyone – by racing against the prevalent trends of the time to ‘feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight’ (*My Life* 317). The Tagore – Geddes correspondence on education involves the meeting of Synthesis, Sympathy and Synergy⁶ which education should entail as both of them pursued their endeavours on the necessity to bring the world together with the

simple idea that in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association. (Appiah xvii)

The principles of education embodied through their epistolary correspondence involves a blue-print of self-transformation in an individual through an awakening facilitating a dialogic condition in which an individual can understand and accept cultures undergoing transformation in communication with the Other leading to an interactive dimension of cultural heritage and identity entailing the development of ‘a moral consciousness’ based upon the ‘emotional responses to global issues’, ‘global ethics based on shared values’, ensuring the ‘non-national interest’ over ‘the national interest’ (Delanty 42, 44). The enlightened ideas of education of Rabindranath Tagore and Patrick Geddes, aimed towards rendering individuals as the ‘universal man’ or Tagore's *Visvakarma*, ‘the world-worker’



(*The Religion* 55). The Tagore – Geddes letters, exchanged in 1922, detail their pragmatic endeavours undertaken for the enlargement of education in India and Scotland which remain enduring in the history of human civilisation.

Notes

Abstract

¹Geddes' letter to Tagore, 15 April 1922.

²Tagore's letter to Geddes, 9 May 1922.

³Appiah xix.

⁴Patrick Geddes, 'The Notation of Life', *Edinburgh Review* 88 (1992), 47.

⁵Geddes' letter to Tagore, 15 April 1922 and Tagore's letter to Geddes, 9 May 1922.

Article

¹This essay is for Dr Arpita Ray, my dear Sister, for her perpetual love, endless inspiration, and eternal support.

²'Umo Universale' is an Italian word for the 'Renaissance Man', 'Universal Man', an ideal of Renaissance Humanism that was developed in Renaissance Italy by Leon Battista Alberti - 'one man can do all things if he will' (www.britannica.com/topic/Renaissance-man).

³*The Tagore – Geddes Correspondence* compiled and edited with an exhaustive introduction by Bashabi Fraser was first published from Edinburgh by Edinburgh Review Book Series in 2002. The second edition of this book was published in Kolkata by Visva Bharati in 2004. The third revised edition entitled *A Meeting of Two Minds: the Geddes Tagore Letters* was published from Edinburgh by Wordpower Books in 2005. The fourth revised edition of this book is in the press.

⁴Geddes explained his theory through the following table:

Out-world	1	4	Facts	Acts
In-world	2	3	Memories	Plans

First, the outer world we see; second the inner world we remember. But we are not content merely with seeing nor with remembering: we went deeper in to the In-world. We made a new step in this when we began actively thinking and planning; and then in carrying out our plan we came back into the Out-world once more. So with this coming of Spring the new garden-scene you have prepared will begin for you. You see the need then of being able to live and be active in the In-world as well as the Out-world; not merely to dream there, but to be awake and all alive, if you ever mean to do anything. From the hard World of Facts to the no less real World of Acts, you can only travel by this In-world way. In school (an in college too) we stay too much, I think, in its first division – the second of our fourfold scheme. So my thinking lessons are largely intended to help you on into the next,



the third. From this is the true way up into the world of action again: those who stay behind, in the house of memory, may become more and more learned, but they will never do very much. That, in fact, is what is wrong with too many educated people; that is why they feel paralysed, and can neither speak nor act though the occasion calls (*The World Without* 9 - 11).

⁵The Charting of Life, “The Thinking Machine” by Patrick Geddes, Recs A/289/38 – 66 G – M, Archives and Special Collection, University of Strathclyde Library.

⁶The Shield of the Scots College carved by Dr. Arthur Geddes stated-

On a field azure, a saltire argent; surcharged with scroll recalling Edinburgh and its towers; fleur-de-lys, or, of France; a crusader’s symbol of life – date – s3/8athe of the East, pre-Islamic and sacramental, and three doves of Spirit, or, Sympathy, Synthesis and Imagination.

The above script has been obtained from Archives and Special Collection, University of Dundee.

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