AN INTERCULTURAL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION TOWARDS AN INTEGRAL VALUE-BASED PEDAGOGY.

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To my Indian children, Chendu, Lokesh and Shruti.

And to our spiritual master, Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
Section I.

Introduction.

Integral value education towards the transformation of humanity and a new paradigm.
I. A personal turnabout.

It is well-known that the French philosopher, Rene Descartes, starts his famous “Discourse on the Method” by critically examining the educational process that he underwent when he was a boy. It is also a personal reflection upon my own education that brought me to the field of integral or holistic education in a comparative perspective East/West. Furthermore, neutrality or objectivity does not exist, as quantum physics has made it more clear than ever while debunking the fallacies of well-established scientism—that is different from science-. This becomes even more critical when we enter the field of educational philosophy as attempted in this article. The most important things in the educational practice—namely the goals of education and hence the pedagogic principles—stem from a certain world view and from ethical/philosophical considerations. In this article, we will delve into this philosophical depth of the educational process beyond the technocratic blindness that too often blocks both the thinking and the praxis in contemporary school systems.

Although Catalan by birth and born in the 2000 years old city of Barcelona, my parents decided to enrol me and my brother and sister at the French School of Barcelona, still today praised as one of the most prestigious schools of the city and the country. While following the national French syllabus till higher secondary level (Baccalaureat) the school would share all the characteristics of a typically European academic school for the middle/higher class, with some Napoleonic touch up according to the French background.

To start with, I must simply say that in fifteen years of schooling—from three to eighteen—I did not have one single period of music or drama. There was only some pathetic period devoted in theory to drawing and painting in the primary and middle school, that is all, which means that the educational process was exclusively made of language, maths, science and social studies: pure academics in a competitive way and through academic pressure without any considerateness to fire out any student who could not follow the academic pressure cooker, which produced more than one child or teenager suicide that was conveniently covered up to perpetuate the system.

My own school stands as a symbol of modern mainstream education, exclusively focused on pure academics from a strictly intellectual/rationalistic approach, the academic lecture method being implemented from top downwards till primary school, with battalions of children geometrically arranged with elbows on the desks and eyes fixed on the blackboard for the whole day, with bells mechanically disciplining time like in a factory. Now I dare to say that this kind of school dismissed education and was reduced to professional training—for white collar workers, entrepreneurs and politicians-. This kind of modern school has been the pedagogy of Industrial Revolution in a materialistic and increasingly technocratic civilization.

Some educationists have found another sort of educational philosophy by reading the European pioneers of holistic pedagogies—Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Steiner, Montessori, etc— or the North-American forerunners of progressive pedagogies—Dewey, Kilpatrick, etc-. My personal turnabout has been more exotic, which has been a gift too. It was the acquaintance with Prof. Raimon Panikkar, a renowned scholar for comparative philosophy East/West and intercultural dialogue, that led me to the discovery of Indian and Buddhist philosophy. For a matter of coherence, Prof. Panikkar encouraged me to go to India quite soon, which happened for the first time in September 1998. After the normal initial shock in the streets of Chennai, and after being ensorcelled by the magic of the Theosophical headquarters in Adyar, I started a pedagogic pilgrimage through Indian schools affiliated to the Krishnamurti Foundation, Ramakrishna Mission, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Sri Sathya Sai Organization, etc. All these schools were inspired by the great sages of modern India, and all of them were implementing some sort of holistic education so far from my Napoleonic posh school for European upper class
kids where maths was the highest value on Earth and marks the ultimate goal of life. Only later would I discover the forerunners of Western holistic education, and then the Indian sages, which was a gift for a European scholar, an invitation not to forget that Europe or the West is not the only civilization on Earth.

By reading in depth the sages of India who worked on education and by visiting their schools, my life made a radical change. New avenues were open with unventured possibilities far beyond the narrow boundaries of Napoleonic schools and first rate academics. The black eyes full of light of Indian children were saying something else even deeper than the profound books of the sages. What a contrast between those eyes from the Indian schools with their glowing smile and the dull morose faces of European kids sitting like small soldiers on the desks of the Napoleonic school! The experience of integral education in India helped me realize how mainstream schooling in the modern world had dramatically reduced the multidimensional nature of humanity to a mere intellect academically trained, and the multidimensional nature of the Cosmos to a dead clock-wise mechanism. The schools of integral education in India helped me rediscover the deepest meaning of Life, and every time I would come back to my continent after spending some months in the schools of India, I would say to myself after landing at Frankfurt Airport: Europe is dead -which the Romantics already anticipated two centuries back-

The Napoleonic school was only concerned about marks in academics, with an unquestionable supremacy of maths and science. Now I want to say that integral education is concerned with humanity and life.

II. Introduction/ terminology.

The terms “holistic” or “integral education” often refer to the more humanistic and global type of pedagogy. Many times, they also imply the spiritual dimension of humanity –not in terms of outer/ orthodox religions but rather in terms of inner spirituality-. Although proper holistic education cannot overlook the most profound domain of the human being, some pedagogies have been defined as integral even if they do not manifest the inner dimension clearly enough. Hence, holistic education has been confused with other labels such as alternative education.

Here, we use the two adjectives –integral and holistic- as synonyms –which is quite conventional-. At the same time, we underline that integral or holistic education strictu sensu encompasses all the domains of humanity -all of them-, for which the spiritual –inner- realm becomes intrinsic to any genuine integral pedagogy.

There is another connection that must be clarified: the link between integral/ holistic education and education in human values or value-based education. We must be aware that value education can be understood and implemented in different ways, some corresponding to the most traditional patterns of schooling in the modern age, and some directly connected with proper integral education.
• If values are comprehended in strictly intellectual/ emotional terms within the standard human psyche, it is reasonable that they are simply taught as any academic subject. This notion of values is external to the subject—it is a social construct; and commonly it is inculcated or even imposed from outside through a system of beliefs that will usually correspond to some religious creed or organization or to some other ideological system in society.

• Values as mentioned in India by Vivekananda or Sathya Sai Baba are something entirely different, and they are directly connected with integral or holistic education. From Philosophical Idealism or spiritual philosophy, values are not to be inculcated or imposed from outside by any system of beliefs through some kind of catechism that will operate at the intellectual/ emotional level. From the point of view of integral education on spiritual grounds, values naturally unfold from within, from the depth of human consciousness, and only then, they are real and they have an ontological texture. Therefore, they are also universal—in spite of the relative cultural formulation—, which is clearly exemplified by values such as love, peace or compassion, which are mentioned by sages from all spiritual traditions and cultures.

Otherwise, merely intellectual constructs implanted from outside do not really work, and as we all know very well, human beings educated in these traditional patterns show a striking and structural incoherence, since they systematically do the opposite of what they preach. We have seen too much of this kind of hypocrisy through human history. Only true integral education unfolding the ontological nature of values from within can bring a real transformation of humanity and hence the world.

Some scholars have also underlined the connection between integral education and systemic theory. According to this kind of sociological/ anthropological thinking, the properties of any given system cannot be explained by the mere sum of its component parts. Instead, the system as a whole determines how its parts behave. Systemic/ holistic theories have overcome the limitations inherent to the mechanistic ideology predominant in the modern world, while integrating multiple layers of reality or experience within a global overview.

This kind of world view was already underlined one century back by the universal poet from Bengal and lofty philosopher of education, R. Tagore:

“For true education is to realise at every step how our training and knowledge have organic connection with our surroundings.”

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1 Tagore, “The Centre of Indian Culture”, p 7.
III. A brief historical mapping.

Scholars have found it difficult to map the history of integral education and identify the key historical contributors since the core ideas of holistic education are as old as mankind and may be traced back to virtually all cultures of human history. Only modernity has imposed another world view radically cut from these core ideas -timeless and universal-. Still, some major figures and schools of thought can be easily identified, among which we would stress Vedanta, Buddhist philosophy and Plato/ Neoplatonism in the ancient world, and Kant, Hegel and Rousseau/ Romanticism at the dawn of the modern age.

Together with Rousseau, the names of Pestalozzi and Froebel should be added. Among the Romantics, several authors manifested a keen interest in education –on holistic grounds:- Goethe, Schiller, Novalis, Jean-Paul, Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott, etc. In the XXth century, we should especially mention the heirs of Theosophy, R. Steiner and M. Montessori, together with the founders of American Pragmatism like J. Dewey and F. Parker, as well as the renowned father of Jungian psychology, C.G. Jung. More recently, we could point out some reputed names such as H. Gardner, D. Goleman, K. Wilber, A. Maslow, C. Rogers, etc. In the last decades, transpersonal psychology has brought a substantial contribution to integral education: transpersonal education.

Needless to say, Western scholarship usually ignores the bestowal from other civilizations, in particular India, where integral education comes back to the Vedic period, while modern India has provided the most profound formulations for this kind of pedagogy with great sages and philosophers, such as Vivekananda, R. Tagore, Yogananda, Aurobindo, Shivananda, J. Krishnamurti, Prabhupada, Sathya Sai Baba, etc. In no other country in the world are there as many schools of holistic education as in India. But, as Prof. R. Panikkar always reminded, the inertia of cultural imperialism still undermines the capacity of aperture of the West to a real intercultural dialogue.
IV. Main features of integral education.

1. In spite of historical, cultural or personal differences, integral education presents a set of core characteristics. To start with, the main goal of education would not be academic training but the formation of character, the education of the human being as such, and hence, the transformation of humanity towards higher states of consciousness above the still prevailing selfishness, egoism, unlimited desire, division, conflict, violence, domination, etc. From this general perspective, holistic education aims at helping the growing child or youth to become what he or she is already in potential terms. One of the major figures of transpersonal psychology, A. Maslow, refers to it as “self-actualization” or self-realization in the more traditional vocabulary of spiritual traditions. As the great sage and educationist from modern India, Vivekananda, said in simple yet powerful words:

“The end of all education, all training. should be man-making.”

In the words of another eminent sage and educationist from modern India, J. Krishnamurti:

“Present-day education is a complete failure because it has emphasized technique. In over-emphasizing technique we destroy man.”

2. The holistic perspective is concerned with human realization at all levels: physical, relational, ethical, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual. Whatever is the concrete way of structuring and unfolding all the domains of human personality, integral education always engages students in an active role through their own learning process, which means that holistic pedagogies promote the self-education of the child. This kind of education also fosters positive values and attitudes, maturity and responsibility, together with community life and the sense of brotherhood and unity. Holistic pedagogies help the growing child overcome obstacles and difficulties and face challenges.

Vivekanda said it again in simple and clear terms:

“A child educates itself.”

“You (the teacher) can take away the obstacles. You can supply the growing seed with the materials.”

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3 Krishnamurti, “Education and the Significance of Life”, 1953, p 18
3. Nevertheless, integral education is not confined to positive values and community life—as in mere scouting for instance--; it goes far beyond since it unveils all the depth of the human being.

In Krishnamurti’s words:

“The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole.”

At a strictly psychological level, integral education tries that each child strives to become all that he or she can be. Hence, there would not be deficits or disabilities according to pre-established standards, but rather differences in psychological tendencies and multiple intelligences—cf H. Gardner more recently—.

Still, human realization would not be limited to psychological criteria, since the inner spiritual dimension would constitute the last and most profound layer of any genuine integral pedagogy. As we warned above, this is not the realm of outer organized religions, but rather the depth of human consciousness. From this spiritual world view, integral education emphasizes the coherence between thought, word and deed, that is, the harmony between the inner and the outer realms. It also tries to develop in the child’s mind the notions of interdependence and interconnectedness—so dear to the forerunners of quantum physics, such as Planck, Heisenberg, Bohr or Schroedinger—.

To sum up, integral education inherits the spiritual insights and wisdom of the ancient traditions of Philosophical Idealism, though it tries to adapt this millenary timeless heritage to the modern world. In Western civilization, Socrates would be the most paradigmatic figure while following the immortal inscription on the Temple of Delphos: -Man, know yourself, and you will know the universe and the gods. This can never become a rigid, dogmatic system fixed once for ever; it must be always evolving like life itself. Integral education is the opposite of dogmatism.

As Rudolf Steiner warned:

“For the true teacher, pedagogy must be something living, something new at each moment. Everything that teachers carry in their souls as memories robs them of their originality.”

4. A holistic curriculum will be very different from the typical modern school—which reduces education to pure academics, and hence, to professional training from the predominant mechanistic ideology of Industrial Revolution—. Holistic pedagogies do not neglect academic training, although they will shift from the mechanic ways of academic teaching—quantity of information to be memorized and poured down in tests—towards true academic excellence lying in free creative thinking, imagination, inquiry and self-expression.

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6 Krishnamurti, “Education and the Significance of Life”, 1953, p 24

7 Steiner R., 1995, p 85
5. Beyond academic excellence, integral education will bring children to know about themselves. Holistic education is essentially Socratic—Know yourself—which is also at the core of the Indian Upanishads. Moreover, integral education knows that self-knowledge is essentially relational, since the human being is essentially social. Therefore, integral education will educate children through **relationship and Socratic dialogue**, something that the modern sage, Krishnamurti, expounded with sharp lucid insights.

For Krishnamurti, mainstream schooling has been the opposite of the Socratic spirit:

“Instead of awakening the integrated intelligence of the individual, education is encouraging him to conform to a pattern and so is hindering his comprehension of himself as a total process.”

6. Integral education will attach great importance to **the teaching strategies, pedagogic tools and educational methods**, convinced that the mainstream school system has impoverished pedagogy by overstressing the academic lecture method and bringing it from top down, from college down to primary school. Holistic education will certainly favour a more Socratic/dialectical method of teaching, while it will promote a more active role of the student.

Furthermore, integral education is by definition child-centred and value-based: it seeks to unveil the uniqueness of every child or human being instead of moulding the growing human being into fixed, rigid social patterns; it also seeks to unfold the fundamental human values—such as love, peace and compassion—from within. This means that there should not be any dualism in education; values and academics are inseparable. The whole educational process and campus must be imbued with values and a certain ethos.

In the words of Maria Montessori:

“The pedagogical method of observation has for its base the liberty of the child; and liberty is activity.”

“Discipline must come through liberty. (...) If discipline is founded upon liberty, the discipline itself must necessarily be active.”

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8 Krishnamurti, “Education and the Significance of Life”, 1953, p 12

9 Montessori M. 2004, p 124

10 Montessori M., 2004, p 124
7. Ultimately, **integral education is essentially transformative rather than informative.**

In this world view, integral yoga as understood by the modern Indian sage, Aurobindo, is not a “fuga mundi” but rather it implies the very transformation of the empirical plane.

“The integral yoga does not reject life. It transforms life.”

As Albert Einstein warned, modern science and technology are like an axe in the hands of a pathological criminal—the ordinary mind, valueless, selfish and destructive-. For holistic pedagogies, the most fundamental goal of the educational process would be the transformation of the human being towards higher states of consciousness, basically more ethical, and ultimately spiritual.

In Krishnamurti’s words:

“Education in the true sense is helping the individual to be mature and free, to flower greatly in love and goodness.”

8. On the other hand, **integral education emphasizes relations and dialogue, interdependence and interconnectedness**, whereas mainstream schooling has operated a deep fragmentation of knowledge and reality. This means that holistic pedagogies will favour interdisciplinary approaches and team work—without dismissing personal effort-. Just like systemic thinking in social studies and quantum physics in science, holistic education recognizes the various facets of reality as connected and integrated. Together with this transdisciplinary spirit of inquiry, integral education recognizes the dialectical nature of the cosmos, life and humanity.

9. **As per the evaluation methods, holistic pedagogies will avoid the mechanical tests so well developed in mainstream schooling**—till the most aberrant formulations in Asian countries like India, where students are forced to memorize without understanding in order to pour down this blind quantity of information in disciplinary tests-. Integral education prefers another kind of academic excellence based on conceptual exams, essays and commentaries, problem solving/ case study, experiential methods, etc, while it fully elaborates all the possible tools to encourage the spirit of inquiry and creativity of the student. The concept of the project becomes a major evaluation method in holistic schools.

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12 Krishnamurti, “Education and the Significance of Life”, 1953, p 23
As stressed by R. Tagore:

“(...) in education the most important factor must be the inspiring atmosphere of creative activity.”

10. **The teachers’ role** faces another major mutation from mainstream schooling to integral pedagogies. In the typically modern school, the teacher is regarded as a figure of authority who controls and punishes –just like the state-. Integral education comes back to **the profound spirit of the master/disciple relationship** –the Gurukula of India or the Greek Paideia-. This means that the teacher is seen as a friend or mentor who accompanies the growing human being from love and respect for the unique nature of the child. Consequently, integral education will prefer dialogue to monologue, cooperation to competition.

As it has been emphasized in the Indian educational tradition, love –pedagogic love- lies at the heart of the teaching process. As R. Steiner said:

“Now, my dear children, when you have felt your teacher’s love all day long up here, then you can go home again and tell your parents about what you have learned, and your parents will be glad (...)”

In conclusion, integral education in the modern age culminates the historical drift towards human realization evolving through all cultures of mankind with new developments and achievements. Contemporary holistic education constitutes the humanism of our time, the actualization of millenary traditions of philosophy and wisdom at the dawn of a paradigm shift: from the modern reductionism and mechanism of Industrial Revolution towards a more holistic paradigm where consciousness is the key, as the godfathers of quantum physics have already understood.

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14 Steiner R., 1996, p 31
V. Integral education and the paradigm shift. 
To bring back that Glory to the Earth.

After the horrors of the French Revolution, that, instead of nurturing a new humanity repeated the tyranny of the past, the Romantic poet could chant a truly new vision that was the real awakening to a higher level of consciousness and reality:

“I was only then
Contended, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O’er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
For in all things
I saw one life, and felt that it was joy.”


Steiner’s developmental approach is inseparable from a deep understanding of the human being that cannot overlook the spiritual dimension that simply exists. Waldorf education is but the translation into the pedagogic field of this deeper understanding of humanity – Anthroposophy-. In Steiner’s words:

“A new study of humanity, a new understanding of humanity is necessary. (...) The second thing that we must develop as we work toward a more humane form of society, is a social attitude of the teachers toward the children already in the school. This is a new love of humanity – an awareness of the interplay of forces between the teacher and pupil.”

“I am not surprised that the majority of today’s teachers view their work mechanically. Their understanding of humanity comes from the dead science that has arisen out of the industrial, statist and capitalist life of the past three or four centuries. That science has resulted in a dead art of education (...)”

The most important to understand Steiner’s philosophy of education is to keep in mind that the Waldorf School derives from Anthroposophy understood as a “weltanschauung”, a world view, that is spiritual and metaphysical, Socratic or Platonist, and also Christian, in front of the materialistic and mechanistic paradigm of the capitalist modern world.

To accompany the child and youth along its process of growing up towards higher states of consciousness would be the true meaning of integral education. Anything else can be training or instruction, but not education – “educare” in Latin, that is, “e-ducere”, to unfold from within the innermost nature of humanity; “bala vikas” in Sanskrit, literally meaning the blossoming of the boy/child from within.

The atrocities, horrors and crimes against humanity during the IIIrd Reich, and in particular in the extermination camps, were perpetrated by men -and women too- with college/university degrees and even Ph.D. After more than 60 years, European/Western education has still not changed – in general terms-; it is still merely academic.

15 Steiner R., 1995, p 59
16 Steiner R., 1995, p 60
But all that academic knowledge would be for what? For exploiting our fellow human beings and devastating the whole planet? As many managers with MBAs are doing from the big corporations that ravage the Amazonia, or as many petty business men with “culture” are doing in Asia in workshops worse than Oliver Twist’s orphanage where young children work as slaves.

Mankind has still not learnt the lesson of 1945, and history continues to repeat itself, with an acceleration that is characteristic of our time. The Europeans who illusively thought that 1945 was finished, had to witness the horrors of Stalinism, Maoism, the Red Khmers, the dictatorships of Latin America, Vietnam, etc, –until the horrors happened again even on the soil of Europe in Yugoslavia-.

1945 will only be closed through a shift in the state of consciousness, and this should constitute the main goal of education according to holistic pedagogies.

Meanwhile, many among the “best” private schools of the world, also the most expensive, still advertise their pedagogy without mentioning not only the spiritual dimension – of course- but even human values; it is only a matter of training skilled professionals capable of taking afterwards the best paid jobs –which compensates the investment done by their parents-. In parallel with that, European academic systems tend to cancel philosophy of education as a subject in the career of education, being replaced by pedagogic technologies.

Many people are still blind with the technological mirage of our time. Faced with acute problems, human authorities on Earth think that they will find the solutions with more technology; while it is the technology –or science, or knowledge- without values, without a holistic sensitiveness, that has produced the present catastrophe, evident enough at the ecological level. We will not arrange anything with more technology; the system by itself is unsustainable. Only with values, only with a holistic outlook, only with a shift of paradigm, may we have some future ahead. As Albert Einstein said, we can never solve a problem with the same state of mind that has created it.

To put one well-known example, Waldorf education, created by R. Steiner, wants to unfold human potential in depth with all its capacities, and educate the whole child. The school must stimulate both the intellectual/rational and intuitive/artistic side of the student in equal measure –unlike mainstream schooling that hypertrophies the intellect to the detriment of the more intuitive or aesthetic skills-. The holistic nature of Waldorf education embraces the spiritual dimension, dramatically lost in the modern world from Steiner’s point of view. In his own words:

“...We must develop and art of education that can lead us out of the social chaos into which we have fallen (...)

There is no escaping this chaos unless we find a way to bring spirituality into human souls through education.”\textsuperscript{17}

The emergence of a new kind of science, with fields such as quantum physics, relational theory, epigenetics, deep ecology, Jungian psychiatry, transpersonal psychology, sophrology, etc, implies a lucid acceptance and even understanding that the human being is multi-dimensional, like the universe; not only are there different states of consciousness but even different levels of vibration and reality.

\textsuperscript{17} Steiner R., 1997, p 12
In this quantum horizon, the time has come to dare to speak, and not to feel any shame or to hide oneself behind subterfuges. The time has come to dare to speak of the spiritual dimension of humanity. But not that distant and terrifying God that lies there in Heaven very far from us, and judges and condemns; since, as Lord Jesus uttered, the Kingdom of Heaven lies within us. Here we speak of the Brahman –the Transcendent- that is the Atman -the very essence of ourselves- in the language of the philosophical tradition of India. We speak of the God of love and compassion chanted by the greatest saints and sages of the West and the East, such as Saint Francis of Assissi, Kabir, or Mother Theresa.

What we defend is finally a matter of common sense: to integrate all the dimensions of humanity for the sake of children and all human beings; to come back to the true, original – etymological- meaning of education –“e-ducere”, “bala vikas”-.

Which means, to raise the fundamental issue of the transformation of the human being – from within-: the real, ontological transformation of humanity towards higher states of consciousness and vibration TROUGH EDUCATION.

Only that can assure us that the IIIrd Reich will never happen again.

This transformation can only occur in real freedom, through a genuine pursuit, research and inquiry. Transformation cannot be imposed –only outer systems of beliefs and catechism can be imposed from outside-: We can only transform ourselves; of course, with the caring and affectionate guidance of a true teacher, who will never impose but only suggest, who will at the maximum show the path that will have to be trodden by ourselves, since the true master is the one who wants the pupil to become his own master. As any genuine teacher would say: - Do not believe me; just listen to me.

Truth cannot be imposed from outside as a concept. It can only be experienced from inside as a reality. There is no other reality than life itself, and we can only live our lives ourselves. In this horizon of love and realization, education becomes a caring guidance, when the teacher is a true “guru” –friend, philosopher and guide-.

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The tragedy of European Romanticism arose from a lucid awareness of the sinister destiny of the modern world, begetting all the horrors that humanity has witnessed from the Terror of the French Revolution until the crimes against humanity in the recent civil war in the former Yugoslavia. The Romantics understood in depth the process of modernization, since their comprehension dawned from deeper layers of human consciousness. In this tragedy, the Romantic hero realized with grief and nostalgia that the Light of a higher reality was vanishing in a joyless dismal world increasingly dominated by the lowest tendencies of the most superficial ego.
“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our Life’s Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.”

“Turn wheresoe’er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.
Yet I know, where’er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.”


The Romantic hero feels that there hath past away a glory from the earth.

We do believe that integral education in human values can bring back that glory to the earth.
Part I.

Educational Models for Integral Education:

India and the Western World.
Section II.

The sages of India: Vivekananda, Tagore and Aurobindo.
Introduction.

Western scholarship rarely pays attention to the contributions from other civilizations; our ordinary handbooks on the history of philosophy or the history of art are usually centred on Western culture in exclusive terms. In front of this cultural scenario –and bias–, the renowned scholar from Varanasi and Santa Barbara (California), Prof. Raimon Panikkar, worked throughout his entire career to open Western culture and scholarship to intercultural dialogue. ¹⁸

In the educational field, in particular, non-Western pedagogies are generally ignored, even amongst the advocates of integral value-based education, who could be considered more open-minded than the average population or scholarship. If we observe what happens in the expanding sector of progressive value-based pedagogies, we can easily realize that almost everybody focuses exclusively on the Western pioneers, Steiner and Montessori in Europe, Dewey and Kilpatrick in North America.

As R. Panikkar stressed in his books and lectures, the Western world can learn many things from other civilizations, India for instance; all his academic and philosophical career was an earnest defence of intercultural/inter-religious dialogue. This paper tries to open Western pedagogy and ethics to this needful intercultural dialogue, showing to Western educators and scholars that our paths of integral value education can be enriched through the educational philosophy of major sages of India such as Swami Vivekananda, R. Tagore and Sri Aurobindo.

Moreover, we should not forget that this enlightening philosophy of education has been implemented through vast educational organizations providing decades of pedagogic experience. India can offer to the Western world an accumulated experience of more than hundred years and thousands of schools devoted to the practice of holistic value-based education rooted in a deeply ethical world view.

However, Western scholars and educators must be aware of another crucial issue, that of the paradigm. Most Westerners in the post-modern world assume that there is only one paradigm—which is materialistic, mechanistic and utilitarian, and ultimately technocratic–. The sages of India examined here—just as Plato, Hegel or Steiner in the Western world—speak of ethics and education from another world view, which is spiritual and metaphysical. Only from this depth within, which, as quantum physicists have understood, is made of the same stuff than consciousness, can true ethics and true education evolve: the Socratic path of self-inquiry as a symbol of this mystical/metaphysical paradigm buried down by the triumph of materialism and reappraised today by quantum physics and the new holistic paradigm.

In the words of the Indian scholar S. Samuel Ravi:

“Education (in the Indian tradition) was used as an instrument to enable the individual to rise above and to attain the truth, the beautiful and the good”.  

This metaphysical trinity –Satyam, Sundaram, Shivam in Sanskrit, which Tagore heartily embraced - evolves from within through a Socratic path of self-inquiry and self-realization. In the Indian “gurukula” – the community of the master with his disciples- the “guru” knows from experience –not from mere bookish knowledge- that the truth, the beautiful and the good exists in the depth within the “chela” –disciple-. Then education becomes a loving guidance through which the adult accompanies the growing youth to unfold this ethical and spiritual depth from within, which is as real as the empirical world, though it is commonly overlooked by the prevailing metaphysical ignorance – “avidya”-.

This metaphysical depth or reality is what the Indian “chela” wanted to know –not mere intellectual knowledge-.

“He (Bhrgu) again approached his father Varuna and said: -Venerable Sir, teach me Brahman.”

This well-known instance from the Taittiriya Upanishad (Chapter III Section 2) exemplifies the Vedic world view from which stems the Idealistic conception of education in search of this metaphysical reality –the Brahman- that is certainly real –as real as matter- and that lies within each and everyone, not outside in the empirical realm.

The renowned Indian scholar R.N. Sharma, who has earnestly studied the Indian educational system, emphasizes the intimate link between the Vedic metaphysical worldview and its pedagogic translation:

“According to Vedic world view the world is pervaded by divinity and the aim of every living being is to achieve liberation. This is possible by following one’s own dharma. Thus, according to the Vedas the aim of education is liberation.”

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However, the modern scholar must be aware that this kind of liberation—which is metaphysical—has nothing to do with the socio-political liberation of the French Revolution or Marxism. In “Philosophical Foundations of Value Education in India”, the renowned Indian scholar, S.P. Ruhela, makes the difference between this metaphysical liberation and the modern liberation of P. Freire for instance—“The Pedagogy of the Oppressed”. This is the difference between Philosophical Idealism—represented by the Upanishads and Critical Thought—represented by P. Freire after Marxism or the Frankfurt School. While Freire and radical thinkers like him want education to raise pupils or conscience to such a level that they come to know about the reality of their social situation, very clearly and critically, and then they are motivated to adopt all sorts of social means, the Upanishads and Philosophical Idealism want people’s conscience to be raised by meditation, introspection, value education, and such other non-violent, spiritual means.

Modern sages such as Swami Vivekananda, R. Tagore or Sri Aurobindo restate this perennial philosophy of education for the modern world. This is what we try to bring to contemporary readers in this article, aware that Western scholarship and education has usually overlooked this major contribution from Indian Philosophical Idealism.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.

Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) is one of the most important spiritual masters of modern India and one of the precursors of the Hindu Renaissance.

His favourite and closest disciple, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) would become another major figure of Indian philosophy and spirituality with more international resonance. Vivekananda is considered as one of the fathers of Neo-Vedanta, and one of the forerunners of integral value-based education in India.

The Ramakrishna Order bearing the name of the Master comprises the twin institutions named Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

- The Ramakrishna Math came into being under the guidance of the Master himself, although it was organized as such in 1886 (registered in 1901) after his passing away by his prominent disciple, Swami Vivekananda. It is a monastic order, with the headquarters at Belur (near Kolkata in West Bengal).
- The Ramakrishna Mission was founded by Swami Vivekananda on May 1st 1897 (registered in 1909). It is now a formally registered society in which monks from the Ramakrishna Math and lay professionals work together to conduct various types of social service as part of their spiritual practice, especially in the educational arena, but also in other fields: medical services, attention to weaker sectors, relief in times of natural calamities, spiritual and cultural activities, etc.
The vision and goals of the Ramakrishna Mission:

- The ideology is traditional in spirit though modern in outlook, essentially ethical, spiritual and also practical.
- Its aim is universal, so it is addressed to all human beings irrespective of their social/religious background.
- It emphasizes the essential divinity of all beings, and hence their sacred dignity; each being is God’s manifestation or embodiment.
- It postulates that all religions are equally true, for which all of them can lead to spiritual realization if properly followed.
- It believes that service to fellow beings is service to God.
- It advocates an integral vision of the human being and the spiritual path, integrating the three Yogas (domains or ways): Jnana (knowledge/wisdom), Bhakti (love/devotion) and Karma (action/service).

Vivekananda is especially important still today for a modern defence of Philosophical Idealism and its pedagogic translation into integral value-based education. As S.P. Ruhela explains in his works devoted to value education:

“Vivekananda is perhaps the first modern Indian thinker to be at once traditional in spirit and modern in outlook. Imbued with the spiritual attainments of his Master and himself having the first-hand spiritual experience, he could speak about ancient Indian soul and spirit in an unaltering way. His views on education are also therefore traditional in value substance but most modern in its material compass.”

Beyond Philosophical Idealism, for many Indian scholars Vivekananda is still relevant in general terms towards national development and the building of a national system of education. With the new BJP government under the steering of Mr N. Modi, Vivekananda is object of even more attention to inspire public policies for both nation and education development.

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The educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda is essentially integral and value-based.\textsuperscript{28} It has been implemented through 900 schools/colleges.

- Vivekananda is convinced that mankind is going through a serious crisis—with which more and more people would agree today—. Scientism and mechanism have reduced civilization to technocracy—a major theme of the illustrious philosopher Raimon Panikkar-. This historical process has undermined spiritual and human values together with ethics. Vivekananda concludes that the only solution to these structural flaws and their subsequent social evils lies in education—which was the deepest conviction of Kant and Hegel as well-.

  “The education that our boys receive (under British colonization) is very negative. The schoolboy learns nothing, but has everything of his own broken down.”\textsuperscript{26}

- For this major philosopher and sage, education signifies man-making; the formation of character is as important as academic training. Hence, the pedagogic process must be seen as self-development. This means that education must be child-centred, unfolding the “svadharma”—the deepest nature—of every child.

  “A child educates itself.”\textsuperscript{27}

- In this perspective, education must be above all transformative—the very key of integral education—, which means for Vivekananda that the most fundamental goal of education should be awakening the spiritual self wherein—the very foundation of Philosophical Idealism, Socrates’ motto-. Vivekananda emphasized that education implies unfolding the dormant potential within, which is essentially divine, though obscured by the ignorance prevailing in this world. This corresponds to the etymological meaning of the Sanskrit concept BalaVikas, that is, unfolding the depth of the boy/child from within.

  “Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside.”\textsuperscript{28}

  “The Light Divine within is obscured in most people.”\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{25} Cf Swami Vivekananda on education, 1932, 1957, 1999.


\textsuperscript{27} Swami Vivekananda, 1957, p 4.

\textsuperscript{28} Swami Vivekananda, 1957, p 1.

\textsuperscript{29} Swami Vivekananda, 1957, p 3.
Vivekananda makes it clear that this Socratic path of Bala Vikas – unfolding - implies the removal of a series of negative aspects in order to unveil the depth inside: purifying the ego, liberating oneself from false identifications and ignorance.

“You (the teacher) can take away the obstacles. You can supply the growing seed with the materials.”

Meditation certainly helps to produce this transformative catharsis towards the realization of our true nature: this inner self or perfection within, with which we gradually identify ourselves through inner work of self-inquiry.

When human consciousness reaches this true deeper identity, it realizes the major teaching of all sages as a living reality: our own self is identical with all other selves of the universe, that is, the unity underlying diversity and cosmic consciousness. Education ultimately enables us to comprehend our own self within as the self everywhere. Unity – ontological unity - becomes the foremost goal of education – of an integral and humanistic vision of education beyond mere academics -.

Since we are in this world here and now, the spiritual foundation of education should not be achieved in isolation from others or the world. Vivekananda advocates a humanistic integration of body, mind and soul within our community, when life becomes realization – of our innermost nature and service to the community and fellow beings – who are essentially One with us -. Education should also promote universal brotherhood.

Among educational methods, Vivekananda prefers the Socratic method of dialogue guiding the student to inquire by himself or herself.

This implies the fundamental ethical dimension in education: the pedagogic process as the formation of character. However, ethics is not the compliance with something outside but the unfolding of something from within; a Kantian internal imperative with a metaphysical entity: again, the Socratic path.

“The end of all education, all training. should be man-making.”

Vivekananda also promoted discussion and guidance/ counselling to students.

According to him, all knowledge lies already inside, since our inner self is the Self of everything. Knowing means re-discovering – unveiling from within -. The teacher helps the student to remove the obstacles so that this inner knowledge can unfold.

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• Hence, Vivekananda would encourage the self-education of the child –to some extent and under the caring guidance of the teacher as Guru-.

“You cannot teach a child anymore than you can grow a plant. The plant develops its own nature. The child also teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way.”32

“No one was ever really taught by another. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things.”33

• Like recent spiritual masters such as Sathya Sai Baba, Vivekananda emphasized the role model of the adults –teachers or parents--; the main task of any educator is to be a living example, a source of inspiration.

• Also like Sathya Sai Baba or Swami Prabhupada, Vivekananda praised the profound spirit of the Indian Gurukula, the master/disciple relationship, which he calls “gurugriha-vasa” following the Sanskrit tradition. Hence, an ideal school should try to revive this spirit in a modern frame in order to develop all the potential of human relationship, the very basis of education. 34

• In terms of curriculum, Vivekananda proposed an integral syllabus comprising all the main academic subjects, music and arts, culture, values and ethics, physical exercise and the spiritual path as the foundation of everything.

• In the philosophical and spiritual domain, Vivekananda advocated the teaching of Vedas, Upanishads and Vedanta in an open frame of mind embracing all spiritual traditions.35 Obviously he also recommended the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita.36

• In terms of spiritual practice, he emphasized the role of meditation and yoga.

• Beyond mere techniques, educators should never forget that the spiritual path, the Socratic self-inquiry towards self-realization, should always remain the innermost core of the pedagogic system.

“Religion is the innermost core of education.”37

“First of all self-knowledge.”

33 Swami Vivekananda, 1957, p 2.
35 Cf Swami Vivekananda, 1957, p 45.
36 Cf Swami Vivekananda, 1957, p 85.
“Infinite power is latent in this “jivatman” (individualised soul); from the ant to the perfect man there is the same Atman (essence) in all, the difference being only in manifestation.”

Vivekananda certainly promoted a national resurgence of India in front of British colonization and he is still regarded all around the country as one of the Founding Fathers of modern India. His picture can be seen in the halls, offices and classrooms in all schools all around the country from the new middle-class outskirts of Bangalore to the most remote hamlets of rural Andhra.

Nonetheless, we should be cautious on that respect, because he was not a politician but rather a philosopher, sage and “guru”. Even if he speaks of national development, we should remember that his ideas on the Indian renaissance are part of a spiritual world view whose very centre is not about politics but spirituality -the process of spiritual transformation of the human being-. This spiritual journey -“sadhana”- evolves within the society itself, not in a cave in the Himalayas; this is another important part of Vivekananda’s mission. Still, there is no Indian renaissance without human renaissance, and the rebirth is essentially spiritual and global. Whether some politicians have later reduced his message to narrow-minded politics while forgetting the depth of his spiritual quest is another matter.

As we quoted just above, Vivekananda clearly stated:

“First of all self-knowledge.”

The Socratic quest and the famous motto engraved in the Temple of Delphos was the very core of Vivekananda’s vision and mission –not mere politics-.

After his inspiring legacy, the Math and Mission has been running around 900 educational institutes, which gives us an idea of the gigantic dimension of the social service started by this lighthouse of India and the world that was Swami Vivekananda under the inspiration of his master, Sri Ramakrishna. Not by chance Swami Vivekananda himself called for the education of the masses as an indispensable step towards a renaissance of India. The twin organizations also run 15 hospitals, 125 dispensaries and around 50 mobile medical units.

One of the most significant institutes of the Math and Mission would be the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture at Golpark, Kolkata. Another well-known academic space would be the Ramakrishna Institute of Moral and Spiritual Education in Mysore.


39 Cf Swami Vivekananda, 1957, p 68-76.
We have had the privilege of interacting with schools of the Ramakrishna Mission in South India, especially in Chennai, such as the Main Higher Secondary School (Mambalam), Matriculation School (Mambalam), Boys'Hostel (Mambalam) or Students' Home (Mylapore). Apart from the touching human experience with the children and the teachers, we have been able to realize how difficult it is to implement Vivekananda’s message in daily life in middle-class or humble neighbourhoods of an Indian city today. The lack in proper training from the side of teachers, the precarious background of many children, the burden of the official syllabus with excessive information and mechanical tests that do not leave time for anything else, etc, a whole set of factors does not make it easy to follow Vivekananda’s inspiration in the real classroom that has nothing to do with the perfection of ideals on written books. Real life is something entirely different, not only in India but also in Europe and everywhere, and here, at the level of daily life, in the classroom, integral education is not an easy task. Still, the Students’ Home in Mylapore, near the majestic Shiva Temple, does its best and creates a special atmosphere where we can feel that Ramakrishna and Vivekananda are still alive.
R. TAGORE AND SHANTINIKETAN.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is one of the greatest poets/writers of India, and undoubtedly one of the major figures of world literature, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. His poetry manifests a unique sensitiveness and beauty, with a profound spiritual spell. He can be considered as a major mystical figure of the modern world who expressed his sublime vision through poetry, literature and also music.

Furthermore, his humanism was translated into a sincere passion for education, and we can certainly conclude that this mystical poet of India has provided one of the most enlightening messages in the modern world for a more humanistic, integral and spiritual kind of education, which S.P. Ruhela emphasizes in his works on value education:

“Deeply rooted in the Upanishadic idealistic spirit, Tagore was very much influenced by the Vaishnava poets of Bengal (...) Tagore, the high priest of aesthetic and spiritual expression advocates the same idea with a greater force and richness of content as the ultimate aim of education. (...) Tagore, like other modern Indian educational thinkers, recognises that the final aim of education is freedom.”

But this is not the freedom of Marxism or the Frankfurt School, even less the freedom of throwing off our bonds in the common ego, but rather the joyful realization of that deeper truth experienced and unveiled by the Upanishadic sages or the Vaishnava mystical poets.

Tagore’s influence on progressive or holistic education has been widely recognized, not only in India but also in the Western world. His ideas on education can still inspire the needed transformation of educational systems towards integral value education.

40 S.P. Ruhela, 2000 B, p. 76.

41 Cf Dastoor N.D., Minocher Homji, 1998, p. 3-8.

42 Cf for instance The Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies, Edinburgh Napier University.

Cf also Elmhirst L.K., 1961.

The Indian scholar S. Bhattarcharjee stresses his impact in the Indian educational system:

“Tagore’s educational ideals have been agreed by other educationists and many of his innovations have now become part of general educational practices, but his special role lay in the emphasis on harmony balance between materialism and spiritualism in total development of personality.”

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**Tagore’s educational and humanistic trinity.**

- In 1901, Tagore moved to Shantiniketan, where he founded an ashram that included an experimental school.
- In 1921, Tagore and agricultural economist Leonard Elmhirst set up the Institute for Rural Reconstruction, later renamed Shriniketan.
- Shriniketan would be connected with the Vishva-Bharati University, created in the same year, 1921.

Between 1878 and 1932, Tagore visited more than thirty countries on five continents, which contributed to the international recognition of his lofty legacy. His fame and notoriety rapidly grew in Western countries, to such an extent that we could soon find kindergartens in European cities bringing the auspicious name of the great mystical poet and educationist of India. From this point of view, Tagore’s work contributed to build up a prestigious image of Indian culture and spirituality in the Western world.

Although the name of Shantiniketan is surrounded by a certain aura in the West, Tagore’s prominence as a mystical poet or writer has probably cast some shade upon his philosophy of education, which has often been overlooked while stressing other educational reformers of the modern age. Tagore’s pedagogy can bring invaluable insights into the understanding of integral education in depth; his intercultural aperture and his mystical vision of the unity of mankind may cast a purer light upon a world still divided by national, religious and social conflict.

Tagore did not write a proper treatise on education, unlike some other major figures of the history of educational philosophy. Hence, his pedagogic ideas must be gleaned through his various writings; they can also be apprehended through his educational experiences in Shantiniketan. His major work dealing with education would be “The Centre of Indian Culture”.

His educational philosophy is deeply mystical, pure reflection of the inner vision of a spiritual poet, seer and sage. Therefore, he emphatically embraced the message of all saints and spiritual masters.

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“Then in the world where does our liberation lie? In love.”

For Tagore, love is the key to shift from mechanical necessity to blissful freedom. It is the key of human liberation, the very essence of Man since it is the very essence of God. Hence, it is the very core of education.

Here, Tagore exemplifies both Philosophical Idealism and its pedagogic translation- the Indian Gurukula or the Socratic method.-

The reference to the Indian Gurukula becomes explicit in Tagore’s writings. The poet from Bengal defended with enthusiasm the ideal of “tapovana” –the forest of the yogis- where the “gurukula” –the community of the master with his disciples- evolved through centuries and even thousands of years. For Tagore, these forest-dwellers, seekers and teachers, kept the genius and essence of India.

“India has proved that it has its own mind, which has deeply thought and felt and tried to solve according to its light the problems of existence. The education of India is to enable this mind of India to find out truth, to make this truth its own wherever found and to give expression to it in such a manner as only it can do.”

In Tagore’s words, the forest of the yogis “has established the link of the soul with the universal”, and this is what the “guru” –master- taught to the “chela” –disciple-, or rather, this is what the disciple unveiled under the loving guidance of the master. This is the very core of education for Tagore–and also for Vivekananda-. This is the very essence of the Indian Gurukula, gradually vanishing with the establishment of European modern schooling under the British through colonization. This Gurukula –so akin to Socrates and Plato- is what Tagore wanted to be recreated in India. For him, the Upanishads stand as a symbol of this light from Ancient India. Tagore believed that the modern school created by Europe enhances the ego, whereas the Indian Gurukula frees the soul. The renaissance of the “gurukula” or “tapovana” is crucial for him–and also for Vivekananda- for a general renaissance of India–and the world-. Tapovana should inspire the national education of India instead of the British-made school; it could also inspire many true seekers all around the world.

However, this has nothing to do with narrow-minded or exclusive political nationalism, from which Tagore clearly withdrew; it has to do with genuine mysticism. It is a spiritual and universal vision.

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46 Tagore, “The Centre of Indian Culture”, p 6.

47 Cf Tagore’s “Words of Freedom. Ideas of a Nation”.
In Tagore’s words:

“In this forest man has realized in serene meditation the union of his soul with universal nature.”

Another wonder of Tagore’s vision and mission would be **Vishva-Bharati**, an intercultural space for the arts and science, where persons from different areas and countries could work together in a common pursuit of Truth. For this, Tagore invited artists and scholars from other parts of India and the world to live together at Shantiniketan and share their pursuits in a spirit of unity in diversity.

Vishva-Bharati has been seen as the international University of Shantiniketan ashram and school. From its beginning in 1921, it has developed under Tagore’s aura, and it was made the fourth central university of India by the National Government in 1951.

Shantiniketan, Vishva-Bharati and Shriniketan stand as a symbol of the best educational efforts of the modern age, the most sensitive and inspirational pedagogy, deeply humanistic, profoundly mystical, and truly integral, envisioned and taught by one of the most sublime souls that have lived in the world in the modern age, one of the greatest poets and educationists of India and the world, Rabindranath Tagore.

**Tagore’s educational philosophy for an all round human personality.**

- Tagore’s pedagogic system is rooted in the immediate context of the child, whilst it is also open to the cultures of the outer world.
- This means that Tagore’s pedagogy is systemic.

“For true education is to realise at every step how our training and knowledge have organic connection with our surroundings.”

- His pedagogy is clearly child-centred towards self-realization, with pleasurable learning sensibly individualized to the personality of every child –nothing imposed and repressive as it has often happened in modern schooling-. 
- His pedagogy is also ethical, value-centred and spiritually-based, requesting teachers not to emphasize wars and conflict but rather the progress of mankind.
- He always defended self-discipline twinned with self-learning and the freedom of the child –directed towards self-expression-.

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50 Tagore, “The Centre of Indian Culture”, p 7.
It is worthwhile to notice that Dr M. Montessori visited Shantiniketan in 1939 and found herself in immediate sympathy with Tagore and his school.\textsuperscript{51} Dr Montessori realized that Tagore’s Shantiniketan was based upon self/ experiential learning, which she advocated throughout her entire life. In fact, Montessori stayed for a long period of time in India, more than initially planned, and settled down in the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, Chennai.

- Tagore was very fond of the Rousseauian pedagogy with classes held in the open air under the trees nurturing this typically Romantic and organic unity with Nature.
- In this perspective, Nature walks and hiking should be part of the curriculum.
- Observation of Nature, direct experience and activities should constitute major pedagogic methods.
- Tagore insisted that education must arise the feeling of living in harmony with all things and all existence.
- As we can easily realize, the poet had a quantum mind avant-la-lettre; his world vision and pedagogy breathe a spirit of interdependence and interconnectedness, harmony and unity.
- Tagore suggested to celebrate seasonal festivals throughout the year. This practice would blend natural cycles and the organic relation with Nature, cultural diversity and spiritual inspiration for the youths.
- Through the daily life of his own school, he always requested flexibility in terms of class schedule, avoiding fixed patterns and a mechanistic routine.
- Coming to the integral nature of the curriculum, Tagore insisted that the aesthetic part of education should be as important as the intellectual –something that the mainstream schooling of the modern age has brutally ignored for centuries till very recently--; hence, the poet gave great prominence to literature, art, music, dance and drama –and very especially to music with its tremendous potential in transformative terms–.
- This great pedagogue from India always encouraged debate/ discussion and the creativity and self-expression of children, not only through the arts but also through literature, for which his fortunate students were allowed to present their own writings in literary evenings.
- In this horizon, Shantiniketan students were able to publish their own illustrated magazines and freely issue their own publications.

“(…) in education the most important factor must be the inspiring atmosphere of creative activity.”\textsuperscript{52}


\textsuperscript{52} Tagore, “The Centre of Indian Culture” p 7.
• Finally, his pedagogy was totally open to universal fraternity and the unity of mankind.

Integral education and the Universal Man.
From ethics to metaphysics. From metaphysics to education.

Tagore’s pedagogic thought is deeply holistic in the sense that it aims at offering a comprehensive educational process evolving all the facets of human life. Developing an all round personality would include five major domains: physical, mental, moral, aesthetic and spiritual.

Only an integral pedagogy may unfold man’s perfection – a crucial concept in Tagore’s philosophy. However, perfection is a process and a horizon, and the very goal of education. Perfection means the gradual development or unfolding from within of the five domains of humanity. Only then, can the educational process manifest the self-realization of the child or human being.

For the great poet of Bengal, this holistic and humanistic process should be realized on a universal scale, since all children or human beings - in India and all around the world - contain the seeds of this perfection – this five-fold integral personality to be manifested through self-realization, in a way that will be unique to everyone. Ultimately, Tagore’s educational philosophy could be summarized through the concept of the Universal Man.

In Tagore’s own words:

“Spiritual birth is being born out of this egg of inarticulate consciousness. It is by that birth that we shall be twice born.”

Tagore withdraws here from the Brahmins’ twice-born ritualism to embrace the true metaphysical second birth.

“That is to be truly born in the world, the birth of individual consciousness in universal consciousness.”

In general terms, we can say that philosophy of education cannot be properly grasped without taking into account the general philosophical background of a particular school or author. This is especially important for Tagore, since his pedagogic proposal is but the reflection of his metaphysical vision centred upon the notion of the Universal Man, an ideal where Philosophical Idealism and Humanism, the East and the West, blend in a shining horizon of self-realization and unity for mankind.

The Universal Man, which would be the ultimate goal of education, can be seen as a poetical vision of the ultimate reality. It will never be fulfilled through the second eye of knowledge, the intellect or reason; it must be realized through the awakening of the third eye, the metaphysical vision, while integrating the second eye—the mind—and the first eye—the senses and the body-. Hence, the realization of the Universal Man can only be integral; for this reason, the educational process must also be holistic.

For Tagore, the human being is much more than reason and body; he is a soul, Spirit. But Tagore is aware of the metaphysical insights of the Upanishads: there are not as many spirits as individuals; there is only One Spirit in all and in everything. The Universal Man is aware of the fundamental unity underlying diversity. Self-realization means that we see the Self in us and in all.

In the Universal Man, God, Nature and Man are reunited; the Universal Man embraces Nature and God. He is synonym of relation and interdependence. He is the cradle of unity. The Universal Man lies in everybody, even in the humblest. Hence, everybody should be respected as an embodiment of this cosmic vision: the Universal Man.

Then, a fundamental question may arise: how can we produce the transition from the present human imperfection and limitation towards the Universal Man? For Tagore there would be one answer only: through education.

Steiner was an intellectual and mystic, but not a poet; Montessori was a physician, certainly very spiritual, but not a mystic. Both shared an undeniable pedagogic concern, and both brought decisive contributions to the modern world towards a more humanistic, value-based and integral pedagogy.

But what is unique and soul-subduing in Tagore would be his poetical vision of the world transported into the educational field. Here lies a treasure for mankind, the finest sensitiveness of a universal poet designing and practicing the most genuine holistic value-based education deeply imbued with ethics and aesthetics. Tagore’s legacy will stay for generations to come as a lighthouse to inspire many around India and the world.

Like other scholars, Jha Narmadeshwar draws the parallelism between Tagore and other progressive educationists:

“In many respects Tagore’s ideas relating to the education of children resemble those of Rousseau, Froebel, Dewey, Montessori and others.”

“Through contact with nature, by making them (the children) aware of community relations and with the help of literature, festivals and religious teaching, he tried to develop the souls of the children.”

SRI AUROBINDO’S INTEGRAL EDUCATION AND THE MOTHER.

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) has been one of the major spiritual masters of India in the modern age; he can also be considered as a major poet/writer of English language and one of the main philosophers of the XXth century at the crossroads of the East and the West. Furthermore, his contribution to integral education stands as one of the deepest proposals for pedagogic renewal in our epoch.

In his ashram in Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo was assisted by his spiritual companion, Mirra Richard (born Alfassa), called by devotees The Mother (1878-1973). The Mother would enhance Sri Aurobindo’s interest in education and would develop a whole campus around the ashram.

Aurobindo’s life presents a fascinating shift from freedom fighter (for the independence of India) to yogi, philosopher and Guru. The central theme of his work would be the evolution of Man and Life into a Life Divine.


The pedagogy of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother would be a proposal of integral education for the growth of the soul.55

- The human being is an individual soul, a sparkle of the Divine wrapped in a body and mind, a conscious manifestation of the universal Self. Hence, education should not be reduced to the body and the mind, but should also incorporate the soul or deeper self. The pedagogic system must help the growing child to become aware of his or her deepest nature, awakening all the powers and possibilities of the soul.
- Education is conceived as a process of organic growth, and each child presents a different pattern of growth, for which true education can only be child-centred, taking into account the rhythm of progression, the inclination and characteristics of every child. The “svadharma” (inner nature) and “svabhava” (inherent disposition) must be acknowledged by any sensible educator.56


The Indian scholar S.P. Ruhela has stressed the significance of Aurobindo for an integral value-based philosophy of education today.

“Among all the modern Indian educational thinkers he (Aurobindo) is the one who gives a clearly worked out philosophical basis to his thoughts. A theory of education in order that it may be called a philosophy of education should give an account of man, his goal and values in a way that is speculative satisfying and complete. While others like Gandhiji were more of practical teachers, Aurobindo was primarily a philosopher and hence he has offered the philosophical details of his educational theory.”

In front of the present globalization and its critics, S.R. White stresses the value of Aurobindo’s contribution for the future of education and civilization.

“Aurobindoian thought has core values that can serve as the foundational framework for a holistic global education agenda.”

According to Aurobindo and The Mother, the educational process revolves around five complementary domains.

- **The senses and physical training.** Education must proceed from direct experience; it should not be too abstract. It must train the senses with accuracy and sensitiveness; it must also develop attention and multiple concentration. In general terms, a healthy body is a necessary condition for intellectual and spiritual achievement. Under Platonic influence, Aurobindo stresses that physical education must also nurture a sense of beauty.

- **The mind: intellectual/ academic education.** Beyond mere academics, Aurobindo and The Mother include the development of general mental capacities. They also emphasize the role of curiosity and imagination together with the spirit of inquiry and investigation. The aberration of modern education has consisted of divorcing intellectual training from our emotional and moral nature, and even more, from our spiritual depth.

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57 S.P. Ruhela 2000 B, p. 64.

Cf also S.R. White, 2007.


59 Cf Aurobindo and the Mother, 1973, from p 8 on.
• **Moral education/vital domain: to master one’s character.** Here, Aurobindo warned many times against the mechanical teaching of ethics through textbooks used for catechism as in any other academic subject. True moral education must be transformative. Aurobindo also denounced the traditional moral/religious education imposing out of coercion a certain discipline, fitting children into an external mould fabricated by the adults; all this is heartless and hypocrite, not truly moral. On the other hand, to neglect moral education as it has happened so often in valueless pedagogies, is to precipitate mankind into a total crisis—as it has happened-. Integral education must incorporate values and ethics, but this domain of human personality must become part of ourselves, which only occurs when it unfolds from within.

• **Psychic education.** The psychic being would be the psychological centre of Man; at its core lies Love. Here, Aurobindo and The Mother attach the greatest importance to the positive transformation of character, inseparable from positive values. With psychic education we come to the true motive of life, the reason of our existence and the purpose of life on Earth. However, the most important is to live the experience—not to merely think or read about it-.

• **Spiritual education (also called supramental).** First of all, spirituality does not mean for Aurobindo and The Mother the annihilation of the individual or ego, but its purification and enrichment through contact with the Absolute. For them, it is clear that the contemporary crisis of mankind arises from the unbalance between material progress and inadequate spiritual evolution. Hence, a major aim of education would be the awakening of spiritual consciousness. In Aurobindo’s words, intellectual training cannot change man; it can only provide him with better information and more efficient machinery, leaving the same unchanged ego or mind. Only true spiritual education can bring significant change, but again, not a new kind of imposition or catechism as in the past, but a really transformative spiritual education unfolding the deepest self from inside.

Some additional remarks on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother’s pedagogy.

- **In terms of pedagogic methods,** Aurobindo and The Mother disliked the negative attitude of the teacher, so typical in mainstream schooling, and the repressive ways of imposing out of coercion. If a child manifests bad inclinations or habits, they said, he should not be harshly treated as a delinquent, but encouraged to cleanse these inclinations or habits and positively transform character.
In the horizon of spiritual education, the major pedagogic method would certainly be Yoga, which means union with the source of our being. Aurobindo and The Mother always defended a synthesis of all the various schools of Yoga – Hathayoga, Rajayoga, Jnanyoga, Bhaktiyoga, Karmayoga, etc. This synthesis would be called Integral Yoga – for integral education towards an integral human being.

Integral Yoga would blend all the kinds of Yoga in the Sadhana (spiritual path), and integral education would combine all the domains of humanity and the pedagogic process. Hence, the syllabus for integral education would be all life, which is the very core of Yoga.

From this integral philosophy of education, Aurobindo and The Mother warned against all the misunderstanding inherent to the dichotomy between matter and spirit. Their vision is not a “fuga mundi” – escaping from this world of sorrow towards a better world somewhere else, but rather bringing The Life Divine upon Earth, hence transforming human consciousness and matter itself. The material or mundane world is not false or illusory as some incorrect interpretation has often postulated, especially in India. The empirical realm has its truth too; what is false or illusory is to reduce truth and reality to this only. This new spiritual perspective is what genuine integral education must unfold. This new spiritual perspective gives to Yoga and pedagogy their real integral nature. Integrating matter and spirit would be the main aim of Yoga and hence education.

In the words of Aurobindo himself, education must be centred upon “the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities.”

Then, in Aurobindo’s own words, “Life will be divinised.”

Aurobindo makes it clear that integral education has a spiritual foundation, something that has been overlooked by many advocates of progressive pedagogies in Western countries unaware of the materialistic bias of mainstream culture in the modern world.

From this perspective, Aurobindo addresses himself to educational authorities:

“I would like them (the government) to recognize yoga as education.”

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60 Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, 1973, p 3.
And integral yoga as understood by Aurobindo is not a “fuga mundi” but rather it implies the very transformation of the empirical plane.

“The integral yoga does not reject life. It transforms life.”

Experiments in integral education.

In 1943, Sri Aurobindo and The Mother established a school at Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry with merely 20 students. It grew rapidly, and in 1951, it was expanded into Sri Aurobindo International University Centre. Today the school is known as Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

These educational institutions sought for the manifestation of a new light and power. In spite of human imperfection, the institutes of integral education at Pondicherry –later expanded to Delhi- remain as important attempts to develop holistic value-based education in this world –under the enlightening inspiration of two great figures of the XXth century, Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.-

Apart from the Ashram, Aurobindo’s educational philosophy has also been implemented in the visionary city of Auroville, and it has inspired a vast pedagogic movement through many schools all around India and in the state of Orissa in particular – with around 500 schools and 60 000 students-.

- The Centre of Education at Pondicherry does not award degrees. The Mother was very keen on this point, avoiding academic pressure and the dismissing of proper education by the overemphasis on tests and exams.
- Flexibility –in the pedagogic process- has been one of its cardinal virtues.
- Physical education is given great importance here, with contests and tournaments, not in the traditional spirit of competition however, but rather in a spirit of progress.
- Another salient feature of this pedagogic system would be the Free Progress stream, which means the distinct and unique progress of every child guided by his or her soul. It is the progress of the entire integral human being, which is essentially different for everyone. This progress is obviously not reduced to academic achievement, it is the progress of human consciousness in its self-discovery. This implies an expansion of consciousness, an increasing awareness of the inner power and principle of guidance. It is about a total evolution of our entire being so as to transcend all the present limitations: the Socratic path of self-inquiry.

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64 Aurobindo and the Mother, 1973, p 5.
• All this means that the educational process cannot be rigid, neither coercive. Education must be a process of free growth.

Aurobindo recalls one of the basic principles of integral education from Philosophical Idealism, so emphatically stressed by Vivekananda:

“The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher (...) is a helper and a guide. His business is to suggest not to impose. Teaching is not imparting knowledge to pupil but to show him how to acquire knowledge by himself. Knowledge is within.”

• The pedagogic system also stresses the possibility of educating oneself, of self-experimentation, and above all, the genuine experience of freedom. As he grows older, the student has an increasing capacity to select his subjects and the organization of his time; but his self-education has to be properly guided—the middle path that has always been advocated by Philosophical Idealism. Freedom should not be misused.
• Hence, a great stress falls upon the individual work of students—avoiding the excess of collective projects so fashionable in pseudo-progressive schools.

• Apart from lectures, discussions are cultivated in the school.
• Projects are an important part of the evaluation system too.

It is worthwhile to recollect here one conversation between Aurobindo and his disciples, through which the master asked his followers whether they knew about Montessori’s Method. Through this talk, Aurobindo said pretty clearly: “Montessori is right”. Quite obviously, Aurobindo was aware of the profound parallelism between his own philosophy of education and Montessori’s. The principle of self-learning would certainly constitute a common ground for both philosophies of education, but not only this; first and foremost, both had a spiritual/metaphysical world view and both shared the principles of Philosophical Idealism.

We should not forget that Montessori was a Theosophist, an undeniable fact proved by the records of the Theosophical Society. Many followers of Montessori, prejudiced through mainstream materialism, have felt uncomfortable about it and have tried to deny it or at least minimize it; but the official records of the Theosophical Society speak by themselves.


• For Aurobindo, the ethical dimension is inherent to a deeply value-based pedagogy. However, as it is the case for R. Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Plato, Hegel or R. Steiner, the ethical dimension in Sri Aurobindo Schools does not consist of a mere compliance with something external but rather the deeper realization of something internal: the Kantian internal imperative with a metaphysical depth that Kant did not have but Philosophical Idealism has always had.
• Needless to say, meditation is also cultivated in this Socratic process of self-inquiry and self-realization.

It is important to keep in mind that Aurobindo envisaged his philosophy of education as a proposal for a national system of education that withdraws from the British influence through colonization to go back to the essence of the Indian genius. For Aurobindo, a new system of national education is inseparable from a national resurgence. In parallel to that, integral education constitutes the very foundation of the “sadhana” – spiritual path of transformation.  

Again, we should warn here what we already stated in relation to Tagore and Vivekananda. The return to the Indian tradition does not constitute a political form of nationalism in the mystical Aurobindo –nor in Tagore, nor in Vivekananda- but rather a way of mysticism –as in Tagore and Vivekananda-, a spiritual path that does not evolve in a cave in the Himalaya but in the midst of society as a service to society. For the three of them, there must be a national renaissance in front of British domination, but the national resurgence is inseparable from the inner path of transformation towards a spiritual horizon, because the three of them had a deeply spiritual/ mystical world view.

We should remember the profound transformation undergone by Aurobindo himself through his personal life, from the young nationalist or revolutionary to the latter mystic or spiritual master; in the very turning point of this fascinating career there was a genuine mystical experience and a long spiritual process.

In Aurobindo’s own words:

“In very ancient times it was the spiritual building of character which was the aim of education (...) Of course there was also cultural training, but it was not the main thing (...) In Greece it was intellectual and aesthetic.”


As a philosophical conclusion.

What is the daily reality in Aurobindo’s institutions today? We have been able to interact with the Ashram school in Pondicherry as we have been able to visit Ramakrishna, Krishnamurti or Sri Sathya Sai schools. Our personal testimony would draw a conclusion that should not be a surprise to anybody who is aware of the human condition on Earth. The reality of the Ashram school is pretty far from the ideal of Aurobindo’s writings. With all our respect for individual persons and our appreciation for their efforts, we dare to say that the real school presents some limitation, even some dogmatism, that has nothing to do with the light and the aperture of Aurobindo’s writings.

It is obvious that the followers do not have the spiritual depth or attainment of the master. This does not apply to Aurobindo Ashram only but to all institutions on Earth. The main problem of integral education is that the children in the real classroom do not have Aurobindo as a teacher but his followers, just as Waldorf students do not have Steiner as a teacher but ordinary men and women. And till now in human history there is always a gap between the original master and the latter followers who always imprison the purity and the freshness of the original message into fixed rigid systems that do not correspond to the intention of the founder. This is not only the history of Aurobindo Ashram; it is the whole history of humanity on Earth. J. Krishnamurti has brought profound insights into this fundamental matter that is basically about human consciousness.

Then nobody will be surprised at learning about the conflicts that occurred amongst Aurobindo’s followers after the demise of the Mother. The Kali Yuga in Sanskrit –the Age of Conflicts- corresponds to the egos of the followers; the original master was in another state of consciousness. This other state of consciousness is what we should awaken in the children. But how many teachers experience it themselves? Can you teach values that you do not live yourself? The teacher should be a living example; this is one of the pillars of integral value education. But who lives internally That which the original master did experience? In the Indian tradition, only those who really live the Brahman should teach about it. Bur who lives the Brahman in this world? Everywhere what predominates is mere theoretical bookish knowledge, and this is the only thing that mainstream schooling teaches.

Ramana Maharshi referred many times to those intellectuals who are scholarly ignorant. Ramana was a living example of human values such as love and compassion. He had the inner experience and that light was visible in his eyes. He would deeply touch many without saying one single word; just by looking at them many would have tears in their eyes.
The main problem of integral spiritually-based education is that it is extremely difficult to find teachers like Ramana, like Vivekananda, Tagore or Aurobindo, precisely because they were pioneers in a world much more limited in terms of consciousness, where the mainstream educational system enhances mere intellectual bookish knowledge and not the inner light that was shining in Ramana’s eyes awakening the lost memory of that depth buried down within each and everyone.

This is the very core of integral education according to the sages of India such as Vivekananda, Tagore or Aurobindo, in deep coherence with Plato’s Parable of the Cave, and needless to say, in deep coherence with the message of Jesus Christ in the Gospel. Therefore, we can conclude that integral education understood from this spiritual/metaphysical world view constitutes the human process itself through the whole human history, or to put it in Aurobindo’s words, the adventure of consciousness on Earth.

That is why teachers’ training is so important in integral value-based education. As Sathya Sai Baba said many times, before you open one school first you must train the teachers—not in academic terms but from the point of view of human values.

According to the sages of India, in spite of human imperfection we should not drop the effort and the attempt to strive for integral education. We should not wait to be perfect to start, first of all because everything is in process in the human condition, and any honest endeavour—though imperfect—will make a difference and will be valuable. The educational philosophy of the sages of India such as Vivekananda, Tagore or Aurobindo, just as that of Plato, Kant or Steiner, will always be there in the horizon as a source of inspiration.

Some further sociological considerations.

We hope that these few pages have awakened the interest of the Western reader encouraging him or her to investigate a little bit more about the educational philosophy of these three sages of India, Swami Vivekananda, R. Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, in the horizon of integral value-based education. We also remind the Western reader that these three philosophies of education, deeply holistic, ethical, humanistic and obviously spiritual, have been implemented and developed by a large number of schools and colleges. Western educational authorities can also find useful materials in this accumulated experience of India in order to assess and design educational policies on holistic and humanistic lines.

It becomes also clear from this paper that the sages of India who have spoken about pedagogics have explicitly stressed the spiritual/metaphysical foundation of a truly integral or value-based kind of education. In Aurobindo’s words:

“India has seen always in man a soul, a portion of the Divinity enwrapped in mind and body, a conscious manifestation in nature of the universal self and spirit.”69

This vision from India can help Western scholarship to clarify deeply-rooted misunderstanding and confusion. The peculiar religious history of Europe has nurtured reactions and debates that do not exist in India—or in Buddhist countries-. The educational philosophy of the Indian sages can make it clear for the Western public that there is a spiritual dimension beyond politics or debates, since it is not outside—within the frame of institutionalized religions or religious organizations—but inside—in each human being, within the inner depth of each and everyone-. This inner domain can only evolve in freedom; it is not a matter of belief but rather of experience. True ethics stems from this inner dimension, and then ethics unfolds the ontological texture of human values.

An army of utilitarian and technocratic scholars have still not grasped this fundamental point. But quantum physicists and in general all the advocates of the new holistic paradigm have clearly understood it. In fact, it is a tremendous irony of human history that scholars imitate now the Newtonian concept of science even in the humanities and needless to say in economics and social sciences, whereas this Newtonian world view—as a paradigm, not as pure physics—has been totally debunked by quantum physics, astrophysics, relational theory, new biology, epigenetics, neuroscience, sophrology, etc. New science and the new holistic paradigm have clearly understood the Socratic path of self-inquiry within a spiritual/metaphysical world view that lies at the core of the ethical and educational philosophy of the sages of India or Western philosophers such as Plato, Hegel or Steiner.

Quantum physicists and Jungian/transpersonal psychologists have certainly grasped the meaning and significance of this millenary message of Philosophical Idealism—both Eastern and Western—which, we should not forget, can also be found in the Western tradition, not only in India, from Plato to the Romantics and Hegel, and needless to say, among Christian mystics. However, the sages of India may allow Westerners to better understand the spiritual foundation of integral value-based education beyond the confusion and polemics too often present in the Western world.

At the same time, we should not overlook either the complexity of the Indian society and educational system today. According to the Indian scholar S.L. Bhyrappa:

“Rapid development of science, industrialisation and its effects in the form of urbanisation and disintegration of family; Marxism; psychological theories; Darwin’s theory of evolution; growing individualism and the empirical outlook of life—all these have fashioned the contemporary Western notions of values. India is exposed to these influences in all the respects and there is a cultural crisis in which the old has not completely died and the new not fully entrenched.”

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Contemporary India offers a fast process of Westernization—not only modernization—that imitates quite often the USA rather than Europe and in general the most superficial or the worst aspects of the West instead of the deepest or better, which produces as a reaction a nationalistic response and advocacy of a certain “Indian tradition” that may be real to some extent and also a political construct from another perspective. The Westernization of India has forgotten the “tradition” and the new nationalism has misunderstood it, reinvented it and ultimately perverted it. To come back to the genuine contents of Indian Philosophical Idealism is something urgently needed in Indian society and culture, not only in front of modern materialism and Western influence but also in front of the political usage—and distortion—of the “Indian tradition” by political interests.

Thus, the great sages of India such as Swami Vivekananda, R. Tagore or Sri Aurobindo can still perform a crucial role to inspire the Indian educational system beyond the fallacies and illusions of modern materialism and also beyond the politics of nationalism and governmental policies. The most profound message of the Vedic heritage and modern sages awaits silently on the threshold of Indian—and Western—schools to uplift the children and to inspire the teachers and the parents.

As Prof. Raimon Panikkar always stressed: Wisdom is an invitation only; you can take it or not—this is your freedom.

Already in 1964 the Education Commission of India under the chairmanship of Prof. D.S. Kothari stressed the need of moral value education, which was reinforced by later documents such as the famous report “Challenge of Education. A Policy Perspective” of August 1985 (Ministry of Education/ Government of India). More official committees and papers have followed, but the major initiatives with a real impact on the school scenario have come from private organizations such as the Vidya Vahini Programme launched by the Sri Sathya Sai Organization with the support of the Tata Group, and needless to say, the immense contribution of the Ramakrishna Mission, Tagore’s institutions and Aurobindo-inspired schools—amongst many other genuine initiatives, from Krishnamurti schools to small endeavours that do not come out to the public light.

However, the most important is that both public authorities and private schools in India—and all around the world—realize the depth of value education beyond the more instrumental or utilitarian level, and here Indian philosophy of education has brought a decisive contribution from Vedas or Upanishads to Vivekananda, Tagore or Aurobindo. This paper tries to restate the significance of these philosophers of education for the schools of the XXIst century, both in India, the West and all around the world.

71 Cf Somnath Saraf, 2000.
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EDUCATION WITHIN A SPIRITUAL/ METAPHYSICAL WORLD VIEW
TOWARDS INTEGRAL VALUE-BASED EDUCATION.

Section III.

European educationists:
Steiner and Montessori.
Introduction.

It is commonly agreed that Steiner and Montessori would be the pioneers of integral or progressive pedagogies in Europe, and Dewey and Kilpatrick in North America. This paper tries to expound the main points of Steiner and Montessori’s pedagogic innovation which strongly makes the case for the humanistic foundation of education—and even spiritual-. At the same time, it shows that there is a common background in Steiner, Montessori and even Dewey—Philosophical Idealism—which induces the three of them to react against the mainstream school system, essentially technocratic and utilitarian like the civilization that has produced it. It is this special Idealistic sensitiveness which propels these major figures of holistic or alternative education to open new avenues in front of the alienating reductionism operated by modern schooling.

The progressive pedagogy of the European pioneers—like that of the North-American precursors—would be deeply akin to the integral value-based philosophy of education of Indian sages such as Vivekananda, Tagore, Aurobindo, Krishnamurti or Sathya Sai Baba. Unfortunately, the Western world has massively ignored the contribution of India, not only in the educational sector but also in general. That is why the renowned scholar, Prof R. Panikkar, always denounced the cultural imperialism of the West while claiming for an intercultural dialogue that has been rare till now.

In fact, the European pioneers of integral education have also been ignored in their own continent for many decades. From a sharp hostility at the beginning towards an initial aperture in the last years, the educational philosophy of Steiner and Montessori is still revolutionary—in the deepest sense—because the mainstream system still goes in the opposite direction—as a reflection of the whole civilization-. There are more Waldorf and Montessori schools today, and some governments have paid more attention than others to their proposals. But in general terms mainstream schooling is still what both Steiner and Montessori denounced, and their pedagogic innovation is still valid and it is still waiting to be seriously implemented in the whole educational system—not only in a bunch of private Waldorf or Montessori schools-. This may require adaptation, flexibility and prudence; still there is something in both Steiner and Montessori that is important for the whole educational system, not only for a minority of special parents searching for something different for their children.

The most important today would be the deeper message of Steiner and Montessori’s pedagogic and philosophical insights. And this is what we try to elucidate in this paper. Certainly, these renowned educationists have had some influence on Western educational systems, and a number of schools have been created following their inspiration. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that the mainstream school system has not changed in significant terms yet—especially in Europe—; it is still basically academic and utilitarian, and ultimately technocratic; it continues to structure a sharp reductionism in front of the multidimensional nature of humanity and the cosmos. From this point of view, European and Western educational systems are still essentially modern, that is, materialistic and technocratic, not holistic yet—as quantum physics would certainly
prefer-. In this horizon we may state something “pour épater les bourgeois”: integral education is quantum whereas mainstream schooling is Newtonian. There is something epistemologically profound in this philosophical provocation.

In Steiner’s words:

“Individuals are seldom brought into touch with their own humanity. Anthroposophy, which is based on a real and comprehensive understanding of the human being, would hear this heartfelt appeal coming from all sides. When we have genuine knowledge of the human being we see that the human being possesses three clearly distinguished members: physical body, soul and spirit.”

In this heartfelt appeal, Europe is probably more reluctant than North America to open the mainstream system to holistic or progressive pedagogies. For this reason, we must say today that the pedagogic innovation of Steiner and Montessori, like that of Dewey and Kilpatrick, is still a source of inspiration in order to transform the mainstream educational systems from technocracy and utilitarianism towards a more holistic, humanistic, ethical and even spiritual vision of education and hence humanity.

In this perspective, the notion of paradigm is essential to grasp not only all the depth of Steiner and Montessori but more specifically their criticism of mainstream schooling and hence their alternative proposals. As we already mentioned, their philosophical background would be Philosophical Idealism in general and Theosophy or the Theosophical Society in particular –from which Steiner withdrew to create his own frame and organization, Anthroposophy-. This is particularly important to understand their pedagogic innovation.

Let us take experiential learning for instance. In the modern world it would be usually understood in cognitive terms only –see Dewey for instance-; but for Steiner and Montessori, as it was for Socrates and Plato, as it would be for all Theosophists, experiential learning has another deeper dimension beyond the mere cognitive level, which is metaphysical and spiritual: know yourself and you will know the universe and the gods. Here Theosophists such as Steiner or Montessori would be deeply coherent with the Vedic education of India and the Vedantic “gurukula” –community of master and disciples- exemplified by Shankara and his disciples –something deeply akin to Platonism by the way-.

Steiner makes it clear that modern civilization is based upon a materialistic world view deriving from scientism rather than science. In front of this, his world view is spiritual and metaphysical, and he is aware of the gap between the society and himself.

“The world is permeated by spirit, and true knowledge of the world must be permeated by spirit as well.”

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72 Steiner R., 1997, p 13-14

73 Cf Steiner R., 1997, p 13
Precisely for this reason academic or governmental reports that do appreciate positive aspects of Waldorf education are still cautious when facing the possible implementation of Waldorf strategies into the mainstream sector. This kind of report manifests the matter of the paradigm or world view, which is not at all the same in Waldorf schools and in mainstream schooling.

For instance, the report of the University of West of England on Waldorf education warns:

“Adoption of Steiner practices in mainstream education has to be approached with caution. Transferring practices between schools of differing philosophies is neither straightforward nor in all cases appropriate, and may not achieve the expected consequences because they are removed from the supportive school context in which they originate.”\textsuperscript{75}

Transferring practices between schools of differing philosophies of education means in depth in philosophical terms transferring practices of differing paradigms or world views.

Steiner and Montessori defended an integral form of education from another paradigm, let us call it metaphysical or Idealistic –form Philosophical Idealism and Theosophy--; certainly not from the materialistic and utilitarian world view prevailing in the modern age. We want to insist on this crucial issue in this paper as we have done in other works through the study of integral philosophies of education both in the West and the East.

We also want to make it clear that philosophically the deeper background of Steiner and Montessori would not be Theosophy but Philosophical Idealism, this Philosophia Perennis that Huxley studied in his famous works and fascinated major quantum physicists –especially in its Indian Vedic formulation-. We may find some limitations in the concrete contents of modern Theosophy, but this is not the real matter. The fundamental issue at stake is the epistemological and metaphysical depth of Philosophical Idealism –both Socratic/ Platonist or Vedic/ Vedantic, or in any other tradition or school of thought-. It is this philosophical depth what brings quantum physicists to the convergence of science and spirituality. It is not a matter of religion –in the orthodox sense and even less in the mere sociological meaning--; it is a matter of reality, and this is what quantum physics and other branches of new science have realized –see relational science, new biology, epigenetics, sophrology, etc-.

While elaborating a new educational project for 20 years between India, Europe and North America, which is called “International Education for a New World”, the author of these pages has studied the educational philosophy of the pioneers of integral value-based education in Europe, North America and India, especially from this

\textsuperscript{74} Steiner R., 1997, p 29

\textsuperscript{75} Ph. Woods, M. Ashley, G. Woods, 2005, p 7
philosophical background provided by Philosophical Idealism. He has also visited many schools implementing their pedagogic proposals in the three continents. In this article we try to bring out our observation and conclusions from 20 years of field work together with the more scholarly research and philosophical work. We hope that the readers will find it inspirational or useful to strive towards a more humanistic kind of education.

As Kant emphasized, education is a historical process. Integral value education is even more clearly a collective endeavour that constitutes in fact the very process of human evolution, or to put it in Aurobindo’s words, the adventure of consciousness on Earth.

THE HEIRS OF THEOSOPHY: R. STEINER AND ANTHROPOSOPHY/WALDORF SCHOOLS.  

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) is a fascinating figure of the XXth century, philosopher and educationist, member of the Theosophical Society and later founder of Anthroposophy and Waldorf Schools, probably the most mature project of integral education in the Western world with wide scope implementation (around 2500 schools including kindergarten). Through Theosophy he was in fact an heir of Goethe, Romanticism and the long tradition of European Philosophical Idealism going back to Plato, Pythagoras and Orphism.

- In a first phase of his life and work, more philosophically oriented, Steiner attempted a synthesis between science and spirituality also outlined by the forerunners of quantum physics in the West and Swami Vivekananda in India. Through his spiritual science, Steiner tried to provide a connection between the cognitive path of modern science and the Socratic/mystical quest of Philosophical Idealism and spiritual philosophy.
- In a second phase, starting around 1907, he collaborated in a diversity of artistic media, developing the dance called “eurythmy” and building the famous Goetheanum, a cultural centre for all the arts.
- In a third phase, beginning after the First World War, he established different more practical endeavours, like biodynamic agriculture, anthroposophical medicine and mainly Waldorf Schools.

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76 It is important to note that few critical biographies and scholarly works have been published about Steiner apart from the hagiography characteristic of Anthroposophical organizations or Waldorf Schools.

77 Cf Ullrich H., 1994
Steiner became the head of the German and Austrian sections of the Theosophical Society in 1902. Quite soon, some differences manifested between Steiner and the Society.

- First, the Theosophical Society had a broad open spirit open to intercultural dialogue, and made an invaluable contribution towards a reappraisal of Hinduism and Buddhism in a colonial era that had despised these major spiritual traditions – the most prominent figures of Theosophy even supported the independence of India-. Steiner’s world view more limited from this point of view; without so much interest for the Eastern traditions, he rather closed himself within the limits of the European esoteric tradition and Christianity exclusively.

- Secondly, the leaders of the Society, A. Besant and Ch. Leadbeater, recognized the purity and the depth of a young boy from Madras Beach, J. Krishnamurti. Though their expectation for the young boy to become the vehicle of an immortal master, Maitreya, and a World Teacher were not totally or exactly accomplished, still their intuition was basically sound. The older Krishnamurti always recognized that his contacts with Masters had been totally real, and nobody can deny that J. Krishnamurti became one of the most brilliant philosophers and sages of the modern age, a true spiritual master “malgre lui”, and finally a real world teacher, though not in the way the Society had initially thought of, but in a purely Socratic way, that is, the most genuine. However, Steiner was pretty Eurocentric, and could not so easily accept an Indian boy becoming the World Teacher. This illustrious thinker and educationist could not be aware of his own limitation from this point of view, which implied an unconscious adoption of the cultural imperialism of his age.

Steiner formally cut with the Theosophical Society in 1912/1913, and formed a new organization, Anthroposophy, where Steiner could feel at ease becoming somewhat the pope of his own church, centred on European culture and Christianity, without Besants or Leadbeaters reminding him about other spiritual traditions like Hinduism or Buddhism, and without Indian boys being candidates to such high positions as World Teacher.

In any case, he pursued the typically theosophical search for the fulfilment of spiritual life. Like the Romantics, Steiner suffered from the demystification of the world operated by the modern age.

“The central theme of Steiner’s work is the inner perception of the spiritual world and the spiritualization of every area of human activity.”

78 Ullrich H., 1994, p 2
In 1919, Steiner founded the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart. At the same time, he lectured more than ever, and the Goetheanum expanded its cultural activities. In 1923, he founded the School of Spiritual Science, intended to be “the soul of the Anthroposophical Society”. After the First World War, he proposed radical social reforms, namely his famous Threefold Social Order, in which the cultural, political and economic realms would be largely independent, whereas, according to Steiner, their fusion had generated inflexibility leading to the catastrophe of World War I. 79

From 1919/1921, the new National-Socialist Party (Nazi) rapidly gained strength in Germany, and its leaders, such as Adolf Hitler and Dietrich Eckart, started attacking Steiner. Apparently, it was an obvious cultural gap between them that produced the Nazi aggressiveness. In depth, Hitler was convinced that Steiner had supernatural powers – oriented towards the light-, while the Nazi leader was very interested in getting such kind of powers but in a totally opposite orientation, towards dark forces. This sinister spectrum of German politics and culture declared a “war against Steiner”. The Goetheanum was burnt, and Steiner’s lectures were object of violent assaults amidst threatening.

After a long period of illness, Steiner died in 1925, leaving a fascinating life devoted to spiritual philosophy, a new holistic paradigm and integral education. He was also one of the first intellectuals to seriously warn Germans and Europeans about the danger of Hitler and National-Socialism; his warning was more than justified with all what developed after his death.

Steiner’s integral education: Waldorf Schools.

Already as a young man, Steiner defended the independence of educational institutions from governmental control. In 1907, he wrote an essay on “Education in the Light of Spiritual Science”, where he described the major phases of child development that would later become the very foundation of Waldorf’s pedagogy. In 1919, Emil Molt invited him to lecture to his factory in Stuttgart, the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory. Out of these lectures came a new school, the first Waldorf School, pioneer of a movement that amounts to circa 2500 schools and kindergartens at the beginning of the XXIst century all around the globe.

In 1922, Prof. M. Mackenzie invited Steiner to present his pedagogic ideas at the famous Oxford University, which would launch the creation of Waldorf Schools in the United Kingdom.

“In contrast to the path taken by Dewey and Montessori, who sought to establish their New Education on recent ideas of empirical child psychology, Steiner based his educational plan entirely on his cosmic spiritualistic anthropology.” 80

79 Cf Steiner R., 1995, p 7

80 Ullrich H., 1994, p 5-6
The main features of Waldorf education.

- A humanistic approach;
- Integral or holistic pedagogy;
- Child-centred and value-centred philosophy;
- The basal role of ethics in education;
- Interdisciplinary spirit;
- Emphasis on the pedagogic potential of all the arts;
- Stressing the role of imagination and creativity.

Steiner aimed at the formation of free moral integrated human beings in front of the reductionism and mechanism of mainstream schooling. Freedom applies not only to the children, but also to the schools and the teachers, who have a considerable amount of freedom to define the curriculum.

“Waldorf educators are particularly concerned with the development of the soul of the school-age child.”

Steiner’s model of child development. (We shall examine it below in more detail.)

- Early childhood (from birth to 7), when learning is basically experiential, sensory-based and imitative through playing.
- Elementary school (7 to 14), embracing late childhood and puberty/early adolescence.
- During late adolescence, after 14, the secondary school’s pedagogy can develop conceptual/abstract thinking and moral judgement, though it has already been prepared through the elementary school, especially after 11.

Most of Waldorf Schools are autonomous institutions that do not follow an official curriculum. In spite of inevitable problems with the perennial will of governments to control education, Waldorf Schools have been able to survive and develop, offering one the most comprehensive and mature systems of integral education in the Western world.

81 Uhrmacher P.B., 1995, P 10
And despite being so different from mainstream schooling, Waldorf schools have been increasingly appreciated at the scholarly and even governmental level.

As the study made by the University of Arizona concludes:

“The empirical research on Waldorf education is surprisingly limited given its nearly 100 years history. However, the available studies suggest a positive impact of Waldorf on a number of cognitive and social outcome measures.”

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**THE HEIRS OF THEOSOPHY: M. MONTESSORI’ S SCHOOLS.**

**Maria Montessori** (1870-1952) was an Italian physician and educationist that developed a special pedagogic system, the Montessori Method, as an attempt to provide a more integral and humanistic kind of education in reaction to the mainstream school system or her time –and to some extent of ours too–.

Montessori’s pedagogic system arises from realizing what is “the child’s true normal nature”. From this point of view, Montessori develops on modern academic grounds one of the major themes anticipated by Rousseau and the Romantics. Montessori observed with a scientific eye what happens when young children are given freedom in an environment prepared towards their self-directed learning. Hence, the method aims at reproducing through a pedagogic frame this experimental observation to unfold in the school their true natural way of being –called “normalization”–.

“Montessori borrowed the term “normalization” from the field of anthropology. It is a technical term which means “becoming a contributing member of society” (...) According to Montessori, the phenomenon of normalization refers to the process of healthy development whereby children regularly and freely choose constructive activities based upon their interests, which then leads to their development of the capacity to concentrate (...) she believed that this state was “the true nature of the child”.”

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82 A.L. Larrison, A.J. Daly, C. van Vooren, University of Arizona, 2012, p2


84 Lloyd K.M., 2008, P 17-18
In this pedagogic system, the main role of the teacher—sometimes called guide—consists of removing the obstacles interfering with this natural development of the child and its natural inclination towards its own self-directed learning process. Another main function of the “guide” would be to carefully observe the children in their own developmental process. The teacher must believe in the child. The teacher will also provide lessons, where he will show how to use the various self-teaching materials or will correct any kind of misbehaviour. The teacher—a compared to a gardener—takes care of the child as a soul.

In general, the Montessori Method has been basically implemented with young children (till seven), though some pedagogic application has also occurred with elder groups of age.

In terms of history of educational philosophy, we can understand Montessori’s reaction against the mainstream schooling of her time—and partly today—which overlooked the nature of the child and the characteristics of the different age groups, while imposing from college down to primary school the lecture method on purely academic grounds.

However, the development of educational philosophy will have to examine with a sensible mind whether Montessori’s innovation does not sometimes fall into the opposite extreme—some of her followers rather than herself—, which may bring to an erosion of the pedagogic role of the adult. Mankind always shifts like a pendulum from one extreme to another. Montessori’s Method should invite educators to find a middle path between the overwhelming imposition of the adult—as in the modern mainstream schooling— and the dismissal of the adult’s pedagogic role—as it has sometimes happened in the last decades under an aura of progressive pedagogy-. Montessori herself insisted that children need a structured pedagogic environment, and she felt that Rousseau did not understand it properly and hence misunderstood the child’s freedom.

When dealing with Montessori’s succession, it is important to make it clear that the Montessori Method does not constitute a trade mark for which it has been adopted by a diversity of organizations differing in their interpretation and implementation.

Montessori borrowed the experimental method called Scientific Education, which was developed in the XIXth century by the French physicians Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard and Edouard Seguin. Dr Itard became famous for trying to educate the wild boy from Aveyron and worked with handicapped children; Dr Seguin continued his work and developed especially designed self-teaching materials. Both Itard and Seguin were important for the treatment of mentally impaired children, and Montessori followed them in her research on mental retardation. In front of the brutal treatment that mentally handicapped children received at that time, Montessori defended after the two French physicians a more pedagogic and more humane policy towards these children. In fact, it
was her study of children’s mental illnesses that motivated her to study education in general.\(^{85}\)

In 1907, she established a care centre for young children in a low-income district of Rome. In this Casa dei Bambini -Children’s House-, she put into practice Seguin’s method, and soon realized the positive results. From this experience she wrote several books and conducted training programmes. At the end of her life, she explored how her method could be extended to secondary education and even college.\(^{86}\)

Although Montessori evolved her method from direct experience and from scientific research, not from any philosophical background or specific theory, it is clear that her pedagogic orientation is deeply akin to Rousseau and the philosophical school of Naturalism among the major trends of educational philosophy. She got acquainted with the more progressive philosophy of education, especially Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel, and she did value their contribution, but still she was not totally satisfied with them.

“As she became more knowledgeable about these important educational theories, Montessori recognized their value but also found them scientifically inadequate. Through promoting children’s dignity and freedom, she found that Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel had relied on a philosophical, rather than a scientific, view of children.”\(^{87}\)

Like Steiner, and also like Kant, Rousseau and Hegel much before, Montessori reacted against the reductionism and mechanism of mainstream schooling, with authoritarian and repressive traits at that time –much sharper than today-. From this historical point of view, Montessori decisively contributed to the pedagogic innovation of the modern age towards a more humanistic and integral kind of education.

At that time, the most influential progressive philosopher of education in North America was Dewey, and it is interesting to note that Dewey’s heir, Kilpatrick, strongly criticized Montessori instead of valuing her. We could be surprised at Kilpatrick’s hostility against Montessori by keeping in mind their common progressive reaction against the rigidity and dehumanization of mainstream schooling. But this common general background should not overlook existing differences amongst these pioneers of progressive education. We might tend to oversimplify things just by thinking that all of them were progressive educationists questioning mainstream schooling. In spite of this, they worked from different perspectives on different paths, and they were not free from their egos like other mortals. Kilpatrick was clearly dominating the educational scene in


\(^{86}\) Cf Montessori M., 2004, chapter 2

\(^{87}\) Gutek G.L., in Montessori M., 2004, p 11
North America with other progressives when Montessori went there, and maybe it was his typically human nature that did not allow him to fully recognize the value of Montessori’s contribution, which he certainly diminished.

Quite far from Kilpatrick’s pragmatism, the Montessori Method designs a curriculum that stimulates the inner plan of nature and encourages the child’s own natural inner guidance—which is one of the major themes of Philosophical Idealism. For Montessori, the child is God, and first and foremost the teacher must regard the child as a soul.

Apart from the connection with Rousseau and Naturalism, there is a profound relation between Montessori and Philosophical Idealism, which can be biographically explained through her interaction with Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, one fundamental aspect of Montessori that has been often ignored by many of her followers—due to their materialistic bias consistent with the prevailing world view.

On the other hand, this “esoteric” dimension of Montessori brings her closer to Steiner and his Waldorf Method. Both were Theosophists and both had this metaphysical and spiritual—we could say mystical—world view so different from the predominating ideology in the modern age. From this point of view, both the Montessori and the Waldorf Method are deeply coherent, although we should not deny either that Montessori and Steiner followed very different paths in spite of this common philosophical background.

It is not so well known that Maria Montessori was a member of the Theosophical Society—like Steiner-. Some prejudiced persons have fiercely denied that Montessori was a Theosophist, while the evidence is undeniable in the archives of the Theosophical Society. The same prejudice has brought some people to push Montessori’s acquaintance with Theosophy at the end of her life, while the existing records show a much earlier bond. In conclusion, Montessori had been related to Theosophy when she was much younger than presumed by many, and she formally became a member—which has been denied by many-. In any case, anybody who earnestly examines her life and work must acknowledge that her scientific method is not incompatible with a profound spiritual sensitiveness, which she prudently dealt with in the European cultural context. For Montessori, the teacher is the protector of the child’s soul.

At the end of her life, she could closely collaborate with the Theosophical Society in its world headquarters in Adyar, Chennai. Initially invited by the Society in 1939, she had to stay much longer when the Second World War broke out—she was from Italian origin and India was a British colony, for which she was treated as an “enemy” and was interned there-. The Theosophical Society adopted her method for its schools, and Dr Montessori was active in lecturing and training. Her humanistic contribution to pedagogy is deeply coherent with Philosophical Idealism, and hence Theosophy.  

88 Cf Wylie W., 2008
From the rich life and extensive work of the founder, the Montessori Method provides a wide range of pedagogic materials that stimulate the child’s interest and his or her **self-directed activity**. For the youngest children (birth to six), for whom the method was originally designed, **these pedagogic materials are organized into five categories**:\(^89\)

- Practical life
- Sensorial
- Language
- Maths
- And Cultural.

(We shall examine it below in more detail.)

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\(^{89}\) Cf Lillard A.S., 2013
A MORE DETAILED STUDY OF THE PEDAGOGIC PRACTICE.

Montessori, Waldorf and the Socratic Method (the Gurukula of India).

Montessori designed her method basically for young children, since the method itself developed from the observation of small kids. Adolescence and secondary school – from 11 onwards- is another world. And she was aware of it though she left it quite unexplored –probably it was not her task, she already did a lot-. Montessori Schools have institutionalized this small children’s ethos –though Montessori herself was open to the adaptation of her method to adolescence-. If you browse through the net about Montessori Schools you will massively see small children, not adolescents. This dominance of the small children’s ethos in Montessori Schools conveys a very real danger in pedagogic terms, since our whole civilization already produces a structural infantilization of adolescence –which is inseparable from the destruction of initiation cultures, and which is also connected to Michel Foucault's repressive strategies of modernity-.

The typical Montessori classroom –as advertised by Montessori Schools- is suitable for kindergarten and the first years of primary school –maybe not so suitable for the end of primary schooling and certainly not for the higher classes-. As we said, puberty and adolescence is another world. Moreover, the real anthropological differences in learning between the two genders should be incorporated –which has not been the case till now though it is empirically obvious that they exist-. Apart from being a space for small kids, the typical Montessori classroom is also a women’s domain from which men are visibly absent –which constitutes one of the most dramatic trends of our civilization, the lack of men in education, directly linked to the world crisis of boys’ education, because boys obviously need male teachers as role models-.

After Montessori’s innovation, most of the schools bringing her name became a world of ladies taking care of small kids. The very image of Montessori Schools –see most of videos and photos in the net- shows that only; adolescents are absent and male teachers almost not visible. Where are the specific needs of adolescents? Where are the specific needs of boys who need role models of their own gender? That is why there is a world crisis of boys’ education that is not tackled yet. Education is much more than women with small kids; there are the older age-groups, there are anthropological differences between boys and girls, and the male gender also must be totally involved in education; everybody with common sense –which has been lost by the way- will agree that the growing boy needs the positive role model of his own gender.

Both Piaget and Steiner understood the profound differences between the age-groups and the features of each. From 8 on and especially from 11 on, and even more from 14 on, the deeper meaning of pedagogic principles such as experiential/ self-learning or child-centred education must be implemented in ways that are different in practice. But the very image of Montessori Schools in the net seems to ignore the older
age-groups from puberty on and their specific pedagogic needs. Steiner was aware of it, and the Waldorf Method designed different pedagogic strategies for the different age-groups while paying attention to the higher classes. Other educationists have also taken into account the necessary pedagogy for adolescents; on the other hand, the Indian Gurukula—like the Socratic dialogue and method—is suitable for adolescents, not for small children. Here the presence of male teachers becomes still more important than in the lower grades, especially for boys; it is anthropologically evident that boys need positive role models of their own gender to grow up in a balanced way.

The educational systems must fully comprehend the significance of the different age-groups—which Piaget studied in detail, and Steiner incorporated more clearly than Montessori in his Waldorf Method. From this point of view we believe that the Montessori Method is more suitable for kindergarten and primary school—especially till 7/8—while the Waldorf Method can bring valuable insights for the older age-groups/adolescence—which does not mean that Steiner did not pay attention to the lower grades.

Still, educational systems should value and integrate both Montessori and Steiner in an open spirit, not in dogmatic terms, which means that they should be open to other contributions too. We should not forget that Froebel already anticipated many insights of Montessori. Moreover, we should not ignore the fundamental reflections of the great philosophers of education—from Plato to Rousseau, Kant and Hegel, unknown to most of progressive schools—and we should not forget either the grand tradition of the Indian Gurukula and the major educationists of India—that do not exist in the mind of most of Montessori or Waldorf teachers. We do believe that there is something fundamental in the Indian Gurukula, in Vivekananda, Tagore, Aurobindo, Krishnamurti or Sathya Sai Baba, that Montessori or Waldorf Schools are overlooking whereas they could learn a lot from it—the same would apply to Plato and the Socratic Method.

Montessori made a crucial contribution to education in the modern age—herself more than her followers—; Steiner too. To start with, we should combine both instead of sticking to one of them only. And both must be complemented by other philosophers of education and other pedagogic traditions in an open spirit, not in dogmatic terms. Only this wider perspective with aperture of mind can solve the problems of education in the world and open new avenues for a better future. This is what the educational systems should try to do in the future.

The ideal synthesis for the future of education could be a combination of the Montessori Method for small children (in an open way) and the Socratic Method (parallel to the Indian Gurukula) for adolescence—while integrating other valuable contributions such as the Waldorf Method, and needless to say, the major philosophers of education of the West together with the great educationists of India, totally ignored by Western cultural imperialism.

When implemented in adolescence, the Montessori Method becomes the Socratic Method, which we can also find in the Indian Gurukula—the Upanishadic dialogues are deeply coherent with the Platonic dialogues. The pedagogic principles beneath both Montessori and Socrates—and Steiner—are the same: self/experiential learning, child-centred and holistic education, etc, within a metaphysical/spiritual vision. Not by chance
Montessori was a Theosopist –like Steiner- and Socrates is the model for Western Philosophical Idealism. We should keep in mind that Steiner was a Platonist –through Goethe-. This is the underlying philosophical paradigm for integral education.

**We can draw a more detailed model of human growth in parallel to the major pedagogic methods:**

- Kindergarten: Montessori Method (always in an open not dogmatic way)
- Primary school: Montessori and Waldorf Method (with other sources)
- Middle school: Waldorf and Socratic Method –the Indian Gurukula-
- Higher secondary: the Socratic Method –the Gurukula-. 

Education should integrate all the valuable contributions from both the West and the East while taking into account the developmental process. This is what we try to do in this project. As Kant said, education is a historical process towards human emancipation.

**Last but not least. Both Montessori and Steiner were Theosophists.**

Where is the spiritual dimension of the child/adolescent in most of Montessori Schools and even in some Waldorf Schools? Many Montessori Schools have forgotten adolescents and also male teachers. They have also forgotten the spiritual dimension of the child, which was certainly present in Montessori’s vision –she was a Theosophist like Steiner-. Her philosophy of education incorporates a metaphysical/mystical dimension: the Child as a Soul. 

But many Montessori Schools –and even some Waldorf Schools too- share the materialistic bias of modern civilization and become an integral part of it –they are the cheerful face of this civilization, but still they share the same paradigm in depth-. The genius of Montessori –or Steiner- has been diluted by their followers, as usual in human history; the human condition has not changed yet.

While working on integral education for twenty years in three continents we have continuously heard the question: -How do we do it? Parents and teachers are obsessed by the techniques and it seems to many that the key to the Montessori or the Waldorf Method lies in the technique. We have always responded that this state of mind corresponds to the technocratic mirage of our civilization. The key to the Montessori or the Waldorf Method, the key to integral education, does not lie in the technique but in the intention, in the state of consciousness. What is common to all progressive educationists would be the pedagogic principles; all of them have understood and defended the same pedagogic principles in spite of the different perspectives and paths in their respective lives and careers. If a teacher or a parent understands these pedagogic principles, he or she will do it, and may even recreate new practical ways to implement it, whereas if you

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90 Cf Montessori M., 2004, p 127 and p 262-264
do not understand the pedagogic principle and you just mechanically implement a set of techniques you will reproduce the mainstream system without being aware of it. Krishnamurti made profound reflections on this crucial issue, but few have listened to him. People are usually attracted by techniques while few really tackle the issue of conscience. Montessori was aware of it and warned about it, but her words have been forgotten behind the paraphernalia of techniques and materials.

“It is my belief that the thing which we should cultivate in our teachers is more the spirit than the mechanical skill of the scientist; that is, the direction of the preparation should be toward the spirit rather than toward the mechanism.”91

91 Montessori M., 2004, p 73
THE MONTESSORI METHOD.

From anthropological research, Dr M. Montessori observed children in natural settings such as home, playground, etc. She concluded that children grow and learn from inside out—which not only Piaget but also Philosophical Idealism would endorse, from Socrates to Vivekananda-. There is a natural development of the child, which the educational process must respect. Children learn of their own accord, and teachers/parents must nurture this natural process through their loving and prudent guidance. An excess of external inducements—as in mainstream schooling—produces dependence on authority and need of approval.

“The school must permit the free, natural manifestations of the child if in the school scientific pedagogy is to be born.” 92

- Conventional schools: children are forced to learn and need incentives to learn. If they do not respond they are punished. Punishment and prize are inseparable from forced unnatural effort.
- Montessori schools assume the opposite: children do not need to be forced to learn; they are naturally interested in learning.

Still, we must be aware that M. Montessori did not arrange a legal trademark or brand name—whereas R. Steiner did—which means that anybody can use Montessori’s name quite freely—whereas it is legally not possible under the names of “Steiner” or “Waldorf”-. This is the reason why there are around 2000 Waldorf Schools in front of around 20 000 Montessori Schools. On the other hand, there can be very different interpretations of the Montessori Method—which may have pros and cons— in front of the standardization of Waldorf Schools through the educational franchise—which again may have pros and cons-.

➢ The three foundations of the Montessori Method:

- The normalization of the child’s natural development
- To cultivate the autonomy of the growing child as a subject
- To educate the whole child—integral education-.

92 Montessori M., 2004, p 74
According to M. Montessori, **the classroom environment** must be arranged so that it facilitates interaction and experience through activities –amongst children themselves and between child and teacher–.

Children must be able to move around and interact amongst them and with the teacher; pedagogic materials must be easily accessible.

The classroom is not run by the teacher unilaterally –as in mainstream schools– but experienced by the children under qualified freedom –freedom for the child to learn by himself or herself under the caring guidance of the adult–.

Montessori stressed that the classroom environment is as important as the teacher.

“The novelty lies, perhaps, in my idea for the use of this open-air space, which is to be in direct communication with the schoolroom, so that the children may be free to go and come as they like, throughout the entire day. (…)

The principal modification in the matter of school furnishings is the abolition of desks and benches or stationary chairs.”

- Many Montessori classrooms look pretty original -a large space where all children move around selecting educational materials under the observation and guidance of teachers–;
- whereas some Montessori classrooms –especially with older children- look more conventional with desks in front of the blackboard –and here the Montessori Method is also implemented in some way–.

**Mixing age-groups;** elder students as mentors to the younger and leaders.

The younger see what the elder are doing and seek for explanations. These are naturally given, which is highly educational for the young ones. At the same time, the elder are happy to teach what they know and this is also educational for them.

**Teachers** should not face the children frontally all the time but move around the classroom to pay an individual attention to students one by one or in small groups.

The teacher must follow the child, instead of the child following the teacher. The teacher is a guide.

**Experiential learning.**

The school must teach basic skills -such as reading, writing, arithmetic, etc–, but basically through educational activities with a practical dimension that affects life and which is meaningful to children. To learn by doing.

Teachers must give to students constructive and practical tasks to complement mere intellectual learning from outside –given by adults–.

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93 Montessori M., 2004, p 120
“The pedagogical method of observation has for its base the liberty of the child; and liberty is activity.”

- Bio-sciences teaching becomes a naturalistic inquiry, rising questions from experience with the world.
- Physical sciences might be taught through practical application.

For small kids **play-way methods** are more suitable, since playing constitutes the natural way of learning for the young child. Montessori schools have developed many practical play-way tools and educational toys—which are in fact as old as mankind; two centuries back Froebel already designed educational toys for young children.

**Self-learning.**

Adults must give a chance to the children to learn on their own. Children must be self-motivated and find their own interests. Teachers must allow students to choose what they want to learn and then guide them. When the child exhibits interest in learning something, he must be guided by the teacher in his own learning process.

According to Montessori, **life is based on choice.** So children must learn to make their own decisions. They must choose and decide in their own educational process. Learning through obedience to external commands is contrary to life. Imagination awakens the natural interest of the child.

“It is true that some pedagogues, led by Rousseau, have given voice to impracticable principles and vague aspirations for the liberty of the child, but the true concept of liberty is practically unknown to educators.”

“Discipline must come through liberty. (...) If discipline is founded upon liberty, the discipline itself must necessarily be active.”

Together with free choice through individual or group projects, children must be taught self-responsibility through practical tasks while taking care of the educational tools, materials and space.

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94 Montessori M. 2004, p 124

95 Montessori M, 2004, p 74

96 Montessori M., 2004, p 124
The pedagogic practice must allow children to see a bigger picture of knowledge and their own process of learning, so that they can take ownership of their education, which fosters the child’s natural desire to learn. This can be facilitated when younger students observe what elders are doing by mixing the age-groups.

Mental activities and higher functions are connected to physical movement; it is aberrant to force children –and even more boys- to sit down in front of a blackboard for the whole day –as in mainstream schooling-. The learning process requires freedom of movement and the natural movement of the child. We must set the energy of the children free. Freedom in education means freedom for the creative energy, which is the urge of life towards the natural inner development of the individual.

However, there must be some organization in the school. Freedom does not mean lack of organization. Freedom requires a structured environment. Organization is necessary for children to work freely.

It is also important that the school/ classroom incorporates plants and animals; the contact with Nature is fundamental in education. Children must work in the garden and observe Nature directly; there can even be plants in the classroom. The contact with animals is also highly educational; it has been proved that many psychological troubles improve through it –see for instance the experiments with equino-therapy-.

While giving freedom to the child and allowing self-learning, the teacher must provide material means, guidance and understanding.

The teacher’s role is indispensable.

Hence, teachers should not apply non-interference when children behave in naughty ways; then, they must stop them and make them realize what they are doing so that they positively transform themselves –which is something very different from negative criticism or coercive punishment-.

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97 Cf Montessori M, 2004, chapter 10
In the Montessori classroom materials are organized into five areas: 98

- **Practical life:** this kind of materials and exercises enhance physical coordination, care of self and care of the environment. There are also lessons about polite manners too.
- **Sensorial:** this kind of materials are used in activities and exercises for children to experience the natural world and the physical environment, including shape, colour, etc. Here, Dr Montessori borrowed many ideas from Dr Itard and especially Dr Seguin with their Scientific Education.
- **Mathematics:** this kind of materials show basic concepts like addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, numeration, value, etc. A famous Romantic pedagogue, Froebel, was probably the first educator to design educational play-way materials -known as Froebel’s gifts-. 
- **Language:** this kind of materials provide experiences through various exercises to develop the basic skills of reading and writing.
- **Cultural subjects:** this kind of materials allow children to learn cultural subjects like geography (map puzzles, globes, etc), history and science (for instance, naming and organizing plants or animals). Music and art are also incorporated in different ways.

These five domains would be complemented by other activities, namely the various artistic disciplines, performance, gardening, activities into Nature, games and sports, etc.

For the earlier stages Montessori attached a great importance to sensory training. 99

Many videos are available in the net showing a diversity of materials from the five areas and how they work.

Needless to say, Waldorf Schools utilize similar tools; other educational organizations and some commercial companies have also produced this kind of educational toys, which Froebel already anticipated two centuries back.

The materials must be easily accessible to the children in furniture especially designed for them –not for the adults-. The utilization of the materials by the children allows self-learning, experiential learning and problem-solving. This pedagogic practice is obviously child-centred, and teachers move around like the children themselves paying individual attention to them one by one or in small groups.

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98 Cf Lillard A.S., 2013

99 Cf Montessori M., 2004, chapter 12, 13 and 14
THE WALDORF METHOD.

Unlike M. Montessori who focused on young children only, R. Steiner draw a whole map of human development through stages and elucidated the pedagogic principles and tools of education at every stage.
Year by year the Waldorf system prepares the growing child for the next step through a scaffolding of human growth parallel to pedagogic practice carefully designed by Steiner—something that Montessori, in spite of her valuable contribution, did not do—.
Through this process, Steiner underlined the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge.

We do appreciate the remarkable contribution of Steiner—like that of Montessori—. Both were decisive to break the rigidity of the dehumanized mainstream school system. But sticking to them and their time without free inquiry and innovation is in fact contrary to their spirit and aperture of mind.
All educational systems around the world might get inspired by them—and by other great educationists from both the West and the East—but we should not get blocked at them.
Decades have passed and the journey continues. They are the beginning, not the end of the path, which means that their innovation must be reinvented and exploration must go on in an open spirit, not in dogmatic terms.
Steiner himself rarely used the term “Waldorf Method”; it was institutionalized by his followers, who recreated a closed system out of his philosophy of education that was still open to ongoing inquiry. As usual in history, the followers have made something that the founder did not do. In fact, Steiner did not pretend to be original and extensively quoted his sources of inspiration, especially the Romantics. His followers only have established the “uniqueness” of the Waldorf Method. For Steiner it was not unique and there was no Waldorf Method even; there was philosophy of education which he explored with an open spirit.

In his own words:

“For the true teacher, pedagogy must be something living, something new at each moment. Everything that teachers carry in their souls as memories robs them of their originality.”

Steiner R., 1995, p 85

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80
Steiner’s model of human development through successive age-groups requiring specific pedagogic approaches.

“(…) how important it is that teachers turn their attention in particular toward the drastic changes, or metamorphoses, that occur during a child’s life –for example the change of teeth and puberty.”

- **From birth to age 7. Early childhood.**
  During this period physical development is key, and children learn through play.
  - Hence, the pedagogy must prefer play-way methods and practical activities –with both indoor and outdoor games or activities–.
  - Sensory training is also very important because learning occurs basically through the senses.
  - Magic is equally crucial since the young child’s world view is essentially magical. Songs, poems and fairytales must be widely used together with movement games.
  - The educational process should incorporate natural rhythm and cultural calendar, seasonal festivals drawn from different traditions and cultures.

- **From 7 to 14. Later childhood and early adolescence.**
  Proper academic instruction starts here because the elder child or young adolescent is more intellectually prepared and more aware of the environment and the world. Here imagination and creativity are fundamental, and the elder child or young adolescent needs a legendary horizon that is inspirational and morally educational.
  - Learning is essentially imaginative and artistic. The pedagogy must take special care of emotional education and artistic expression through all the arts. The elementary school curriculum is multi-disciplinary arts-based, including visual arts, drama, dance (eurhythmy), vocal and instrumental music and crafts.
  - There is little reliance on official textbooks. Instead, the student creates his or her own illustrated summary of coursework in book form.

- **From 14 to 21. Later adolescence.**
  In this period the elder adolescent thinks more in depth and develops abstract thinking –which already awakens from 11 on-.
  The Waldorf School must prepare elder students for college or professional life.
  - Here, the emphasis shifts towards intellectual understanding, ethical ideals and social responsibility.
  - In higher secondary education, Waldorf Schools provide specialist teachers for the academic subjects.

101 Steiner R., 1997, p 48

Cf also Steiner R., 1996, p 6
• Though the educational process focuses more on the academic subjects, students continue to practise the various artistic disciplines.
• Above all, students are encouraged to develop their own free creative thinking together with moral values and social responsibility.

Steiner’s developmental approach is inseparable from a deep understanding of the human being that cannot overlook the spiritual dimension that simply exists. Waldorf education is but the translation into the pedagogic field of this deeper understanding of humanity – Anthroposophy-. In Steiner’s words:

“A new study of humanity, a new understanding of humanity is necessary. (...) The second thing that we must develop as we work toward a more humane form of society, is a social attitude of the teachers toward the children already in the school. This is a new love of humanity – an awareness of the interplay of forces between the teacher and pupil.”^102

“I am not surprised that the majority of today’s teachers view their work mechanically. Their understanding of humanity comes from the dead science that has arisen out of the industrial, statist and capitalist life of the past three or four centuries. That science has resulted in a dead art of education (...)”^103

The most important to understand Steiner’s philosophy of education is to keep in mind that the Waldorf School derives from Anthroposophy understood as a “weltanschauung”, a world view that is spiritual and metaphysical, Socratic or Platonist, and also Christian, in front of the materialistic and mechanistic paradigm of the capitalist modern world.

Through this new understanding of humanity that is at the same time very old, Steiner puts forward a developmental approach to education, through which the Waldorf Method would be based upon the following principles.

• We must educate the whole child: physically, intellectually, emotionally, morally, socially and spiritually. Holistic/ integral education.
• Not only should we integrate all the dimensions of humanity in the school; also, the educational process should evolve from the whole to the parts through an interdisciplinary spirit in all subjects or activities.
• Students must be taught how to think – freely - rather than what to think.
• Children must learn by themselves on their own pace: self-learning.

^102 Steiner R., 1995, p 59

^103 Steiner R., 1995, p 60
• Learning must occur through direct experience and practical activities/projects: experiential learning.
• Teaching must be linked to reality and the practical aspects of life. Steiner opposed the abuse of mere intellectual, abstract bookish knowledge that becomes overwhelming and finally useless in mainstream schooling.
• Teaching can be delivered in ways that are more creative and artistic, using movement, games, even dance, music or the arts; obviously this may be more suitable for the younger students in simple ways, but even in higher grades the same philosophy can be implemented in more mature terms combining different disciplines in an interdisciplinary pedagogy.
• For the lower grades, even maths can be taught in more visual and artistic ways that use geometrical forms for arithmetic—the holistic approach that integrates different aspects of knowledge and reality—.
For the higher grades, maths can be linked not only to science but also to philosophy and obviously to social issues—again the interdisciplinary spirit that can imbibe everything in the educational process—.
• Education must be child-centred: teachers must follow children, not children following teachers—as in mainstream schooling--; the teacher is a friend, philosopher and guide.
• Every student must unfold his/ her own potential and vocation.
• Through education the individual must find himself; the Socratic heritage.
• This means that education must be transformative rather than informative.

As it has been emphasized in the Indian educational tradition, love—pedagogic love—lies at the heart of the teaching process in Steiner’s vision:

“Now, my dear children, when you have felt your teacher’s love all day long up here, then you can go home again and tell your parents about what you have learned, and your parents will be glad (...)”\(^{104}\)

• In Waldorf Schools, students and class teacher stay together and grow together through a whole seven years cycle—which might be questioned—.
• There is no hurry for academics—in front of the mainstream pressure in terms of academics—. Students may not begin reading until grades 2/3 and even 4—which again may be questioned; not too early, not too late—.

• Before learning to read and write, young children become familiar with shapes or forms through drawing and painting that will bring to the alphabet later. Steiner favoured a slower more integrated approach very different from conventional academic methods in mainstream schooling. The historical process through which humanity discovered literacy—oral tradition, images, shapes, symbols, alphabet—may ease the way for children to learn to read

\(^{104}\) Steiner R., 1996, p 31
and write. Children will first listen to a fairy tale, then they will review the story by creating images, later they will explore shapes, forms and symbols, and finally they will progressively learn the letters of the alphabet. Letters may be linked to words/ideas - B for bear- or objects/images - T like a tree-. Hence, the growing child will do the experience of the human process itself.  

- Subjects are taught for three to four weeks.
- Children are able to learn and explore at their own pace.

- Students are not given standardized tests and marks. Their progress is measured globally through observation. Teacher’s observation must be discreet not to produce anxiety in the child. Tests and grades are only introduced in the higher classes as a preparation for college.
- Teachers work with parents to set goals to students.

➢ In conclusion, Waldorf education wants to unfold human potential in depth with all its capacities, and educate the whole child. The school must stimulate both the intellectual/rational and intuitive/ artistic side of the student in equal measure—unlike mainstream schooling that hypertrophies the intellect to the detriment of the more intuitive or aesthetic skills-. The holistic nature of Waldorf education embraces the spiritual dimension, dramatically lost in the modern world from Steiner’s point of view. In his own words:

“We must develop an art of education that can lead us out of the social chaos into which we have fallen (...) There is no escaping this chaos unless we find a way to bring spirituality into human souls through education.”

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105 Cf Steiner R., 1997, p 64-67

106 Steiner R., 1997, p 12
Let us see in more detail the pedagogic tools of the Waldorf Method Through the successive stages of human development.

“The true curriculum results from an understanding of the stages of human life.”\textsuperscript{107}

- **The first stage (birth/ 7): kindergarten/ early childhood.\textsuperscript{108}**

  Teachers must create a warm, beautiful and loving environment, which is as important as the pedagogic method itself. The physical setting must be pastel in colour to create a calming effect. 
  Furniture should be simple and made of solid wood. 
  The educational toys should also be made of wood and natural materials. 
  The classroom must be like a home. 
  Routines must be regularly set and followed (daily, weekly, seasonally and yearly routines). 

  At this stage Steiner emphasizes domestic or daily real life tasks, playing and artistic activities that children can engage in. 
  It is important to adapt the activities according to the calendar, the natural rhythm of Nature and the cultural/spiritual festivals of the year. 
  Fairy tales, fables, poems and folklore are cherished by Steiner for this age-group; they should be told aloud by teachers –as it would be customary in the olden days-. 
  Learning must basically happen through a hands on student led approach. 
  For this age-group, sensory training, imitation, play-way methods and educational toys must prevail; Steiner always preferred to use natural materials and objects from Nature, which children themselves can collect. 
  Waldorf Schools –like Montessori- utilize a wide range of educational games and toys since playing is the natural way for children to learn. Waldorf Schools combine movement, speaking and singing in circle group as a creative/artistic way of teaching more suitable for the nature of the young child. 
  Free-playing is also important; we must avoid the excess of adult interference characteristic of modern societies that becomes over-protective. 
  Sensory training is equally fundamental at this stage, developing coordination and evoking the sense of a deeper harmony. 

  Movement is crucial for human growth; that is why Steiner encouraged dance –not only for girls but also boys, not only for young children but also adolescents-. 
  With professional assistance, Steiner developed “eurhythmy” –the good rhythm- that incorporates all the senses, movement, gesture, music, arising the natural movement of the child, balance and a deeper harmony. 

\textsuperscript{107} Steiner R., 1995, p 42 

\textsuperscript{108} Cf Steiner R., 1997, lecture three
First and foremost, the adult must awaken the sense of wonder in the young child; this will be the basis for an eagerness to learn through academics in higher grades. Teachers –and parents- must also foster the child’s natural power of imagination, which can be refined by story-telling, poetry, the arts, etc. Hence, fantasy playing is very educational for small kids.

Teachers must develop problem-solving in peers relationships while nurturing the sense of brotherhood, community and unity.
Children must be encouraged to work in groups.
Mixing age-groups is highly educational: the younger students look up to the older and the older have a responsibility towards the younger.

Activities in natural settings must be organized regularly while awakening the feeling of beauty and awe. The direct contact with Nature is deeply educational too. Gardening should constitute a normal routine in the school.

➢ The second stage (7/14): Primary and Middle School.109

Language must be based on world literature and myths; Steiner stressed both the intercultural and mythical dimensions of language and culture. Legends are as important as history.
Children must get to know about the world’s main civilizations, religions and cultural contributions –in a horizon that is mythical, far from the materialistic world view that has alienated humanity and impoverished culture-. Here we must remember –and celebrate- Steiner’s roots in Theosophy and Philosophical Idealism and his metaphysical “weltanschauung” –world view- contrary to the prevailing materialism of the modern age.

Science teaching must cover all the areas: geography, biology, chemistry, physics, geology, astronomy, always in ways adequate to the age.
In science subjects students must observe and describe scientific concepts in their own words and drawings; experimental activities and practical tasks can be basic tools for science teaching –instead of mere bookish intellectual learning-.
Mathematics must also cover all its branches: arithmetic, algebra and geometry.

Physical education and gardening become an integral part of education, not mere extra-curricular activities.

Steiner especially emphasized the educational value of the arts in all the various artistic disciplines -and also the different crafts-. Following Plato, he stressed the importance of dance –not only for girls but also for boys, not only for small kids but also for teenagers-; with the assistance of professional advice, he developed eurhythmy.

109 Cf Steiner R., 1997, lecture fourth and fifth
Community life with relationship and respect for others should also be an integral part of education.

Though prudent in a deeply materialistic culture, Steiner dared to introduce the metaphysical aspects of reality and knowledge, more easily acceptable through great figures such as Plato, Dante or Goethe—for instance-. This metaphysical/spiritual dimension introduced through culture can unfold intellectual/academic teaching like geometry, history or science.

Steiner tried to work out the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge parallel to the holistic nature of reality, not only through bridges amongst the academic disciplines, science and humanities, but even by linking academics and the arts.

For instance, a group of students will perform some dance—eurhythmy—that will evoke the dawn of agriculture or the first civilizations. Through this practical activity—self-experiential learning—the educational process will integrate: history, culture, music, dance, performance, etc, and sometimes literature, even philosophy or science. The children can make the tools for the performance themselves, hence integrating crafts. This holistic experience constitutes the very essence of integral education. Not only the school must incorporate all the facets of education; moreover, these different facets must be integrated within the educational experience itself—self/experiential learning—.

There must be freedom in the classroom, which means freedom of thought—in front of the unilateral and therefore authoritarian discourse of the teacher in mainstream schooling—.
Learning must be basically experiential and self-directed, which means that the learning process may include teachers’ lessons but also practical activities that allow students to experience by themselves.
Imagination and creativity, emphasized by Steiner, must always be stimulated through the educational process—in front of the mechanical routine imposed by mainstream schooling—.

Each pupil has his or her main lesson book where they write all what they learn in their own words with their own drawings.
Students must find joy in learning. They must enjoy what they do and what they learn.

Teachers must love what they teach and care deeply of their students. Steiner kept alive the old tradition of the teacher as a friend, philosopher and guide. He was closer than Montessori to the Socratic spirit.
“The teacher respected by the child as an authority should personify what is good, true and beautiful.”

The Socratic teacher advocated by Steiner becomes a living example of the values he or she teaches, which has been strongly emphasized by integral value education in India. Amazingly enough, Steiner quotes the trinity of values –good, true and beautiful- that lies at the core of the spiritual tradition of India –“satyam” (true), “shivam” (good), “sundaram” (beautiful)-. In fact the same trinity of values could be found in Ancient Greece.

As an heir of Socrates, Steiner was convinced that the true teacher must bring the student to question not in negative or nihilistic terms but in positive or constructive ways, to know himself and hence the world and others. Then belief can only come through experience. The Waldorf School cannot teach any catechism or dogma; it must accompany the growing child to question and inquire, to experience and know through his or her own experience.

For Steiner –heir of Philosophical Idealism and hence heir of Socrates and Plato through Goethe- education must be essentially transformative –something that constitutes the very basis of integral education for the great educationists and sages of India that Steiner unfortunately did not know very well-. As usual in Philosophical Idealism, the inner life as understood by Steiner unfolds the communitarian dimension, the “polis”. Education must internally transform the growing child, and this inner transformation is inseparable from social service and community concern, brotherhood and unity.

➢ Through the third stage (14/ 21) in higher secondary school,

Learning will be more individual, intellectual and scholarly; But still it must be creative, utilizing, for instance, research projects and thesis. Free creative critical thinking will be encouraged. Student must find their own world view and voice.

To sum up:

- Waldorf kindergarten classrooms look very much like Montessori’s kindergarten, since both Montessori and Waldorf are very close to each other in depth.
- However, Waldorf classrooms in higher grades may look more conventional quite often, with desks in front of the blackboard as in mainstream schools. This is probably inevitable to some extent, since the higher grades require an academic function from the side of the teacher that cannot be implemented in the progressive kindergarten scenario.

110 Steiner R., 1997, p 71
Still, Waldorf Schools –like other schools of integral education- try to implement the pedagogic principles of self/ experiential learning and child-centred education even in the higher grades with classrooms that apparently look more conventional. There are ways to do it, and this is what Waldorf and other schools explore.

That the Waldorf School is the expression of Anthroposophy was always clear in Steiner’s views and statements, even if he was certainly aware of the materialistic bias of mainstream schooling and civilization.

“The anthroposophical movement is the basis of the Waldorf School movement.”

It is some Waldorf educators or parents after him that have sometimes tried to establish some sort of difference between both –Anthroposophy and Waldorf School- or to ignore Anthroposophy and present the Waldorf Method independently from Anthroposophy, maybe to avoid problems or issues arising from social prejudice and hostility.

Another matter would be the respect for the freedom of thought of both the student and the teacher, that Steiner always respected. From this point of view, the founder made it clear that although Anthroposophy is the basis of the Waldorf School and its world view, this does not mean that Anthroposophy is inculcated to the children in some authoritarian way, because Steiner, as a true heir of Socratic, was deeply convinced of the fundamental value of freedom of thought, which means that the Waldorf School should never inculcate Anthroposophy because what Anthroposophy should teach would be precisely freedom of thought. By the way, this would be one of the three pillars of the Theosophical Society too, which was deeply Socratic just like Steiner –the most famous Theosophist with Krishnamurti and Montessori-.

In Steiner’s words:

“At the Waldorf School in Stuttgart we have been able to pursue an art of education based on anthroposophy for many years; and we have always made it clear to the rest of the world that anthroposophy as such was never taught here.”

111 Steiner R., 1996, p 162

112 Steiner R., 1997, p 30
Conclusion.

We have tried in these few pages to outline the main points of the pedagogic innovation put forward by Steiner and Montessori in Europe, parallel to that of Dewey and Kilpatrick in North America or the sages of India.

Moreover, we have shown that both Steiner and Montessori share a common cultural background, which is not typically modern-utilitarian and technocratic-but rather humanistic, even spiritual, metaphysical and Idealistic. The foundation of their pedagogic innovation in Philosophical Idealism must be properly grasped and taken into consideration, like their association with the Theosophical Society. Otherwise, we will not be able to adequately comprehend their educational message, and we will not be able to evaluate their historical significance. It is this foundation and association that makes them so deeply akin to the sages of India. And it is this kind of Idealistic sensitiveness which makes all of them critical with the mainstream school system-valueless, soulless and alienating-and dissatisfied with ordinary schools and their inherent utilitarianism and technocracy, which reduces the multidimensional nature of humanity and reality to mere academic training from a highly rationalistic stand point.

On the other hand, some scholars or professionals of education have overemphasized their social influence or success. Certainly, a number of schools have developed all around the globe following their inspiration, and no doubt, the school system has changed to some extent in Western countries, especially for the primary section-more in North America than in Europe-. Nonetheless, we must realize that Western or modern mainstream schooling—also in Asia-still faces a long process of transformation ahead; it is still technocratic and utilitarian, and it still operates a profound reductionism of the deeper multidimensional nature of humanity and the cosmos. It is still far from the holistic, multidimensional, humanistic, ethical and even spiritual vision of these great educators.

European schooling is probably more rigid and more reluctant to a holistic pedagogy than North American schools. In fact, European universities seem to be pretty rigid compared to the flexibility and dynamism of North American universities. Only Northern countries such as The Netherlands, Scandinavia and Finland have shown more sensitiveness towards this holistic value-based aperture. We can also find some aperture in some social/cultural sectors of Germany. However, the major part of Europe has followed the extreme utilitarianism of the United Kingdom and the extreme rationalism of France. And the whole of Europe is deeply influenced by an intellectual world view that has obviously promoted merely bookish knowledge instead of experiential learning. That is why Steiner and Montessori ardently defended a more experiential form of education—as it was in the Indian tradition by the way-. They both still stand as a symbol of a long path of transformation ahead. Dewey and his heir, Kilpatrick opened this horizon in North America.
Outside the Western world, the scenario can even be more dramatic. Let us take the example of India, where Dr Montessori was invited to share her pedagogic innovation. She stayed in Adyar with the Theosophical Society for quite a long period of time, giving lectures and training teachers to instil her humanistic and spiritual approach to children into the Indian educational system. After half a century, we can conclude that the Indian educational system massively ignores Montessori’s contribution; not only beating children is common in most of the schools, but still more significant, there is nothing from Montessori’s humanistic concern for children. Indian children are massively forced to memorize even without proper understanding in order to pour down an undigested mass of information into mechanical tests devoid of any creativity. The mainstream schooling of India constitutes the paroxysm of the typically modern utilitarian soulless education invented in 18th and 19th century Europe. Fortunately, there are new trends coming out today that strive for a more humanistic, value-based, spiritual and holistic kind of education.

Even in the cradle of modernity, Europe, more and more parents dislike the mainstream school system and feel that it lacks the humanistic touch of Montessori, the spiritual and holistic sensitiveness of Steiner, or the progressive and deeply ethical vision of Dewey/ Kilpatrick. An increasing number of parents search for alternative schools and do not find enough of them –especially in Southern Europe-.

We dare to conclude that, in spite of some evolution through the XXth century, mainstream schooling is still essentially technocratic, utilitarian and valueless; it still reduces the deeper multidimensional nature of the human being to poorer merely academic patterns, because the world view or paradigm in general terms has not changed yet. Education is always a mirror of the whole civilization. If you go to another country or continent, or another solar system or galaxy, and you want to know about their civilization and world view, first and foremost examine their educational system, and you will get to know everything about them, their culture and their state of consciousness.

Then, the educational message of great educationists such as Steiner or Montessori in Europe, Dewey or Kilpatrick in North-America, together with the sages of India, can still be a source of inspiration for a long process of transformation of the educational systems towards a more holistic, ethical, spiritual and humanistic vision, knowing with Kant that ethics and humanism cannot be separated, and also knowing with R. Panikkar humanism and spirituality cannot be dissociated either.

R. Panikkar warned that technocracy and humanism are mutually exclusive, and in terms of civilization we must make a decision for one or the other. The modern world has made a clear decision –for technocracy-, and nothing has changed yet in general terms; in fact it has even worsened, just see the abuse of technology in daily life and amongst children in particular, or just see the increasing consumerism everywhere, also in Asia. The school/ college system is a reflection of this technocratic world view. R. Panikkar defended another choice –for humanism--; like Steiner and Montessori, like the sages of India.113

113 Cf Panikkar 1993
In spite of the normal caution in this kind of mainstream report, the researchers of the University of West England conclude:

“There are a number of aspects of Steiner school practice that might readily inform good practice in maintained schools, whilst others may be more controversial but could be the basis for profitable dialogue.”

The controversial aspects could only arise from the difference of paradigm or world view between Steiner and mainstream schooling as indicated in the introduction of this article. If we are aware of it the controversy may be properly channelled, knowing that within the paradigm of Philosophical Idealism wisdom is an invitation; unlike the common ego and ordinary ideologies, wisdom never imposes itself. As the renowned philosopher R. Panikkar always stated, you can take it or not, this is your freedom. It is an invitation; it only suggests.

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Section IV.

J. Krishnamurti and Theosophy at the Junction of the West and the East.
Introduction.

J. Krishnamurti has become relatively well-known in Western countries; his books can be easily found in ordinary bookstalls. Nonetheless, the academic arena has largely ignored him, more sharply in Europe than in North America. Yet, we can regard him as an astounding philosopher who always showed a profound interest for education, and who outlined an educational philosophy that can certainly enrich the educational scenario especially in the horizon of integral value-based pedagogies.

Many educators concerned with holistic value education would primarily think of Steiner and Montessori –in Europe- or Dewey/ Kilpatrick –in North America-. This fascinating philosopher, J. Krishnamurti, who was born in India, was later educated in Europe and also stayed in the USA, offers an intercultural vision at the crossroads of the West and the East, and at the same time, lucid philosophical insights into pedagogy that may help educators evolve genuine paths of integral value-based education.

According to S.H. Forbes:

“Modern education is so obviously failing to solve the world’s problems, is so criticized for failing to meet society’s aspirations, and is so clearly unable to prepare people for the challenges of life.”

Krishnamurti was aware of this and he spoke about it many times, often with sharp words not in mild ways. For instance, he plainly said that the educational system implanted by the state is a catastrophe. Governments do not want people to think –freely-, a point which N. Chomsky or M. Foucault would certainly agree on. For Krishnamurti, governments want people to be like machines or robots; hence, the mainstream educational system teaches children what to think rather than to think –freely-, a point which J. Dewey would also agree on.

Krishnamurti even warned that the present civilization is going towards a collapse sooner or later, which Mr Havel, President or Czechoslovakia, also expressed before a joint session of the Congress of the USA in 1991, and which major thinkers of the XXth century such as E. Laszlo or major scientists such as A. Einstein cautioned about. For Krishnamurti, as it would be the case for other well-known educationists, a profound change in education constitutes the only way out from the present break-down towards a break-through and a better future.

115 Forbes S.H., 1994, p 1


In Krishnamurti’s own words:

“Present-day education is a complete failure because it has emphasized technique. In over-emphasizing technique we destroy man.”

In front of this scenario, the purpose of all education would be to bring about freedom, love, the flowering of goodness and the complete transformation of society. If we compare this philosophy of education to the existing mainstream educational system, it is obvious that there is a huge gap. Krishnamurti was aware of the gap, and the mainstream system has ignored him because his lucidity could only be uncomfortable and impertinent.

In fact, the gap unveils the opposition between two paradigms, that of Krishnamurti, a mystical world view, and that of mainstream schooling and civilization, a materialistic and technocratic world view. For Krishnamurti, education should help create a totally different society, not through the social revolution and its intrinsic violence – as in communism – but through the inner transformation, a shift in consciousness – as in mystical philosophy and Philosophical Idealism, from Socrates to Steiner, from Upanishads to Vivekananda.

As it would be the case for Steiner, Hegel or R. Tagore, the humanistic dimension of Krishnamurti’s educational philosophy must be properly comprehended within a world view that is deeply spiritual – not materialistic or utilitarian as in mainstream schooling. This remarkable sage has been sometimes misunderstood – more often in Western countries than in India. He was not an anarchist at all, nor some kind of Voltaire. He was a mystic “strictu sensu”; we try to show it in this paper as clearly as possible, which means that the humanistic dimension of his educational philosophy stems from that inner spirituality that we can truly call mystical, and that is obviously essential to the philosophical and pedagogic concerns of Plato or Steiner, Autobindo or Tagore – and even Hegel as we explain in another paper.

In order to understand this unique philosopher and educationist and his mystical world view, we must examine his fundamental relation with the Theosophical Society that adopted and educated him. It is well-known that the renowned sage cut with Theosophy at a certain point of his life. It is less often acknowledged that there was afterwards a gradual reconciliation. Still more meaningful, there was never a contradiction in depth, and an earnest study of Theosophy can show that this school of thought defends an integral value-based kind of education deeply akin to Steiner or Aurobindo, certainly, but also to Krishnamurti himself.

\[118\] Krishnamurti, “Education and the Significance of Life”, 1953, p 18

\[119\] Cf Krishnamurti, “This Matter of Culture”, 1964, chapter 3

Cf also “Education and the Significance of Life”, 1953, p 23
The Indian scholar, Vikrant Mishra, stresses a fundamental point that we should always keep in mind if we want to bring Krishnamurti to the academic arena and the school system:

“Throughout the ages sages have warned us that we can’t see what is true even when it is presented to us because that which is true isn’t what we expect or want to hear.”

What blocks the presentation of the truth may be some prejudice – personal and social-, cultural conditioning, pre-established ideologies that cut the way to new thinking, etc. Krishnamurti was an example of the true philosopher or sage that provokes the ego and the prevailing culture because he questions this prejudice, conditioning, ideologies, etc. This has been the task of the philosopher from Socrates / Plato to Nietzsche or the School of Frankfurt, from the Upanishadic “guru” to Ramana Maharshi. It is this deeper philosophical questioning what makes mainstream scholarship and schooling reluctant to hear Krishnamurti’s message. We hope that this article will arise the interest and awareness of the reader to pursue further inquiry.

Still, another Indian scholar, Meenakshi Thapan, underlines the impact of Krishnamurti’s educational philosophy in India, especially amongst schools of holistic education:

“The impact of the philosopher J. Krishnamurti on the educational ethos of alternative Indian education has been of an unquantifiable quality, although this is often not visible in the formal components of secondary school education.”

For more than twenty years the author of this paper has done research on integral value-based education in three continents, Europe, North America and India, especially from the point of view of Philosophical Idealism and spiritual philosophy. Through this scholarly research and parallel field work in schools and colleges in the three continents, the author has elaborated a new educational project, “International Education for a New World”, that blends in depth the most profound pedagogy from both the West and the East.

Through all these years, the author has visited several schools founded by Krishnamurti himself or the Foundation bringing his name, both in India and California, USA. This paper brings out the observation from the direct field work together with the academic study throughout these twenty years devoted to integral value education in an international horizon East/ West.

120 Vikrant Mishra, 2012, p 2

121 Meenakshi Thapan, 2001, p 1
I. THEOSOPHY AND EDUCATION.

The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 in New York by H. Blavatsky and Colonel H.S. Olcott—among others. After a few years, the two founders moved to India, where they established the international headquarters at Adyar (Chennai).

The three objectives of the Theosophical Society would be:

- The study of comparative philosophy and spirituality, especially from the mystical point of view rather than outer organized systems of beliefs, which means that the Society has been a pioneer in the study and reassessment of Eastern traditions—we must remember that the Society was created when European imperialism was at its zenith.

- The study of the deepest laws of nature and the inherent potential of man, which implies the unity of science and spirituality in a holistic vision. Here, the Society anticipates the advent of new science in dialogue with the traditions of mystical philosophy and wisdom, as it also intuits the new holistic paradigm in emergence through the XXth century—we must keep in mind that modern thought was still dominated by mechanism and materialism when the Society was established.

- The ethical dimension: the formation of a universal brotherhood without distinction or discrimination towards the unity of mankind. Here, the Society foresees the international movement through the XXth century towards a world organization, cooperation and solidarity—whereas the world which Theosophists where working in, divided by nationalism, was evolving towards the two World Wars.

We can easily realize that the triple objective of the Theosophical Society restates the loftiest and oldest ideals of human thought, in a world, however, that was clearly hostile against these ancient and noble ideals—a world of nationalism and war, colonization and imperialism, materialism and mechanism in the transition from the XIXth to the XXth centuries. For this reason, anybody who shares humanistic ideals should be thankful to the Theosophical Society for being pioneers at the peak of modernity, having the courage to question the sinister status quo and predominating culture, and daring to defend radically different ideals that have later gained strength through the XXth century.

The brave pioneering spirit of Theosophists was once more manifested when their President, Mrs A. Besant and other members, publicly supported the independence of India in spite of their British origin. India still recognizes this gesture today.
The philosophical depth Theosophy can still be apprehended through its foundational spirit, which is truly Socratic and, in modern terms, we could say democratic. The Society was explicitly formed as a non-sectarian entity, to such an extent that its rules and regulations state that nobody can impose any belief to anybody, and nobody should blindly accept any truth from outside.

The Society totally agrees with Socrates and the inscription on the Temple of Delphos: Man know yourself and you will know the universe and the gods. What the Society promotes is an inner path of self-inquiry in freedom beyond any system of beliefs or dogmas.

One of the central tenets of Theosophy would be the doctrine of The Intelligent Evolution of All Existence at a cosmic scale, integrating both the physical and the non-physical dimensions of the universe. This theory is expounded in detail in the “Secret Doctrine”, the magnum opus of Mme Blavatsky. This notion of a universal spiritual evolution has been suggested by other mystical philosophers, in particular by Sri Aurobindo.

In any case, the Theosophical Society does not impose any system of beliefs to anybody, nor the Secret Doctrine, since it stresses that the path towards truth is that of a Socratic self-inquiry, which implies self-realization as the major goal of life.

Another more esoteric facet of the Theosophical Society would be the connection with the Mahatmas, Hidden Masters or the Hidden Hierarchy, immortal Masters that are mentioned by the mystical traditions and that are especially popular in a country like India. For instance, Swami Yogananda makes clear reference to one of these Masters, with whom he would be somewhat connected.

Krishnamurti also acknowledged to be in touch with some of these Masters when he was adopted by the leaders of the Society, Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater; even after the formal schism with the Society till the end of his life, he always recognized in private circles that this kind of contacts had been real and had continued.

Another famous scission was that of R. Steiner, who was a prominent member of the German branch of the Society, and cut with it later to establish his own society, Anthroposophy.
Theosophy’s pedagogic endeavour.

The three main objectives of the Theosophical Society may be translated into the educational arena as the three main goals of the pedagogic process:

- To unfold all the potential of the growing child from within in interdependence with the cosmos.
- To unveil the innermost spiritual nature of the growing child through self-inquiry in an open inter-religious horizon.
- To foster a cosmopolitan and intercultural spirit towards the brotherhood and unity of mankind.

- Theosophical education is clearly child-centred, requesting the educational system to respect the child’s individuality.
- Moreover, theosophical education is deeply integral or holistic, comprising all the dimensions of humanity through an all round syllabus.
- Theosophy also stresses the development of character in positive terms and in a transformative horizon: the basal role of ethics in education.
- The theosophical school is democratic, enhancing children’s participation.
- The theosophical pedagogy stresses cooperation and the sense of community.

It is interesting to notice that from the very beginning the first Theosophists were concerned by education and were directly involved in Western and Indian educational systems, manifesting a clear support for child centred or integral/progressive pedagogies. Pioneers of these educational ideals formed an international movement between the two World Wars, and Theosophists played a prominent role in it. Madame Blavatsky already criticized Western educational systems for having lost the spiritual foundation and distorting religion, in particular Christianity. The Theosophical Publishing Society very soon started printing issues on education.

In June 1914, Annie Besant opened a conference on pedagogics at the University of London. Other spiritual and progressive organizations also participated, manifesting once more the non-sectarian and open spirit of the Society. Interesting enough, the Indian Tata Foundation was involved.

Besant would develop in detail the theosophical principles of education in clearly integral value-based terms akin to other major progressive pedagogies. In 1913 she founded the Theosophical Educational Trust in India to pursue the educational ideals of the Central Hindu College which she had initiated at Benares in 1898. In Chennai, South India, the Educational Trust would open the Adyar school which is still running today within the premises of the international headquarters of the Society. Theosophists would also open schools and educational societies in England.
Before Second World War broke out, the Theosophical Society invited Dr M. Montessori to the main campus in Adyar (Chennai) and followed her suggestions. Not by chance, R. Steiner, who was an important member of the German branch of the Society, started Waldorf Schools after his schism from Theosophy.

**Annie Besant’s educational philosophy.**

Annie Besant has been one of the most famous leaders of the Theosophical Society. While being the President of the Society, she adopted J. Krishnamurti together with Ch. Leadbeater. Without this adoption, the world would have never had the profound, lucid and illuminating teachings of this unique sage of the modern world. Besant is also well-known for her support of the independence of India–although this support was shared by many Theosophists in spite of their Western or British origin.

Among other facets and works, she clearly formulated the educational principles of Theosophy. Her educational ideas are expounded in a number of publications, such as “Principles of Education”, “Education for the New Era”, etc.

**The main principles of Besant’s educational philosophy.**

- All round or integral education.
- Child-centred pedagogy.
- Value-based pedagogy and ethics.
- Spiritual foundation directed towards the inner realm, through meditation, yoga, etc.
- To train the growing child to subdue body, feeling and mind to Spirit.
- Emotional education, following Plato’s statement, that is, to educate the emotions so that the growing youth may love all that is beautiful.
- To train the mind in right thinking and right judgement, not only in mere academics.
- To cultivate compassion and solidarity, so that children may sympathise with the joys and sorrows of others while being open to serve the community and their fellow beings.
- Systemic outlook, taking into account the social context as an input and as an output; hence, forming good members of the community.
- To cultivate a sense of unity of mankind and universal brotherhood.
“Education as service”.
Krishnamurti’s educational ideas in the frame of the Theosophical Society.

Krishnamurti’s interest in education was life-long and started as early as 1912, when he published “Education as Service”; he was seventeen only, and was taken care of by the Theosophical Society. This short book published in 1912 brings a preface by Annie Besant, whom Krishnamurti literally calls as a mother.

Like the French philosopher Descartes, the young Krishnamurti starts his reflection on education by recalling his own experience in school. In the first sentence of the book, Krishnamurti refers to one of the Masters mentioned above, and makes it clear that all what he writes in this small book follows the instruction given by the Master to him. Krishnamurti had previously referred to the Master in his very first book, “At the Feet of the Master”, published when he was fourteen.

Educational principles stated by Krishnamurti in “Education as Service”.

• The office of the teacher is the most sacred, although modern societies do not pay the due respect to teachers, for which, Krishnamurti deplores, the cleverest boys are not drawn towards this noble profession.

• Love is the first qualification that a teacher ought to have. Here, the young Krishnamurti totally coincides with Sathya Sai Baba, who always stressed love as the most important among the fundamental human values, and the cornerstone of the educational process. Needless to say, modern schooling has totally banned love from the educational process. Like Sathya Sai Baba, Krishnamurti recalls the depth and beauty of the relationship between master and pupil based on pure love between them.

“The most important qualification in education is love.”

“My master taught me that love will enable a man to acquire all other qualities and that “all the rest without it would never be sufficient”.”

The most famous spiritual master of India in the last decades and maybe in the whole modern age, Sathya Sai Baba, insisted that love is the foundation of all human values and the very essence of what we call “God”. Jesus Christ did not preach something very different either.

122 Krishnamurti, “Education as Service”, 1912, “The Teacher”

123 Krishnamurti, “Education as Service”, 1912, I. “Love”
For Krishnamurti, the love of the teacher for his pupil will bring out love from the pupil in turn. Through this pedagogic love, the teacher will draw out all the good qualities from his student—the very concept of Socratic education or the Indian “bala vikas”, unfolding from within, presented by 17 year-old Krishnamurti-. There is no proper education without the human and spiritual dimensions, which are inseparable.

“This love of the teacher for his pupil, protecting and helping him, will bring out from the pupil in turn, (...)

“Living in this atmosphere of love during school hours, the boy will become a better son and a better brother at home, (...)

This is the very essence of the Indian “gurukula” – the community of the master with the disciples- exemplified by the Upanishadic dialogues or living figures such as Shankaracharya. The renowned scholar and sage from contemporary India, Vimala Thakar, emphasized the beauty of this ancient pedagogy of India, and she dared to conclude that this was one of the heights of philosophy and pedagogy in the history of humanity, from Vedas and Upanishads to Vedanta. This pedagogy of Ancient India would obviously be very close to the Socratic pedagogic love and dialogue in the Platonic works. When observing this ancient pedagogy of India and Greece, we can realize how far is modern mainstream schooling from it, and how far has gone the dehumanization and demystification already deplored by the Romantics two centuries back.

The young Krishnamurti highlights the depth and beauty of the “gurukula”, the relationship between master and disciple:

“Love on the physical plane has many forms. We have the love of husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, the affection between relatives and friends. But all these are blended and enriched in the love of the Master to His disciple.”

- Krishnamurti also values happiness in the process of growing up; the teacher should be cheerful himself, and happiness should also evolve within the school premises, something that was anticipated two centuries back by the eminent philosopher of education, J.J. Rousseau.

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124 Krishnamurti, “Education as Service”, 1912, I. “Love”

125 Krishnamurti, “Education as Service”, 1912, I. Love
“No teacher who really loves his students can be anything but cheerful during school hours.”

- Instead of negatively pointing out the faults of the students, the teacher must help them to unveil their highest nature: a positive transformation of character.

“The whole idea of what is called “punishment” is not only wrong but foolish.”

- Krishnamurti also emphasizes the training of self-discipline or self-control.
- The teacher must be tolerant and respect the ideas of his students.
- Finally, Krishnamurti insists that spirituality and ethics should be the very foundation of the educational process and school life.

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127 Krishnamurti, “Education as Service”, 1912, I. “Love”

128 Cf Krishnamurti, “Education as Service”, 1912, IV. “Good conduct”, 1. “Self-control as to the mind” and 2. “Self-control in action”
II. THE HEIRS OF THEOSOPHY: J. KRISHNAMURTI AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND KRISHNAMURTI’S FOUNDATION AND SCHOOLS.

According to many relevant intellectuals, scientists, artists, politicians and spiritual leaders of the XXth century, such as Aldous Huxley, Christopher Isherwood, David Bohm, Fritjof Capra, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Charles Chaplin, Greta Garbo, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, etc, Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986) would be one of the purest and most profound characters of the XXth century, a genuine philosopher and true sage that can also be regarded as a major educationist and who was even compared to Buddha. His enlightening message will stay for generations to come as one of the cornerstones of educational philosophy in a language suitable for the modern word.

His fascinating life is already a living presentation of his teachings. His inspirational legacy contains the most important reflections for the future of humanity on Earth, regarding education and the crucial issue of consciousness. Few philosophers have so sharply put forward the most fundamental questions for the human race, and his educational philosophy underlines in the clearest terms the very core of what proper education should be.

The fact that he has been persistently ignored by the academic arena indicates the predominant cultural state of the modern world. If humanity has to have future on Earth, it will have to address the key reflections put forward by Krishnamurti; it is not his personality what really matters, though it is undoubtedly fascinating; what really matters is the reflection by itself, which has been expressed in the clearest terms by him, and in ways comprehensible to the modern mind.

In the early years of the XXth century, when he was a teenage boy, Krishnamurti was taken care of by the Theosophical Society, in particular by its leaders A. Besant and Ch. Leadbeater, who really felt that there was a unique depth and purity in that young boy—and they were not wrong at all-. The Society trained the young Krishnamurti to become not only a world leader and teacher, but more specifically the channel for an immortal Master, Maitreya. A special organization was established around him, the Order of the Star.

It is well-known that in 1929—the year of the economic crack-, Krishnamurti disavowed this role, and started a solitary path that would bring to the creation of a new organization around him, the Krishnamurti Foundation.

Some people have found special satisfaction in cultivating the enmity between Krishnamurti and the Theosophical Society—drawn by their own bias and negative emotions-, for which we feel it fundamental to outline some sensible conclusions.
Krishnamurti and the Theosophical Society.
The depth of a misunderstood sage.

Krishnamurti was not some kind of atheistic or agnostic free thinker demolishing spirituality –some of his followers may have been like this, especially in Western countries rather than in India–.

Throughout his life, he shared and exemplified the main goals of Theosophy:

- I. Free self-inquiry towards self-realization;
- II. The unity of science and spirituality towards a deeper understanding of reality.
- III. Brotherhood and the unity of mankind.

Krishnamurti is a living example of the Socratic path of self-inquiry in the XXth century, but some people pulled by prejudice out of ignorance forget that this is the number one goal of the Theosophical Society. Some people underline that Krishnamurti questioned all systems of belief, dogmas and organizations repressing freedom and life; but less people know that this is exactly the ideal of the Theosophical Society, clearly stated in its major texts. Another thing is whether some members of the Society have distorted the goals in their human imperfection, but this has obviously happened within the Krishnamurti Foundation too, and in any human organization.

It is fundamental to realize that there is no contradiction between Krishnamurti and Theosophy in depth. The differences arose from organizational matters, questions of egos, and the inevitable distortion that human beings produce in any organization out of the foundational goals.

In fact, through his life, and even more in the last years, there was an undeniable reconciliation between Krishnamurti and the Theosophical Society, and today some prominent persons, especially in India, are members of both the Krishnamurti Foundation and the Theosophical Society—as many leaders of the Theosophical Society have been at the same time members of Freemasonry-. Few people know that Krishnamurti stated several times in Vasanta Vihar—the beautiful estate of the Krishnamurti Foundation in Chennai—that Theosophists were the ones who better understood him.

Krishnamurti was a true mystic, we dare to say that he is one of the most fascinating mystics in the history of mankind, and his whole legacy is a mystical philosophy imbued with wisdom. We must recollect his astonishing mystical experiences, especially when he was young, but in general throughout his entire life: classical mystical experiences of the Light, expansion towards cosmic consciousness, etc.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{129} Cf Sanat A., 1999
Cynical people that overstress Krishnamurti’s questioning of spiritual/meditative techniques overlook the fact that Krishnamurti reached the state of consciousness of later years due to all the meditation he himself practised for many years.

There is a Socratic reaction in Krishnamurti against religious hypocrisy and repression, mechanical practice without any coherence that has lost the essence; what Krishnamurti advocates then is not an atheistic or agnostic critical thinking –like in the School of Frankfurt- but a genuine return to the purity of the vision, to the essence beyond all the paraphernalia.

Krishnamurti always acknowledged –throughout his whole life till the end- that the contact with other realms of reality and immortal masters during his training years with the Theosophical Society were true, genuine and real. In fact, he often spoke about this kind of contact still in the last years of his life with the Krishnamurti Foundation.

Here we will concentrate on the penetrating and enlightening philosophy of education of this true sage of the XXth century, compared to Buddha by a number of scholars and intellectuals. Krishnamurti’s interest in education was long standing and started as early as 1912 with what is probably his first book, “Education as Service”. His approach is certainly integral or holistic, undoubtedly humanistic, and above all, deeply ethical and spiritual –we can even say mystical-. This presentation of Krishnamurti may question some misunderstanding that has been created around him –especially in the Western world-.

Below we will develop his educational philosophy in the light of the mystical depth of his life that can only be overlooked through prejudice or bias.

After “Education as Service” (1912), Krishnamurti’s first work on education would be “Education and the Significance of Life” (1953), after which followed two compilations of Krishnamurti’s direct interaction with students, “Life ahead” (1963) and “This Matter of Culture” (1964). We should still mention latter publications such as “On Education”, “Letters to the Schools”, “Beginnings of Learning”, etc, where a Socratic Krishnamurti elucidates the very foundation of education –not the technicalities that haunt many parents and teachers- usually in dialogue with teachers and also students.

At the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s Krishnamurti created two schools, one in South India, Rishi Valley, in the hills of southern Andhra Pradesh, and another one in North India, Rajghat, in the outskirts of the oldest city of the world, Varanasi. Between the fifties and the seventies, six more schools were established, four in India and two in the Western world, South England and Ojai, California in the USA.\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{130} Cf Meenakshi Thapan, 2001
We have had the privilege of visiting some of these schools and teaching to the students, observing the living legacy of the sage in the schools that continue to evolve as well as they can a pedagogic practice beyond the limitations of mainstream schooling, being aware that it is not easy to divert from the mainstream system, first and foremost because the academic affiliation of the school implies the heavy burden of the syllabus with public exams that do not allow a Krishnamurti School or any school of integral education to do what they would like to do.

From our scholarly research and field work, these would be the main points of Krishnamurti’s educational philosophy, that Krishnamurti Schools have been trying to put into practice in a world that does not make it easy –often the parents make it as difficult as the governments-.

**Krishnamurti’s educational philosophy to be implemented in Krishnamurti Schools.**

- Krishnamurti never designed a specific pedagogic frame, neither did he specify any particular method or technique of education.

- The spirit of a Krishnamurti School should be deeply Socratic in the sense that nobody should impose or dictate what teachers or students must believe in; in a Krishnamurti School there would not be any scope for any dogma, fixed formula or final authority.

- Furthermore, students –or teachers- are not supposed to blindly accept anything from outside, or to simply believe or imitate what is taught outside. Again, the purest spirit of Buddha or Socrates breathes in Krishnamurti’s educational philosophy, encouraging both students and teachers to freely inquire by themselves.

For Krishnamurti, mainstream schooling is the opposite of the Socratic spirit:

“Instead of awakening the integrated intelligence of the individual, education is encouraging him to conform to a pattern and so is hindering his comprehension of himself as a total process.”

For the sage, the present civilization parallel to the average state of consciousness is based on fragmentation and conflict, which is obviously inseparable from the ego and its intrinsic egoism and separation. All this nurtures people’s inability to see relationship in depth and the underlying interconnectedness. Krishnamurti had a quantum mind; his world view was deeply akin to the discoveries and conclusions of quantum physics, which is exemplified by the fascinating dialogues he had with the quantum physicist D. Bohm. In fact, we can

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131 Krishnamurti, “Education and the Significance of Life”, 1953, p 12
say that all mystics have a quantum mind; the major figures of quantum physics have spoken explicitly about the convergence of quantum physics and mystical philosophy.

In front of this chaotic world and the chaotic mind that has produced it, Krishnamurti advocated a new form of education that is at the same time very old, the education of consciousness to awaken deeper or higher states of consciousness and free human beings from the present mess and sorrow.\(^\text{132}\)

- Krishnamurti’s pedagogy is truly integral, and Krishnamurti Schools attempt to cover all aspects of humanity and life in a balanced harmonious way, without overstressing any particular aspect to the detriment of the whole.

“This book (“Education and the Significance of Life”) offers an approach to teaching and learning that is deeply holistic. The word “holistic” was not in use when he wrote this book; instead Krishnamurti uses the word “integrated”.\(^\text{133}\)

- A Krishnamurti School must create a positive nurturing environment that naturally develops love of Nature, sensitiveness for music and the arts, and curiosity to learn.

- This pedagogy is also child-centred, helping every child to discover his or her own interests and talents instead of mechanically standardizing –as in the mainstream schooling of the modern age-, which also implies self-learning and self-knowledge –in depth, not only in cognitive/ academic terms but also in a Socratic way-.

- For Krishnamurti, the child’s personality needs to be explored and revealed by himself or herself rather than shaped into an external mould –as in mainstream schooling and conventional society-. To Krishnamurti, each person has a unique vocation that needs to be discovered –which constitutes a major theme amongst all advocates of integral education-. What the child really loves to do has to be found and then pursued. This inner vocation would ultimately unveil a deeper spiritual dimension –which has nothing to do with rituals or dogmas-. Steiner or Montessori would totally agree with Krishnamurti.

“Self-knowledge, or “awareness of one’s total psychological process”, was another important aim for Krishnamurti. He believed that the student should “observe and understand his own self-projected values” and the conditioning influences that have influenced the student.”\(^\text{134}\)

\(^{132}\) Cf Krishnamurti, “La libertad primera y ultima”, 1996, p 54-56

Cf also Krishnamurti, “El despertar de la inteligencia”, 2000, vol I, p 191-204

\(^{133}\) Miller J.P., s.d., p 3-4

\(^{134}\) Miller J.P., s.d., p 6
• Although a Krishnamurti School can be run for day scholars, residential schools may be preferable, since they allow us to better develop the fundamental role of relationship in education and life, so beautifully expounded by Krishnamurti himself—and one of his major themes, in deep coherence with Raimon Panikkar’s contribution to dialogue—.

• For Krishnamurti, the campus atmosphere must be imbued with care and affection, so that the child grows free from fear—the main enemy of love, creativity and freedom—.

• Academic excellence must stress creativity and free thinking together with the capacity of expressing oneself; good results in examinations should be a by-product of academic excellence, not an end in itself.

• Instead of teaching the child what to think, we should teach him how to think.

• However, education cannot be reduced to the intellectual mind; it must integrate the emotions—ours and those of others—; the famous concept of emotional intelligence, so fashionable today, was clearly apprehended by Krishnamurti.

• The great role of aesthetics: the schools founded by Krishnamurti are beautiful places indeed; Rishi Valley would be the best example. For the sage, as for Plato, beauty is very important, helping the growing child to undergo his positive transformative process. Beauty is intimately linked to sensitivity, and both unfold the true spiritual feeling.

• Accompanying the child cannot consist of authoritarian repression and punishment; rather, we must help the child to understand himself in order to positively correct himself. Education must be transformative, not repressive. This also means that education must be essentially ethical; however, true ethics stems from within, not from outer coercion nor from outer rules.

  “Krishnamurti was also critical of attempts to control children and to use rewards and punishments.”

• It is very important to nurture the child’s love for Nature, so that he can feel part of it, and live in harmony with the environment—a major Rousseauian theme, deeply felt by Krishnamurti, who stressed the respect for all life and sensitivity to the beauty of Nature, a typically Romantic state of mind, not alien to a pure soul like Krishnamurti who highly appreciated some of the great Romantic poets—. That is why the schools founded by the sage are located in parks or the countryside.

• Krishnamurti Schools organize all sorts of clubs for various activities and different classes for the arts, crafts, music, dance, drama, etc—even gardening, excursions, hiking, etc, and hence the contact with Nature—.

135 Miller J.P., s.d., p 7
Following the profound spirit of Theosophy, Krishnamurti Schools must understand that the quest for truth is the highest religion; in this perspective, they attempt to reconcile the dramatic divorce between science and spirituality. The scientific temper and the spiritual quest can go together again.

Krishnamurti loved Keats’ poetry, and he knew very well that for the Romantic poet, beauty is related to truth, something that R. Tagore would totally endorse. In fact, Indian philosophy has spoken through centuries of the metaphysical trinity that also existed in Ancient Greece: “satyam” –truth- “sundaram” –beauty-, “shivam” –good-. Krishnamurti embraced the Vedantic trinity not because he learnt it as bookish knowledge but rather because he experienced it inwardly. And his educational philosophy is an invitation to awaken this higher truth or deeper reality in the children.

But can the teacher do it if he or she does not live it already? For Krishnamurti, the human and spiritual quality of the teacher is fundamental, and teachers’ training must be primarily focused on this.

In any case isn’t this truly spiritual? Several scholars such as Vikrant Mishra and S.H. Forbes have insisted that Krishnamurti’s pedagogy and philosophy is deeply spiritual; we dare to say, truly mystical. This mystical world view unveils an underlying unity or wholeness.

In Krishnamurti’s words:

“The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole.”

Therefore, the spiritual dimension of Krishnamurti’s educational philosophy is not related to temples or rituals, but rather to self-knowledge. Again, the genuine Socratic spirit of free self-inquiry which is the essence of the genuine spiritual path –beyond all the distortions of organizations and egos, and beyond all sorts of mechanical practices, rituals or beliefs–.

This path of self-inquiry turning inward instead of outward brings out the deeper meaning of meditation beyond mere meditative techniques and spiritual ego.

For this, Krishnamurti Schools should encourage the reflection upon the meaning and purpose of life, leaving some time to be with oneself, and to experience silence. The sage insisted that schools must have special places for silence, not on the periphery of the campus but in the centre of them, like a sanctum sanctorum at the heart of the educational space. Can we deny the spiritual foundation of education in Krishnamurti’s vision?

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136 Krishnamurti, “Education and the Significance of Life”, 1953, p 24

Like Sathya Sai Baba, Krishnamurti also wanted the school to be imbued by a certain atmosphere or ethos that would nurture the children; this ethos should obviously be value-based and spiritual.

The major theme of Krishnamurti’s philosophy, the transformation of human consciousness, should be at the core of a Krishnamurti School.

“For Jiddu Krishnamurthy, the intentions of education must be the inner transformation and liberation of the human being, and from that, society would be transformed.”

We must recognize that human society needs some external order and discipline without becoming excessive or oppressive; but we must also understand that the external order will never bring order inside, in our mind. And the simple imitation of what they believe outside, or the simple imposition of the external order above the individual, will never bring order inside.

Only when there is order inside, in our minds, can an outer order and discipline follow as a natural corollary like the freshness of life, always recreating itself, in a true and living coherence between our thoughts, our words and our deeds. Kant would agree with Krishnamurti on a fundamental point: it is not the compliance with external rules or coercion that brings out genuine ethics, but rather the unfolding of an ethical conviction from within; this internal conviction would be more intellectual and rational in Kant, truly mystical in Krishnamurti. This requires an earnest process of understanding ourselves and others — beyond judgement and belief. This understanding is inseparable from love — for ourselves and for all.

Only this is right living: living in natural order without fear and without compulsion. Then we can truly cooperate with each other without seeking any advantage and without pretending any exploitation. Krishnamurti’s educational philosophy breathes the purest spirit of Dharma, striving for genuine righteousness, not for the satisfying hypocrisy of the ego, that believes that he is good unaware of all its contradictions, but rather for true right living, which is nothing else than the freshness of life, the purity of mind — Chaitanya, the pure consciousness of Indian mystical philosophy.

“In Krishnamurti’s words:

“Education in the true sense is helping the individual to be mature and free, to flower greatly in love and goodness.”

138 Vikrant Mishra, 2012, p 4

139 Krishnamurti, “Education and the Significance of Life”, 1953, p 23
It is interesting to note that Krishnamurti frequently used the verb “to flower”. Virtually nobody knows in the Western world that this corresponds exactly to a Sanskrit word that is fundamental in the educational philosophy of Ancient India: “bala vikas”, which literally means the flowering or blossoming of the boy/child. “Bala vikas” is one of the words in Sanskrit to refer to the form of integral education that Krishnamurti defended, and the coincidence cannot be fortuitous. In the mystical world view that Krishnamurti experienced –like the Indian “rishis” or sages- consciousness unfolds from within, flowering from that wholeness buried inside and awaiting to be unveiled.

- A Krishnamurti School is finally a challenge –the challenge of life, that we face each one of us-. We are free to accept the challenge, as Krishnamurti did, or not –true freedom lies at the core of his enlightening pedagogy-.

In Krishnamurti’s words, schools exist for the enlightenment of man;\(^{140}\) they should be based on the understanding of correct action, the depth and beauty of relationship, and the sacredness of a religious life. As he said, children must be educated so that they become religious (= spiritual) human beings.\(^{141}\)

This means that the teacher himself must live internally what he should awaken in the student. Krishnamurti was aware of the importance of the teacher’s character in depth in any school devoted to the transformation of the human being beyond bookish knowledge. All educationists promoting integral value education have insisted upon teachers’ training not in academic terms but rather from a human, ethical and spiritual dimension.

Can anybody deny the ethical and even spiritual foundation of Krishnamurti’s pedagogy, and his mystical/ Idealistic depth? (Much closer to Plato and Hegel than utilitarian valueless mainstream schooling.)

To merely cultivate academic instruction and technical training while overlooking these fundamental issues -this very foundation of education- brings mankind to the present wars, conflict and destruction.

According to S.H. Forbes:

“Krishnamurti’ insights on education are still radical and frequently ignored or dismissed as impractical. This is possibly due largely to the fact that Krishnamurti presents education as a religious (= spiritual) activity in an age when most people still see it predominantly as preparation for succeeding in a material world.”\(^{142}\)

\(^{140}\) Cf Krishnamurti, “Letters to the Schools”, vol one, Letter of 15th October 1979

\(^{141}\) Cf Krishnamurti, Brockwood Park, Second Public Talk, 26th August 1979

\(^{142}\) Forbes S.H., 1994, p 1
In Krishnamurti’s vision, education should also help children understand what is true freedom. However, Krishnamurti makes it clear that freedom must be at the beginning, not to be gained at the end—of compulsion-. The outcome of compulsion is compulsion.\footnote{Cf Krishnamurti, “Education and the Significance of Life”, 1955, chapter 6}

To sum up, the very goal of education in Krishnamurti’s views is nothing else than the inner transformation of the human being, the liberation of the human being from all sorts of bondage—not only external but especially internal-. Only this psychological revolution, only this shift in consciousness, can bring a real transformation of human society.

Krishnamurti adheres here to the loftiest ideals of Enlightenment and the Kantian project of human emancipation. He also adheres to the Gospel of Jesus Christ when he utters the most beautiful message he ever gave: life is to be lived in the plenitude of love, and only this warmth of love will bring about a new state, a new culture, a new world.\footnote{Cf Krishnamurti, “The Mirror of Relationship. Love, Sex and Chastity”, 1992, p 72-73}

This is a pathless land in the sense that no external systems of beliefs and no social organizations can ever bring about this change. To reach this pathless land there is only one path: the Socratic or Buddhic process of free self-inquiry in relation and dialogue. This is the very core of Krishnamurti’s message.

Whether mankind is ready to understand and face it is another thing. The present crisis, which is not economic in depth but anthropological, shows that there is no future for the present prejudice, ignorance and illusion.

Like Sathya Sai Baba, Krishnamurti stressed the human, ethical and spiritual quality of the teachers. If adults do not live themselves the values or the spiritual feeling, how can they inspire the children? In Krishnamurti schools the students will not have Krishnamurti as a teacher, and in Waldorf Schools they will not have Steiner, but ordinary men and women who should live internally the same depth of experience than them if they must awaken this in the children. Ultimately, integral value education does not educate the children only, but also the teachers and the parents, the adults too; it is systemic, it should have an impact in the community around and interact with its surrounding reality.

In Krishnamurti’s words, to help students towards freedom and a spiritual mind, the educator must previously change his own values and transform his own mind. He too must get rid of the selfish ego; he too must flower in love and goodness. This process of mutual education creates an altogether different relationship between the teacher and the student.
Above all, the over-riding quality of an educator should be spirituality –the true feeling unfolding from within, not the external adherence to rituals and systems of beliefs amidst all sorts of hypocrisy and compulsion-. If the educator is truly spiritual, he will be centred in the being, from which right doing will naturally follow.
Conclusion.

Krishnamurti once acknowledged in front of the staff of his own school that he was himself a vague, dreamy school boy, bad at all academics, but sensitive, full of wonder, and affectionate. Then, Krishnamurti asked to his staff if, according to their criteria, they would have accepted him as a student. A painful silence followed to the sage’s question.

Most probably, any Krishnamurti School would have closed the door to Krishnamurti himself as a boy. This is the most important question that any school of integral education must face for the future. This is the kind of question that we must address because here lies the very core of the human condition in this world.

We have had the privilege of visiting a number of Krishnamurti Schools both in South India and California. Did they follow what Krishnamurti said about education so many times for so many years?

Krishnamurti repeatedly complained that nobody had understood him, even or very especially within the Krishnamurti Foundation itself. In fact, when he was talking in the beautiful estate of Vasanta Vihar in Chennai and the Theosophists were coming from the neighbouring Theosophical Society by crossing the Bridge over the Adyar River, Krishnamurti would often provoke the people of his own Krishnamurti Foundation by commenting that the ones who crossed the bridge (Theosophists) understood him better than his own people (from the Krishnamurti Foundation).

According to the Buddhist scriptures, after enlightenment prince Siddhartha, the Awakened One, Buddha, hesitated whether to teach or not, wondering whether anybody would understand him in this world. Then a most beautiful boy appeared in the light; it was Lord Brahma, who encouraged him to go to the world and teach others.

It seems through history that this has been a common wound amongst most sages, philosophers and even spiritual masters: the awareness of being so far from the average state of consciousness on Earth that nobody or very few will understand.

It is clear that Krishnamurti would be one of them, and it is also clear that Krishnamurti Schools would have closed the door to the boy who was the young Krishnamurti.

We will conclude this paper with one question that the author may raise as a Christian. If Jesus Christ came back to the world today, would humanity crucify Him again?

Or to put it in other words: Has humanity changed significantly in terms of consciousness –not technology–? Many thinkers have said in the last decades and even in the last centuries that the average humanity has not changed so much. We leave it to the reader, to his or her own consideration. Herder already deplored at the very end of the XVIIIth century that there was an increasing gap between the rapid material development and consciousness that did not develop in parallel terms. Two centuries have passed; isn’t the gap still wider?
According to Meenakshi Thapan:

“Krishnamurti’s discomfort with the present world order stemmed from his understanding of the human condition wherein no one is truly happy but ensnared within a psychological world of sorrow, jealousy, pain, anger, envy and troubled relationships. This inner turmoil, Krishnamurti understood, could not lead to harmonious relationships or a good society. It could only create conflict and contradictions that resulted in fragmentation and chaos. These conditions in turn led to exploitation, oppression and war.”\(^{145}\)

The reader will kindly allow us to play with words, and say that the only exit from this vicious circle will never be “brexit” but “philexit”; that is, the solution will never be political or economic—for Krishnamurti Marxism was an illusion and both right and left, separatists and unionists, pro-Europe and anti-Europe, would be the same, the same old state of consciousness staying in separation and conflict. The solution will never be political or economic; it will be philosophical—in its deeper meaning, which puts forward the crucial issue of conscience-. Only a psychological revolution—not communist-, only an inner transformation—not social- can cleanse the present mess and open a hidden depth and purity from within, the true innocence that Krishnamurti certainly experienced through his mystical experiences of unity, love and light.

Krishnamurti said in explicit terms that the crisis which humanity faces is not political, nor scientific, nor religious—in the orthodox sense of the established religious traditions--; the human crisis lies in consciousness, in the mind, in the behaviour, in the relations that people have.\(^{146}\)

He explicitly warned that the revolution in human society must start with the inner psychological transformation of the individual.\(^{147}\) Only a psychological revolution, only a shift in consciousness, may induce significant changes for better, not any ideology, not any form of politics, not any social action with the same old mindset that has created the problem. Albert Einstein insisted that we cannot solve a problem within the same state of consciousness that created it; all ideologies, social reforms and politics have been doing that only.

Krishnamurti reminded his fellow beings that there is something else, which is really different; it is not an ideology, it is not the kind of thinking that is trapped in the old vicious circle. It is an inner experience, it is the very breath of life; and only from this true innocence, only from this pure love, can there be a real change in the world for better.

\(^{145}\) Meenakshi Thapan, 2001, p 3

\(^{146}\) Cf Krishnamurti, “Sobre la mente y el pensamiento”, 1995, p 118

\(^{147}\) Cf Krishnamurti, “La libertad primera y ultima”, 1996, p 37
In his own words:

“Religion is a way of life in which there is inward harmony, a feeling of complete unity.”¹⁴⁸

For Krishnamurti, as for Plato, Steiner, Shakaracharya or Aurobindo, this should be the main aim of education—the inner transformation. For all sages, Eastern or Western, the soulless, utilitarian, technocratic mainstream school system will only maintain and worsen the present conflict and chaos. Is there any hope ahead? In the horizon of this hope, Krishnamurti taught throughout his entire life and created several schools.

“Education forms a central core of Krishnamurti’s world view. In fact, Krishnamurti spent his entire life talking about education as being the agent not only of inner renewal but also of social change. Education is therefore the foundation on which the good society will build itself.

Krishnamurti always asserted the individual’s responsibility to the social order: “You are the world.”” ¹⁴⁹

Our conclusion after 20 years of scholarly research and field work in three continents would be that most of “progressive or holistic” schools—including Waldorf and Montessori, including Krishnamurti Schools—have just recreated mainstream schooling without being aware of it and have just given a more cheerful face to the mainstream system, because in depth nothing has changed and the “progressive or holistic” educators have just implemented some “progressive or holistic” techniques without unfolding the real depth of the matter, which means the world view or paradigm. Most of “progressive or holistic” educators and schools have been “progressive or holistic” in the techniques, not in the state of consciousness, which was still the same old mindset and the same old ego with all its blocks, prejudice, fragmentation, conflict, etc. The mindset has not changed, the ego has not changed; there has been no real transformation within, and the prevailing paradigm or world view has been unconsciously repeated because there was no internal experience of something else and different, really different—which Krishnamurti did experience, like Shankaracharya or R. Tagore—.

¹⁴⁸ Krishnamurti, “Talks and Dialogues”, Saanen, 1968, p 103

¹⁴⁹ Meenakshi Thapan, 2001, p 5
J.P. Miller has understood and clearly explained this crucial issue:

“Educational reform has also tended (like mainstream) to emphasize technique with regard to curriculum and instruction. Unfortunately, even those who call themselves holistic educators can fall into this trap and advocate a particular technique such as cooperative learning without linking the teaching technique to a larger context of holism.”

A “larger context of holism” is precisely the world view or paradigm and the underlying or corresponding state of consciousness, intention or mindset. To use a metaphor widely spread within his intimate circle, Krishnamurti had climbed the ladder to that other level of reality and spoke from there to a mass of followers and members of the Krishnamurti Foundation that were still down, unaware of being down, or even thinking that they were also up whereas they were not—which was obvious through their behaviour; the spiritual ego-. Krishnamurti left this world lamenting that almost nobody had understood him and almost nobody had really transformed himself or herself around him, which means that he was aware that even Krishnamurti Schools had become like other schools, maybe more cheerful—he said it explicitly in front of his own staff-.

This is the major challenge for humanity on Earth. All the polemics about politics and all the ideologies have failed and will continue to fail to address the real problems and solve them—which requires the inner transformation without which there is no social change but the blind repetition of history as it has been till now-. As we said, the solution to humanity’s troubles is not “brexit”—politics— but “philexit”—philosophy—which implies the crucial issue of the paradigm and the state of consciousness.

In front of a proliferation of “holistic” techniques and illusions, Krishnamurti was a real philosopher who put forward a real philosophy of education of the uttermost importance for humanity. He has been widely and persistently ignored till now by mainstream schooling, scholarship and obviously ministries of education. By ignoring the real philosophy the world has gone into the right direction? Just look around and observe yourself. As the well-known philosopher of science, E. Laszlo warned, the present civilization is going towards a break-down. What Krishnamurti left to humanity may help to shift from a break-down to a break-through. All major quantum physicists have understood it—see Planck, Schroedinger, Bohm, Goswami, etc-. But they have also been ignored by mainstream science and governments too, who have perverted quantum science with its philosophical conclusions—see Heisenberg- turning it into quantum technologies more dangerous than ever without conscience.

\[150\] Miller J.P., s.d., p 7
More than ever, the warning of sages and great scientists is still valid. Michel de Montaigne cautioned: “Science without conscience is but the ruin of the soul.” And Albert Einstein insisted that the present science and technology without conscience is like an axe in the hands of a pathological criminal (the present ego, mindset or world view).

Krishnamurti gave to humanity a philosophy of education to raise consciousness from the present ruin of the soul, to transmute the axe in the hands of the pathological criminal into the blossoming of love, goodness and unity.

Will mainstream schooling, scholarship and governments continue to ignore him? Will humanity on Earth shift from the break-down to the break-through? We finalize this article with these questions left open to the consideration of the reader.

As Krishnamurti said, a genuine teacher cannot impose anything, he can only suggest. And as his friend, the renowned philosopher and scholar, Prof Raimon Panikkar, said, wisdom is an invitation only. You are free to take it or not.

In one of his famous conversations with the quantum physicist D. Bohm in Ojai, 15th April 1980, Krishnamurti put forward the most important question for the future of humanity. Till now human thought has persistently responded to hatred with hatred, to violence with violence, etc: just observe human history till now. Why have we lost that other way of looking at things? Why humanity has not advanced in the other direction, that of love, which has no cause?

We leave the reader with Krishnamurti’s question. This is the major question for the future of education too.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Cf Krishnamurti/Bohm, “Mas alla del tiempo”, 1996, p 187
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THE TEACHINGS AND EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SATHYA SAI
BABA: EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES TOWARDS HUMAN
TRANSFORMATION.

Section V.

Sathya Sai Baba:
A Lighthouse for Mankind on the Threshold of a New
World.
The mission of this unique Master of masters, highly revered in India and all around the world as a Divine incarnation, has always promoted the unity of mankind and the transformation of the human being towards higher states of consciousness, recalling the message of great spiritual masters of the past from all the traditions.

Nonetheless, the teachings of this unique Master from the modern age have specially stressed the importance of education and the foundation of education in human values, recognizing the value of worldly knowledge, the intellect, science and academic training though appealing to the human and spiritual grounds of education from the inner depth -the Atman that is Brahman in the language of Vedantic philosophy-. The teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba on education remind us of the Socratic pedagogy or the writings of modern Idealism and Romanticism. Even more directly, they can bring back to our memory the dialogues of the Upanishads with their profound relationship between teacher and pupil. However, what is really unique in the educational philosophy of Sri Sathya Sai Baba would be the intimate link between the academic and the spiritual domains, merging intellectual/ scientific training and spiritual inquiry.

What Sri Sathya Sai Baba puts forward for the XXIst century is not a monastic path, but rather, a lay spirituality incarnated here and now, rooted in this world in order to serve from love and compassion. It is amazing to realize that this great Master of our time has been training for decades entire generations of managers, administrators, computer engineers, scientists, educators and scholars, trying to bring the spiritual dimension, an ethical vision and human values into all the spheres of modern life at the very heart of the industrial, urban and technological world.

We should still add that intercultural and inter-religious dialogue lies at the core of His illuminating teachings; while He has promoted the unity of mankind and the brotherhood of all traditions, races and cultures, He has also proposed that the East learns from the West and the West from the East. In this horizon, He has suggested the fruitful interaction between the best academic training from Europe and the West and the most profound spiritual inquiry into the deepest reality and the self from India and the East, remembering at the same time the mystical traditions from the West and the academic/ scientific schools from the East. In Taoist terms, the yin would be in the yan and the yan in the yin.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has not trained “sannyasins” –or monks-, but ordinary men and women capable of addressing their own transformation in order to transform the world around them from a real change within. As we said, the Master has fostered a lay spirituality incarnated here and now –at the core of the modern world-, to contribute to build a better world silently and authentically.

In this fundamental task, His message can be summarized in only two words: love and service. Only genuine love can produce a real change in us and around us –not a volatile feeling or emotion, but that profound state of being that anybody will recognize as unconditional love-. When our whole being is imbued with this love, our whole life is selfless service to our fellow beings, in cosmic solidarity with all and everything, in the unity underlying diversity. This service –like this love- is our true nature, our birth right. To become –actually- what we are –potentially- constitutes the core of the process of
transformation—or spiritual path-. This has been the most fundamental teaching of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, His infinite gift to Humanity.

Many people talk about social service today. But in Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s vision, “seva”—service to others—is regarded as a service to the Divine, and more precisely, to the Divine in those whom we help. Service is inseparable from love and compassion; it is putting into practice the Divine love lying in us and in everyone. By helping our fellow beings at the material level, we should also help them to realize their own divinity. The human dignity of those whom we help is as important as the help itself.

Moreover, the Master has warned us not to speak too much and publicize the service we provide, but rather to watch how it works in our own process of transformation. Service should be done without thought of self or ego. In Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s words, selfless service removes the impurity of the ego, and hence, constitutes a royal path to God. If we do not grasp it, we just overlook the purpose of life. The spirit in which we help is as important as the service we give. Service to others from love and compassion brings us to God, which means the Divine within ourselves and within everyone.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has set the example Himself. In many images or films recorded through so many years, we can see a younger Master walking among the most humble or destitute, and giving them food, covers, etc. Not only Sri Sathya Sai Baba has put forward a clear teaching, but He has also inspired a huge organization to put the message into practice, and even more, He has served Himself the most needed at the physical level, becoming a living example of coherence between thought, word and deed.

On behalf of millions of overseas devotees, we want to say to India and the world that through His vast organization, Sri Sathya Sai Baba has performed the greatest social service ever provided in modern history by private agents. At the same time, we know so many human beings all around the globe who have transformed themselves towards better human beings through His illuminating teachings and infinite love. This is the true Guru: the one who helps others to transform themselves while serving Humanity.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba will remain for centuries to come as a dazzling lighthouse guiding mankind towards higher states of consciousness and a new world.
From the Teachings of Wisdom

To the Largest Social Service in Modern History.
Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values is founded on the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the most revered spiritual master of India that is at the same time world-recognized. The essence of His educational philosophy lies at the junction between academic excellence and spiritual/value-based/character education. In this point, His illuminating teachings are both unique and fundamental for mankind, although another great spiritual master, Swami Vivekananda, already showed that direction one century back. Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings have always insisted on TRANSFORMATION—not a mere discourse on it, but a real transformation of the human being towards higher states of consciousness and vibration, unfolding the inherent and now forgotten divine nature of Man.

Many devotees show off a bursting love for their Master. But the Master has never requested them to love Him only, but to love all and serve all. Through “seva” – social service- love in action becomes a living reality and the fulfilment of humanity. For this, the Master created a vast organization that could put into practice the coherence between thought, word and action.

Let us present, first, the educational wing of the Organization.

- This large and well-known organization, directly founded by Sai Baba in 1967, runs around hundred schools in India imparting formal education with values, and many other similar schools in the rest of the world (around 50 schools in 30 countries), together with a whole university with several campuses between Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.
- At the same time, it gives spiritual education in India to 300,000 children in 16,000 pedagogic units called Bala Vikas, and to many more in all the continents and most of the countries of the world.
- This notorious educational task, pioneering for value education and competent from the academic side, has been recognized by the authorities of India and also by professionals of education from all around the world.
- In the campus of Prashanti Nilayam, a boy can receive free quality education from first class of primary school up to Ph.D.. Girls can pursue their university formation in the Anantapur campus.
- There are also 12,600 Study Circles and other spiritual activities for adults.
- Furthermore, the Organization offers its pedagogic expertise outside its own framework, and trains teachers from other schools throughout the country, helping, therefore, to improve the educational standards of India.
- Finally, the generosity of Mr Tata and his company will allow a new programme, Vidyā Vahini, to produce a silent revolution in Indian education, fostering excellence and values for all children.
In parallel with that, Sri Sathya Sai Baba has realized through the organization that brings His name the most remarkable non-governmental social task in the Indian Subcontinent, and we could say, in the whole of modern history. In this gigantic social work promoted by Him, we should underline:

- several big hospitals totally free of cost;
- free medical care in rural areas, mobile hospitals and medical camps;
- water purification and sanitation, along with the most important project of civil engineering for water canalization made by non-governmental agents in modern history – providing drinking water to the city of Chennai for instance, but also to many villages in rural areas;
- large scale projects of housing construction for victims of floods;
- massive help for victims of earthquake and tsunami;
- care for the village people in rural India, and free food for villages;
- 2100 adopted villages, and organic agriculture;
- weekly food and clothes to the most humble in urban areas;
- vocational training camps.

In the last years, Sri Sathya Sai Organization in India has launched a whole set of new initiatives that will make its task even more amazing. Needless to say, the new programmes follow the Master’s instruction, and fulfil His extraordinary mission.

We should mention in particular:

* The Digital Village, a unique social policy consisting of a digital connectivity to be used to provide basic services to villages of rural India for their integral development, including: raising the standards of education, health care, family welfare, economic activities, spiritual life, etc.

We can give a meaningful example: tele-medicine. Through wireless connectivity and a diversity of technical devices, the Digital Village sets up a bridge, for instance, between a hospital or a doctor in Mumbai and a patient in rural Maharashtra that has no access to medical care. Not only can they interact through the screen, but also they can keep reports and records, follow up, etc.

The potential is tremendous, and the benefits will be many for the citizens of rural India, often forgotten by the national and regional governments, but never forgotten by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The only ceiling is imagination, so that innumerable versions can be thought of and implemented, always according to the real needs and the opportunities to help our fellow beings.
Another fruitful field of action could be **education**, of course. The programme will set up virtual schools for all those children in rural India who attend schools where there are no teachers, or where the teachers, unqualified, are not prepared to provide quality education. This domain of the Digital Village interlocks with another initiative recently started through the kindness of Mr Tata and the Tata Group: **Vidya Vahini**, already mentioned above.

We can also use the Digital Village to offer **remote counselling and awareness** to the rural areas, and therefore, come to grips with problems like: smoking, alcoholism, drugs, all kinds of abuse, farmers’ problems and suicide, etc.

Furthermore, the Digital Village will be able to bring to remote villages different forms of **spiritual education**, like: devotional chants, discourses and teachings of spiritual masters, Vedic classes, meditation and yoga, etc.

* Among other recent initiatives, we should emphasize the value of the new **Sri Sathya Sai Digital Archive**, intended to preserve for the posterity all kinds of materials related to the life and mission of this unique spiritual master, Sathya Sai Baba.

* Another programme, **Sai Net**, would set up a data collection and a messaging system for Sri Sathya Sai Organization, so that it may become a more ecological paperless organization.

**In conclusion: the whole life of Sri Sathya Sai Baba was a sacrifice for the sake of mankind.** He never did anything for Himself, He never thought of Himself, and He never took care of Himself. He just gave Himself to the human beings that approached Him and to the entire humanity, fostering the most impressive social service ever provided in modern history by a non-governmental organization, and leaving the most comprehensive and profound teachings ever taught by a spiritual master in the modern age.

When He left the body, on the Holy Sunday of Resurrection, Easter 2011, He had done everything. Now it is our task to live the message internally and to spread it honestly, with that coherence and purity that He always requested from us –while He forgave like the most loving mother and father our human imperfection-. 

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The Teachings of Sathya Sai Baba.

Integral Value Education in the context of Indian Mystical Philosophy and Wisdom.

From Ethics to Metaphysics.
Towards a new educational order and a new paradigm.

Already in the 1970s, the International Commission on the Development of Education, known as the Faure Commission, 1972, stressed the importance of the ethical and emotional dimensions of the human being together with the intellectual or strictly academic. At the end of the 1990s, the Jacques Delors Commission made one significant step further, and explicitly added the aesthetic and spiritual domains. This historical tendency towards an official acknowledgement of the spiritual dimension and integral education has been consolidated at the beginning of the XXIst century.

In Europe, the National Curriculum for the United Kingdom has included spiritual education, while the Government of the Principality of Catalonia has incorporated value education in the text books, and starts contemplating practices like relaxation or meditation in the classrooms. In Asia, the Government of Thailand wants to build through the National Education Plan a society based upon morality and wisdom. Not surprisingly, the Indian Authorities have recognized the need for value education on spiritual grounds. Here, the work undertaken by Sri Sathya Sai Organization has been praised and set as an example. In Australia, the Adelaide Declaration on the objectives of schooling has emphasized spiritual development. Even in a small and remote place like Fargo/ Moorhead, on the border between North Dakota and Minnesota, near the frontier with Canada, the school authorities have introduced the value perspective in education.

It is clear today that the typical school where many of us were brought, with only language, mathematics, science and social studies, has no more future ahead. As the Delors Commission warns, the survival of humanity depends on a really holistic kind of education, that integrates ethics, values and the spiritual foundation.

Nevertheless, integral value education can never be a fixed programme or a system of beliefs. It is a process, where the realization of our deepest nature, which we dare to call spiritual, goes together with worldly knowledge. As a process, it is open to dialogue and improvement, like the new paradigm inaugurated by quantum physics, open to the endless recreation of Life. Even if we use books and schedules, we should never close education in human values within a rigid system –this is precisely what must be overcome-. The core of holistic value education is the very breath of Life.

Furthermore, integral value education goes far beyond the mere ethical teaching and the utilitarian understanding of values typical of post-modern societies, still linked to a materialistic pattern. Holistic value education integrates all the dimensions of the human being, and hence, the most profound, which we may call spiritual, and from which the universal human values emerge. We try to show in this article that the spiritual process cannot be reduced to new forms of catechesis –we have already had too many in the past-. Genuine education in human values implies a real, ontological transformation of the human being, and hence society, towards higher levels of consciousness, uplifting mankind towards higher stages of evolution. A higher kind of human being can only be ethical and spiritual, and will live in harmony and unity with his fellow beings and the cosmos.
From this point of view, mankind may learn again from the great traditions of wisdom, mystical philosophy and philosophical Idealism, both in the West and the East, where this path of transformation is unraveled. The XXIst century should also pursue the dialogue between mystical philosophy and new science, unfolding the unity of science and spirituality and a new paradigm for a new era of humanity. Education in human values is the pedagogy of this new paradigm, linking the material and the non-material, and searching for a more meaningful Life.

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Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings.
The transformation of the human being and the paradigm shift.

Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values is founded on the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba, a highly revered spiritual master of South India that is at the same time world-recognized, having followers in virtually all the countries of the world, including the hardest to think of—for a master from Hindu origin-like Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates of the Persian Gulf, while Tibetan Buddhist monks staying in India come to adore Him as a living Bodhisattva. The essence of His educational philosophy lies at the junction between academic excellence and spiritual/value-based/character education. In this point, His illuminating teachings are both unique and fundamental for mankind, although another great spiritual master, Swami Vivekananda, already showed that direction one century back, anticipating the convergence between science and spirituality that the development of quantum physics has certainly confirmed.

In order to help the human mind to grasp more easily the depth of His teachings, Sathya Sai Baba has presented a simple exposition comprising a double five-fold cornerstone.

The Five Fundamental Human Values—that can be further differentiated into more secondary values—:

- Truth,
- Love,
- Peace,
- Righteousness or Right Conduct,
- And Non-Violence.

The Five Fundamental Human Values can be put into practice through a practical pedagogy which is at the same time:

- integral,
- experiential,
- and transformational.
This pedagogy can be practically implemented through different complementary ways; it has become customary to offer this **five-fold combination of Teaching Techniques:**

- prayers and quotations,
- story-telling,
- group singing,
- group activities,
- and silent sitting or meditation.

In the multifaceted and delicate field of meditative techniques, with so many kinds of practices in so many traditions, Sathya Sai Baba prefers to use for children what we call **Meditation in the Light**, which, avoiding the more complicated aspects of Tantric schools, follows the simplicity and depth of Vedantic guidelines.

These basic teachings of Sathya Sai Baba pertain to the individual domain – the process of transformation of each one of us- and also to the educational field – character/value education on spiritual grounds from the point of view of mysticism, not from religious organizations-. Needless to say, the teachings have been not only theoretical but also practical, so that the whole career of Sathya Sai Baba as a spiritual master can be summarized in his famous saying: “My life is my message”. We still do not know how many human beings the Master has helped at the material level, and how many have transformed themselves under His loving and caring guidance. His work has been as huge as silent.

Sathya Sai Baba has given additional messages that relate to **the social realm**; here, He has encouraged intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, insisting on the unity of mankind. Which means that only through the ontological process of transformation towards higher states of consciousness and vibration – purity, that is, purification as a process-, can mankind reach a real state of moral, social and political unity above the present age of egoism, separation and conflict – Kali Yuga in Sanskrit-. Unity is the very essence of that primordial state of being which is pure consciousness, and which is also unconditional love and joy without any cause. This higher state of consciousness corresponds to what we call Divinity. In particular, Sathya Sai Baba has stressed the unity of all religions, encouraging human beings with spiritual inclinations to find the common values among the different religious traditions instead of over-stressing the differences in doctrinal or dogmatic terms.

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The five-fold presentation of the fundamental human values requires some clarification, especially for the Western public, which often asks why five values only, and which always notices the absence of freedom among them.

In Sathya Sai Baba’s words: the factors that make an individual more worthy and more joyful are called human values. Good character increases the value of a person. By being merely endowed with human form, man does not become really human. We must display genuine human qualities. Only when human values are manifested, can man claim to be truly human. Then, he is divine; real humanness unfolds Divinity.

Moreover, Sathya Sai Baba has never said that there are only five human values; there are many, as many as we want, since any classification will ultimately be arbitrary and subjective. What the Master is suggesting is something else, more subtle. The multiplicity of values that we may identify can be organized through a simple system, helping us to understand and implement value teaching. In this pedagogic system, Sathya Sai Baba differentiates five fundamental values that can be further developed into other secondary values.

The Master has never set up a closed system or a new form of catechesis. Some human beings following Him have produced the catechesis or the system –as usual in human history, as it has happened in all religions and cultures-. In Sathya Sai Baba’s eyes, the core of education in human values consists in unfolding the universal human values from inside, from the Divine nature of Man. The human values constitute the very essence of our Divine source. This is an open process that cannot be rigidly organized in any fixed structure –that would immediately block the fluidity of the process-. However, many followers of Sathya Sai Baba have put all their energy in rebuilding again structures and systems that asphyxiate the flow of Life, while this, the stream of Life, not the bars of a system, is what the process of transformation releases, until we become that first and last freedom in the words of J. Krishnamurti.

I. Among the five primary values, the Master would start with Truth, warning that this truth is not exactly what most of modern materialistic philosophy would have in mind. It will help us to examine the Sanskrit original word: Satya, which is ambivalent, since it can be translated either as truth or reality. In Indian philosophy, like in the Pythagorean and Platonist lineage of Ancient Greece, truth and reality would go together in a metaphysical vision close to quantum/ new physics today, but far from the mechanism and materialism prevailing in the modern age. Mankind is in a catastrophic situation today; nobody with common sense dares to deny it. But the most important is to realize the deepest cause for it: in the last centuries, human civilization has increasingly alienated itself from reality –from this multidimensional and interdependent cosmos, that has very little to do with the mechanistic epistemology of the modern age, but has been clearly understood by quantum/ new physics, relational theory or transpersonal psychology.

In conclusion, the human values taught by a spiritual master like Sathya Sai Baba cannot be grasped through a modern frame of mind based on subjectivism and relativism. It is indispensable to comprehend that Sathya Sai Baba is pointing towards a new paradigm; otherwise, we will totally misunderstand His message, and we will just recreate new versions of catechism with good intentions in the framework of the
materialistic paradigm. Sathya Sai Baba shows the path towards this new paradigm, that the dialogue between new science and mystical philosophy started outlining some decades back. This shift of paradigm is the main task of the XXIst century. The continuation of the former modern model would end up in the self-destruction of mankind -which is more than plausible if we observe the state of the planet Earth today.-. Far from the mechanistic or utilitarian frame of mind prevailing in the modern world, Sathya Sai Baba defines truth as the life-principle within each one of us, and without which we cease to exit. This life-principle would be identified with the human soul – Atman in Sanskrit-, which in turn would be the resident Divinity within each individual.

The role of the human intellect is to find out this truth, and then, to act in accordance to it: the coherence between thought, word and deed. However, truth would present three distinct levels:

- **Truth as a sense of perception**: corresponding to the empirical reality perceived by the senses and the basic functions of human intelligence; it is true that fire burns.
- **Truth by inference**: rendered by the logical capacities of the human intellect; from observation, the rational mind can reach more general conclusions. Even though we have not seen all human beings die, it is still true that man is mortal.
- **Ultimate or metaphysical truth**: inseparable of self-realization, attained when the ordinary mind is transformed and purified until it becomes that pure consciousness that is One.

The third level of truth is not a theory as materialistic epistemology would understand it; it is neither a belief or a matter of faith as outer religions would regard it. So, it is not a dogma or a system. As Lord Buddha emphasized, it is an experience; that is why we can call it realization. It is something alive, always fresh and new, as J. Krishnamurti insisted so many times; it is the very breath of Life.

From this point of view, we could do an additional distinction between:

- **human truth**, which can be relative and contextual (according to culture, society, history, etc);
- and **metaphysical truth**, which is beyond the ordinary mind, and hence, ineffable.

There is a **metaphysical dimension of truth** that is immortal, says Sathya Sai Baba, incapable of being destroyed or hurt by human beings in their limitation or imperfection. This eternal truth, which is the foundation of everything, persists and pervades all things and the whole cosmos. It is static and dynamic, Being and Becoming. In any case, Sathya Sai Baba suggests that this higher kind of truth should never be harsh; it should never be used to demean others or to harm them. Truth should be spoken wisely and with love. If truth must cause more damage than good, it is better to be silent. Wise men remain often silent: the silence of Buddha for instance.
II. From Satya –truth/ reality-, Sathya Sai Baba would underline the importance of Dharma –in Sanskrit-. Dharma, like Rita in the archaic Sanskrit of the Rig Veda, would be first of all the cosmic order itself, Being and Becoming, the very foundation of this multidimensional and interdependent cosmos that new science is discovering now.

At a second level, Dharma would be the philosophy or teachings of wisdom here in our world reminding us of that fundamental cosmic order. In spite of the imperfection of human language and the ineffable nature of the most profound, this human dimension of Dharma would provide mankind with hints for understanding and guidelines for a correct action.

At a third level, Dharma would be the correct or right action –righteousness-, that is, the human behaviour in accordance with the teachings of wisdom, and therefore, in harmony with the cosmos. Needless to say, modern civilization has devastated this harmony; hence, the catastrophe that we are facing today.

III. Sathya Sai Baba would also attach a tremendous importance to Prema –Love-. This cardinal human values has received many names through centuries, and some have been specially prominent through cultural history: “philia”, “eros”, “agape”, “prema”, “kama”, “karuna”, love, unconditional love, pedagogic love, friendship, compassion, empathy, sympathy, altruism, etc. In all mystical traditions, it has been understood not only as a vital human value, but more specifically as a cosmic force. First, because it is the very nature of That which or whom we call God –the foundation and origin of everything, and the very essence of ourselves-. Hence, love would be the first human quality. Secondly, all human beings have the experience of love; even if ordinary human love is limited and conditional, still it is a reflection of that unconditional love, inseparable of that pure consciousness without cause or explanation -the nameless mystery, that has been called God-. The first thing that comes out from human condition is love. The human being starts loving his mother, father, brothers or sisters, relatives, friends, educators, etc. Then, he may feel a special love for some animals or Nature in general –like the Romantics-. So, everybody can experience and understand the language of love. Finally, the expansion of love will embrace all human and living beings and everything, and will be melted in that cosmic consciousness which can be called Divine.

Sathya Sai Baba has emphasized something that the Romantics grasped very clearly: love is the mightiest force in the universe, and it is truly representative of human nature and God. The psychic domain of the human being is the source of love, which is like a form of Energy/ Consciousness that every individual transmits and receives. It is the power of the Soul, the deepest Self in us; it is the expression of the individual Divinity within each one of us. Love is the principle that creates and sustains the entire cosmos, human community and relationships. Moreover, love affects positively all forms of life, especially children. That is why it is so important in education. Mystics and sages had always spoken about the importance of love, and recent empirical research, like M. Emoto’s experiments on water crystals, or all the experimentation about the effects of music on plants and the nervous system, have provided a scientific confirmation for our rationalistic age.
IV. Sathya Sai Baba also praises the value of Shanti –Peace- in a world so deeply dominated by violence, and where violence has become structural and apparently normal. Violence disrupts the very rhythm of the Being. Here, the Master makes it clear that peace is not the pause between two wars, neither an international treaty that will be violated any time by any state. Peace is not the absence of violence either, since it is not something negative; it is positive, it is a state of being, our most profound nature. Only in peace can we find ourselves. Violence is ultimately the deepest alienation of the human being, and the shattering of the cosmos itself. In Sathya Sai Baba’s words, peace is the end purpose of all human endeavour. Whatever he thinks or does, man is ultimately searching for peace and happiness. Only through inner transformation, going inwards, peace becomes a sound reality within us. Then, it is not a mere idea or word.

The Master also warns about a crucial point: we must finally recognize some day that nothing in this world or in the universe is ever responsible for absence of peace within us. An extreme example would be those men and women who, even in the horror of the extermination camps of the IIIrd Reich, showed an imperturbable peace inside. Nobody or nothing can shatter the peace within. It is our responsibility only, which means that we can become masters of our own destiny. Furthermore, Sathya Sai Baba reminds us that this profound state of peace is not inert or vegetative. It is a dynamic process –as everything else in the spiritual path towards realization-. Also, sound peace follows the awareness that the source of human fulfilment is not outside –in things- but inside –in the realization of our own nature-.

V. Finally, Sathya Sai Baba would renew the old tradition of Ahimsa of India – Non-violence-, from Buddhism and Jainism to Mahatma Gandhi. However, the Master indicates that non-violence is much more than the absence of violence, since, like peace, it is something positive, not merely negative. The Master suggests that the plenitude of non-violence is reached when our whole life is imbied with a Dharmic spirit, in the coherence between what we think, what we say, and what we do. In that sense, non-violence would be the culmination of all the fundamental human values in a coherent life in harmony with the cosmos; it is respect and reverence for all Creation.

In His illuminating words, non-violence is the zenith of human achievement and perfection. It goes far beyond us through relationship with our fellow beings, and embraces all living and non-living things. When our spirit is awakened, we feel a natural kinship with all beings and the oneness with the cosmos entire. It is much more than merely not hurting or harming –which is undoubtedly the first step-. When we experience the essential oneness of all Creation, there is awareness, realization, which is translated into an attitude of non-violence as a style of life. Then, not only we do not damage anybody or anything, but we extend our sphere of love to all.

Humanity is fulfilled. This true humanity is also Divinity. Only this is human perfection. According to Sathya Sai Baba, the human values cannot be separated, and their intrinsic interconnectedness if filled with love. Interdependence on love constitutes the core of humanity and reality.
In His own poetical expression:

“The first that comes out from man is Love. The same Love is expanded in our words, actions and thoughts. The reflection and the spark that has come out of Love is called Truth. The same Love, when expressed in action, is called Right Conduct. When Love is contemplated upon, mind attains supreme Peace. When we inquire from where this Love has come, and understand its very source, then we realize the great principle of Non-violence. Therefore, the undercurrent that flows through Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Non-violence, is Love only.

Love in feeling is Peace. Love in understanding is Non-violence: respect and reverence for all Creation. Love in action is Right Conduct. Truth, Peace, Right-conduct and Non-violence do not exist separately. They are essentially dependent on Love.

When Love is associated with thoughts, it becomes Truth. When Love is introduced into your activities, your actions become Right Conduct. When your feelings are saturated with Love, your heart is filled with supreme Peace. When you allow Love to guide your understanding and reasoning, then your intelligence becomes saturated with Non-violence. It is this kind of spontaneous Love which is the mark of humanness.”

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However, **the main question** for many honest seekers would be: **How do we reach it?**

The answer is not easy, even though the different mystical traditions have evolved their own paths and instruments for practice, together with notions and theories for understanding, nowadays more easily available for mankind. Most important, it is needed to warn everybody that what Sathya Sai Baba calls Constant Integrated Awareness constitutes a process, that we do not traverse in a week-end seminar –by paying 200 euros, as it has become so fashionable now in Europe-. In global terms, it is a historical process of the whole of mankind, the undercurrent of human evolution.

**This process of transformation involves:**

- peak experiences
- and cleansing –catharsis-.
Besides, the human process requires:

- understanding at the intellectual level, raising the consciousness;
- inspiration by teachings, masters, traditions, positive values, etc, that can elevate the vibration;
- and a real practice through different paths and techniques—that can efficiently put the energy in motion.

Another fundamental point about this process towards Constant Integrated Awareness would be the coherence between thought, word and deed, so many times stressed by Sathya Sai Baba. Whatever is our present position in the process, we can honestly try to be coherent in our personal and professional life with the values that we aspire to. As Jesus said, you shall know them by their fruits.

Finally, Sathya Sai Baba reminds us of the last step, the most difficult one for the ego: surrender—total renunciation and giving totally oneself to Something superior, that becomes integral part of ourselves only through this surrender. Again, the paradigmatic life of Jesus Christ, who embodies and symbolizes the surrender when He accepts the Crucifixion—Your will only, and not mine-. Surrender is the key and the peak of the process of human transformation.

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Sathya Sai Baba’s message on human values in the context of Western civilization. From Enlightenment to mysticism: the two stages of humanism.

It is obvious that the axiology presented by Sathya Sai Baba is very far from the utilitarianism and materialism of the modern age of Liberalism. But this era, brutally violent and devastating, is not sustainable any more—not only economically-, and the emergence of a new paradigm is imperative and urgent—a new paradigm that will reflect Satya, the cosmic reality that is both outside and inside us, since the micro and the macro-cosmos are interconnected. From the main ideology of the modern age, Liberalism, there has been a discourse on values. However, values have been regarded in the liberal frame of mind as human or cultural constructs changing through time and space, and therefore, being subjective and relative. These two principles, relativism and subjectivism, do not deny, of course, the functional necessity for some common assumptions in social life—although these common assumptions may also evolve-. In spite of assaulting Capitalism at the social level, Communism, Socialism and Anarchism shared the main premises of the liberal world view, and in that respect, they were totally modern—even the paroxysm of modernity-. Only one cultural movement of the modern age has brought a real alternative: Romanticism; not surprisingly, it has been the last heir of the millenary traditions of philosophical idealism and mystical philosophy. For the Romantics, love and beauty constituted two supreme values. Furthermore, they were not considered as relative products of culture or subjective constrictions of the mind, but as cosmic forces that lie ultimately inside us and bring us to the threshold of the Absolute.
Sathya Sai Baba would not negate that some values may be subjective and relative, being fabrics of the human mind and culture. But the spiritual master of India would unveil deeper dimensions of reality not taken into account by the materialism of the modern age. Only from this more profound vision, can we comprehend that there are fundamental human values which are universal, since they lie not in the mind but in the deepest domain of the human being—that the Sanskrit tradition of India would call Atmic, and we may call spiritual in modern languages-. Because they form the very texture of the Divine nature of Man, these values are universal—not relative or subjective-. What can be relative is their cultural expression. This is what the Romantics already grasped two centuries back; and this is why they found themselves isolated in a predominantly materialistic and technocratic world. The presentation of Sathya Sai Baba about the five fundamental human values renovates the ancient teachings of wisdom and mystical philosophy for our world, offering clear language and understanding for all, even for new science—in dialogue with wisdom and mysticism—, in order to unfold this new paradigm for the future of mankind. Very few know, even in Puttaparthi (South India), that Sathya Sai Baba has given instructions to eminent physicists of the Western world and Russia about the future of science in this new world view. More people know that many personalities and dignitaries from the main countries have come to see Him privately seeking for advice—among whom, so many Presidents, Prime Ministers, Chief Ministers and Ministers of India—.

Then, the big question arises for many Westerners with minds shaped by the heritage of liberal thought: **which is the space left for freedom**, so important in Western philosophy?

Like all genuine masters of India, Sathya Sai Baba will never deny the inherent value and social significance of Human Rights, with all the legal procedures to make them effective; neither will He question a basic assumption of human freedom. What the Master will say is that freedom is not playing our music at any volume if we have neighbours, neither selecting our favourite cheese for the evening pizza among different brands in the supermarket; it is also much more than going to vote when there are elections. In fact, the teachings of wisdom, as exemplified by Sathya Sai Baba, go to the very essence of freedom, and bring Human Dignity to its fulfilment. Mysticism is the culmination of Humanism.

Freedom is much more than market freedom, although the Master will acknowledge that freedom of market in capitalistic economies is better than the restrictions and impositions of the communist systems—that did not work at all—. Still, the Master will advise the government to operate some kind of supervision or control of economy in terms of social welfare and public interest. Finally, the Master will go beyond all these sociological levels of freedom, suggesting that the deepest plane lies inside each one of us. We are really free when we have cleansed ourselves and we are internally transformed; we are really free when we are free from all our evils inside, when we do not reproduce anymore what we criticize outside in others. Purity is the essence of genuine freedom. Freedom is another name for pure consciousness—like love—.
Freedom is also connected with our own effort in the process towards this pure consciousness. There is certainly something like “karma”, destiny or fate. Everything is not in our hands, it is evident. Still, there is a certain space for what Western philosophy has called free will, which, well understood, could be defined in this way: whatever is our destiny or fate, we can always bring our effort for our own human process, knowing that human effort can even change destiny, as it has been beautifully stated in many stories and parables in all the traditions of wisdom. In this self-effort and free will, in spite of destiny or “karma”, lies the dignity of the human being, the value of his or her life, and the most profound meaning of freedom. Then, it is not so important which brand of cheese do we select in the supermarket—or even which political party we vote for when there are elections-. Human dignity is above market freedom—and even above politics-.

This was the original purport of European Enlightenment, exemplified by the renowned philosopher Immanuel Kant—although such noble ideals have been later distorted by mean ideologies like neo-liberalism-. Mysticism and wisdom, as taught by Sathya Sai Baba, bring the Enlightened dream of human dignity to its accomplishment.

The great sage from French Renaissance, Michel de Montaigne, cautioned:

“Science sans conscience n’est que ruine de l’ame.”
(“Science without conscience is but the ruin of the soul.”)

Western civilization has in the modern age an illustrious tradition of ethical and axiological thought, based upon human values and also spiritual concerns. One of the highest products of European Enlightenment has been Human Rights, though they have been sometimes criticized from intercultural dialogue for not being universal in nature—which is partially true-. The traditions of mystical philosophy of Eastern cultures have had their own expressions of human dignity—like Ancient Greece-. Still, Human Rights constitute one of the loftiest creations of modern culture, and a direct translation of the most elevated currents of thought of the modern age: Humanism and Enlightenment. Moreover, they have become universal in some way after Second World War through United Nations, and, in front of the massive and multiple forms of violation of human dignity in this world, they are totally indispensable—with all our respect and sympathy for the Hindu or Buddhist expression of human dignity-.

The problem is that this kind of humanistic thinking has been more and more distorted and marginalized—not only by dictatorships, revolutions or abuse of power, but also by consumerism and materialism-, so that the dominant trends have produced a pattern of civilization opposed, certainly, to the Vedic vision of India, or the Platonic vision of Ancient Greece, but also to the highest thinking of the modern age—Humanism, Enlightenment, Romanticism and Idealism-. That is why the philosopher Raimon Panikkar has set up the humanism of this ethical/axiological thinking against the technocracy prevailing in the present civilization.
In the transition from the XXth to the XXIst century, Sathya Sai Baba sounds once more the alarm already rung by the humanism of the modern world from Renaissance onwards, warning that the scientific and technological progress of mankind has not been parallel to an ethical and spiritual development, which makes technocracy more dangerous than ever—and this is evident enough if we observe the state of mankind and the planet around us. In coherence with the mystical philosophy of India and Greece, and also with the most profound thinking of Europe and the West in the modern age, Sathya Sai Baba is repeatedly insisting that education must link academics and values, since academics or science without values will ultimately bring mankind towards self-destruction—which is really plausible today. But Sathya Sai Baba is not contended with the surface of the waves, and dives into the depth of the ocean. This means that the ethical/axiological perspective is insufficient and deemed to fail without its foundation, which is essentially spiritual or meta-physical. It is only from that depth inside, from that “mysterion” or “mystika” as the Greeks would call it, that true human values can evolve. Only this inner depth has an ontological consistency. All the rest is “maya”—illusion; it stays at a mere intellectual/emotional level, and hence, it is as volatile as the air. That is why all the “emancipating” movements of the modern age have been essentially illusory to some extent, repeating all the evils and the same patterns of thought that they denounced.

Human Rights are very important—especially in front of oppression and the violation of human dignity; but there is still something more important: Human Values, which are the basis for Human Rights, and which constitute the real, ontological human qualities from which Human Rights can unfold. European Humanism and Enlightenment are highly valuable; but there is still something higher or deeper: mystical philosophy and wisdom, which point at the most essential of the human being and emerge from it. Mysticism is the culmination of Humanism. Sathya Sai Baba does not want the clothes to be changed, but he or she who wears the clothes. It is not a matter of ideologies; all ideologies are ultimately the same, since all repeat the same old tendencies of the human mind. It is a matter of states of consciousness and vibration, and therefore, it is the issue of a real, ontological transformation of the human being.
From social revolutions to the change within.

The XIXth century has been of crucial importance for the history of mankind. It marks the transition from philosophy to social movements, from Enlightenment and Idealism –Kant, Hegel and Romanticism- to Karl Marx –communism/socialism and the proletarian revolutions-. This historical turning point would already start with the French Revolution, a decisive step in human history enthroning the modern age. The XXth century has been the apotheosis of social revolutions -Russia and China in particular-, and the ascent of the masses –not only through left-wing revolutions, but also through Fascism and finally the mass media-.

At the beginning of the XXIst century, the driving force of modernity seems to decline: all the proletarian revolutions have failed, communism disintegrates and turns into capitalism again, and the social policies of the welfare state are gradually dismantled by neoliberalism, which becomes the predominant ideology on its own. In parallel with that, the alienation produced by the mass media and technocracy undermines the principles of democracy, which becomes empty rhetoric at the masked service of economic interests under the neoliberal reign. There is still social conflict all around the world, even in Western countries, aggravated by the economic recession in the last years, with outbursts of racism, galloping criminality and antisocial disorder, strikes and demonstrations; but the protest blindly yells in the midst of confusion and alienation.

From revolutionaries and intellectuals to sages and spiritual masters. This new paradigm, interconnected with higher states of consciousness and vibration, will define a new social model, more solid and authentic, which will really consolidate and extend social justice –something that modernity has never achieved beyond a minority of mankind-. The foundation for a new kind of social justice will not be the revolution –with its intrinsic violence- but love and compassion –and hence, human values-.

The paradigm shift will return to Idealism, mystical philosophy and wisdom -without forgetting Hegel: the movement of the Spirit through history, the Spirit in society and social action-. New idealism, inseparable of integral humanism, will be rooted on the Earth, here and now. Love and compassion will be set in motion in community life. The inner life of the Spirit will be translated into social action in the world in profound solidarity with all.

**Humanism means human values**, the real experience of human values from inside, unfolding through the coherence between thought, word and deed. It is not an ideology; it is an experience, it is reality. This new humanism or idealism will be essentially holistic, integrating all the dimensions of the human being and the cosmos in interdependence, here and now, serving our fellow beings in harmony with everything. Hence, **humanism is synonym of mysticism** –the transformation inside towards higher states of consciousness and vibration-.
This is the essence of Sathya Sai Baba’s message. Another matter is whether mankind listens to it or not.

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Conclusion.

Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values –together with akin pedagogies of integral education- goes far beyond the common usage of values in the modern Western world. It has become trendy in the last years to speak about values in education. But the most common value-based perspective does not exactly correspond to what Sathya Sai Baba has expounded –and with Him, all the traditions of wisdom, mystical philosophy and philosophical Idealism, rediscovered by quantum physics and new science-. Let us see it in more detail.

* The still predominant discourse, visible in the official statements about education, regards values from a basically materialistic point of view in intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and emotional terms. Even when spirituality is acknowledged, it is understood within the framework of conventional faith and organized religion –it is not mystical yet-; while Sathya Sai Baba -and with Him philosophical Idealism- speak from that dimension of “mysterion”/ “mystika” that the materialistic/ mechanistic pattern of the modern world has overlooked. Quantum physics and new science have rediscovered the holistic and humanistic vision of philosophical Idealism –both Eastern and Western-. Moreover, the prevailing liberal ideology in the modern world regards values as subjective to a certain extent, although it can be accepted that there are some common assumptions and shared values in society. In the modern frame of mind, subjectivism is the corollary of relativism; many values would be relative in geographical and historical terms. That is why many parents and public authorities in the United States would be reluctant to introduce values in school –the family teaches its own values at home within the boundaries of social common assumptions-.

* In Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings, culmination of a long history of wisdom and mysticism, human values lie within each human being; more exactly, they are intrinsically linked with each facet of human personality, and therefore, the main domains of education. This means that human values are universal, transcending distinctions of race, culture, religion, history, etc. They embrace all beings, as their origin lies within each individual. We can get through comparative history a simple confirmation of this profound teaching. If we examine the lives and testimonies of mystics, sages and masters from different traditions –Hinduism, Buddhism, Greece, Christianity, Sufism, etc-, we realize that the values of love and peace are present in all of them, irrespective of time and space, race, culture or religion. We can find these fundamental values in all of them, because all of them have found the values within themselves.
Prof Raimon Panikkar has been one of the most renowned scholars in the fields of comparative philosophy and religion, intercultural dialogue and mystical philosophy. In his celebrated “Invitation to Wisdom”, Panikkar retraces the lost steps of the main traditions of wisdom through the classical notion of “quaternitas perfecta”, that is, a four-fold path that integrates all the dimensions of Man and Cosmos in interdependence. In the “quaternitas perfecta”, the most essential would be the sacred dignity of Man, who is a micro-cosmos, an image of the Whole, a spark of the Fire Infinite. Through the living reality of the “quaternitas perfecta”, we could overcome all the dualisms and divisions that presently fragment the modern human being.

The “quaternitas perfecta” consists of four centres:

- **First centre**: the earth and the body; action and will. This is the field of the awakening of consciousness and individuality; it is also the domain of ethics.
- **The second centre** deals with psychology in its deepest meaning, and therefore, with relationship; it also constitutes the world of knowledge.
- **The third centre** would be primarily ontological, since it would embody the Being itself. This manifests through the “polis” –in Greek- or “civitas” –in Latin:- the community, seen as a meso-cosmos where the micro and macro-cosmos get together. The “polis” includes its temples and gods, and the community means communion with our neighbours, all the beings, everything and the gods.
- **The fourth centre** is the realm of the Ether and the Spirit. It conforms the Greek idea of Kosmos, knowing that in Greece, like in Ancient Indian, the Kosmos was the world and the beauty inherent to it –“kalos” in Greek, “sundaram” in Sanskrit-. The fourth centre brings us to contemplation, to Life without fragmentation between thought and action. This is the domain of “mysterion” –in Greek-, “advaita” –in Sanskrit-, the Consciousness of non-duality above all the divisions of the ordinary mind and emotions. This higher state of consciousness unveils the real experience –not the mere concept- of Freedom, and the fulfilment of Life.

This “quaternitas perfecta” would have a direct correspondence with the four-fold quintessence of Greek philosophy:

- **Anthropos** (Man),
- **Polis** (Community),
- **Kosmos** (Universe)
- **Theos** (God).
Many are the sacred numbers in numerology, either Pythagorean –in Europe- or Vedic –in India-. Some schools of wisdom present a “quaternitas perfecta”, while other sacred traditions reveal a five-fold vision. The same multi-dimensional Reality, richer and more beautiful than any human concept produced by the ordinary mind, can be apprehended and uttered in different complementary ways. In any case, the vision of wisdom offers an integral conception of Man and Cosmos in interdependence, from which education should be elucidated. In this holistic philosophy of education, the different dimensions of the human being and reality should be integrated in a harmonious way through the educational process, knowing that Man and Cosmos are ultimately inseparable, and that the whole Reality comes to its fulfilment through self-realization; this is the only true liberation or freedom.

This goes far beyond the liberal issue of moral choice and social tolerance. It is a matter of reality; it deals with ontology, when quantum physics and mystical philosophy meet in a holistic vision of interdependence, and ethics unfolds metaphysics.

In the glowing horizon lit by the traditions of wisdom of both the East and the West, integral education should combine the five fundamental domains of human personality:

- physical development, education for health, and the contact with the environment;
- relation, dialogue and community, positive values and service, ethics and the psychic dimension –love and compassion-;
- the intellect and the rational mind, and therefore, academic training orientated towards understanding, thinking and expression in an interdisciplinary perspective;
- the aesthetic taste and the arts, creativity and emotional education;
- the spiritual dimension and the awakening of human values from inside, that is, self-enquiry towards self-realization and the fulfilment of our deepest and sacred nature.
THE TEACHINGS AND EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SATHYA SAI BABA: EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES TOWARDS HUMAN TRANSFORMATION.

Section VI.

Sathya Sai Baba and Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values.

All the depth of integral value education for the XXIst century.
I. INTEGRAL EDUCATION IN THE TEACHINGS OF SATHYA SAI BABA.

In “Philosophical Foundations of Value Education in India”, the renowned scholar, S.P. Ruhela, makes the difference between Sathya Sai Baba’s educational philosophy and that of P. Freire for instance – “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed”. This is the difference between Philosophical Idealism – represented by Sathya Sai Baba and Critical Thought – represented by P. Freire. For Freire and radical thinkers like him, education must raise students’ conscience to such a level that they come to know about the reality of their social situation, clearly and critically, so that they are prepared to implement all sorts of means to uplift themselves. From a totally different perspective, Sathya Sai Baba wants people’s conscience to be raised by meditation, introspection, value education, and such other nonviolent, essentially spiritual means.

Krishnamurti expressed the same conviction when he stated that a new world, inseparable from a new consciousness, is far beyond the sociological division between right and left and all social movements. As this contemporary sage always warned, what we need is a profound psychological transformation of the human being, a new state of consciousness. Otherwise, the clothes will change but not those who wear them. The clothes may adopt many names – so many ideologies that have not changed the world because those who held them did not change internally. What must change is the one who wears the clothes, that is, human consciousness.

After all the evils produced by the emancipation movements of the modern age, from the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution to the Chinese Cultural Revolution, does mankind need more evidence to understand the capital message of Sathya Sai Baba or J. Krishnamurti? (Which is the message of integral education in human values). The whole future of mankind depends upon this paradigm shift.

However, many followers of Sathya Sai Baba have done exactly the same than most of the followers of other spiritual masters: they have locked the living message of the master into a system. Sathya Sai Baba never proposed a new form of catechism – we have had too many; he put forward the ontological transformation of humanity, which can never be a system but Life itself. Any school following His inspiration should try to be open as the living word of the master – of all masters and sages.

“What is important is the transformation of the mind”.

Sathya Sai Baba.
The Master warned that the prevailing school system has been essentially mechanical. Then, can we produce a mechanical value-based catechism out of His illuminating teachings? Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values should never fall into mechanical routine, dogmatic credos or fixed systems; it should always be open and alive, flowing like the very rhythm of Life. Since it is the human tendency on Earth to fall into mechanical routines, closed systems of beliefs, dogmas and credos, any institution or educator under Sathya Sai Baba’s inspiration should be aware and vigilant in order to go to the essence of the Master’s teachings—which means to make it a living reality, not a dead system or a void routine.

Moreover, the Master insisted that the core of the teachings must be adapted to every culture or context, which means that the way how Sri Sathya Sai Education is implemented in India cannot be merely transported into the Western world; it also means that the tools utilized for the children of Sai devotees—in any country—cannot be simply replicated for children whose parents are not devotees. Still more important, while preserving the essence of the teachings we must find adequate strategies to communicate the message to the modern world, being aware of the bias and prejudice that may still be common and knowing which are the cultural patterns and the spaces of aperture.

Through the next pages, we shall first elucidate the philosophical foundation of Sathya Sai Baba’s education in human values, after which we will expound the major points of his pedagogic proposal.

II. SATHYA SAI BABA’S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION.

* The still predominant discourse in the modern world, visible enough in the official statements about education, regards values from a basically materialistic point of view in intellectual, ethical, and at the most, aesthetic and emotional terms. Even when spirituality is acknowledged, it is understood within the framework of conventional faith and organized religion—it is not mystical yet—; whereas Sathya Sai Baba—and with Him philosophical Idealism—speak from that dimension of “mysterion”/ “mystika” that the materialistic pattern of the modern world has overlooked. Quantum physics and new science have rediscovered the holistic and humanistic vision of philosophical Idealism—both Eastern and Western—.

Furthermore, the prevailing liberal ideology in the modern world regards values as subjective to a certain extent, although it can be accepted that there are some common assumptions and shared values in society. In the modern frame of mind, subjectivism is the corollary of relativism; many values would be relative in geographical and historical terms. That is why many parents and public authorities in Western countries would be reluctant to introduce values in school—the family teaches its own values at home within the boundaries of social common assumptions.
In Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings, culmination of a long history of wisdom and mysticism, human values lie within each human being; more exactly, they are intrinsically linked with each facet of human personality, and therefore, the main domains of education. This means that human values are universal, transcending distinctions of race, culture, religion, history, etc. They embrace all beings, as their origin lies within each individual.

We can get through a comparative history of spirituality a simple confirmation of this profound teaching. If we examine the life and testimony of mystics, sages and spiritual masters from different traditions –Hinduism, Buddhism, Greece, Christianity, Sufism, etc.-, we may realize that the values of love and peace are present in all of them, irrespective of time and space, race, culture or religion. We can find these fundamental values in all of them, because all of them have found the values within themselves.

In Sathya Sai Baba’s words:

“Education is the revelation of the Divine, which is the very core of every created being and thing.”

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The 5 basic human values are interlinked and interrelated to the 5 fundamental domains of humanity. Furthermore, the 5 basic human values, interconnected with the 5 fundamental facets of human nature, are linked to the 5 senses and to the 5 primeval elements of the cosmos.

This holistic vision of wisdom and mysticism is what quantum physics and new science have reformulated in the scientific arena. From here, it is the responsibility of governments and public authorities to take it into account and accept the natural consequences for education: integral education in human values, which is already working with astonishing results all around the world.

According to the traditions of mystical philosophy and wisdom, everything in the universe is made of 5 fundamental elements –sky/ consciousness, air, water, fire, earth-, from which spring all the chemical elements that modern science has described.

Each of the 5 basic elements has inherent in it one of the 5 essential human values –truth, love, peace, righteousness and non-violence-, from which derive all the other positive values that we may identify.

Therefore, the primary human values are not subjective –depending upon persons or cultures-, but objective –they are part of reality-.

In Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings, human values lie within each human being; more exactly, they are intrinsically linked with each facet of human personality, and therefore, the main domains of education.

This means that human values are universal, transcending all sociological or historical distinctions. They are the living patrimony of all beings, as their origin lies in the depth of each and everyone.
More evident would be the connection between the 5 human values and the 5 domains of human personality—physical, intellectual, emotional, psychic, spiritual—defining the human being in his or her integrity, whereas the link between values and elements would connect the part to the whole, the individual to the cosmos, the micro to the macro-cosmos.

This is the indivisibility of human personality and its integrated nature; hence, the need for a holistic kind of education, perfect mirror of the already integral nature of Man One with the Cosmos.

The 5 human values, interconnected with the 5 facets of human nature, are linked to the 5 senses and to the 5 primeval elements of the cosmos: the interdependence of everything; Man and Cosmos are One. Sathya Sai Baba depicts a vision of interconnectedness, interdependence and underlying oneness deeply coherent with quantum physics.

**This holistic paradigm constitutes the epistemological foundation for integral education in human values.**

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III. SATHYA SAI BABA’S INTEGRAL VALUE-BASED PEDAGOGY.

- **Integral education.**

  Education is much more than training for a job; it is for life, not for living.

  Integral education means first of all integrating worldly and spiritual teaching.

  Holistic education must also attach the highest importance to the arts.

  Value-based education must be understood as Educare –in Latin- or Bala Vikas – in Sanskrit-: to unfold from within through a caring guidance.

  This means a process of self-inquiry towards self-knowledge. Then, education is truly emancipating or liberating, leading to genuine freedom.

  To educate means to accompany the growing child with love towards his or her process of transformation –towards a higher form of consciousness, that we may call Divine-. Genuine integral value-based education unveils the inherent Divinity of Man.

  Only then, the fundamental and universal human values can evolve with their ontological texture –and not only at the mere intellectual/ emotional level-. The five basic human values –from which other values shall derive- would be: truth, love, peace, righteousness and non-violence. However, we can identify as many values as we wish; the most important is the frame of mind, the intention, and not the formulation, which should always be open and flexible.

  In this holistic perspective, academics is twinned to ethics or morality.

  Then, human consciousness awakens to the Divine nature of All and to the Divine unity underlying diversity.

  Integral education must be based upon a genuine coherence between thought, word and deed, which means the combination of the three “H”: heart, head and hand.

  Integral education transforms knowledge into wisdom, wisdom into character, and character into service. This means the integration of knowledge and action upon values and ethics.
Teacher’s role.

The teacher must be a living example and source of inspiration;
Providing freedom within certain limits,
Together with the needed discipline.

The double pillar of education: love and discipline.
Teachers should love students as their own children.
Discipline must evolve through love, not through fear.

Teaching should also come from the heart, not only from the mind; only then it really touches the students.

Education should discover again all the depth of the Indian Gurukula, the community of the master and his disciples –which was bound by profound love and harmony, totally lost in the modern school system–.

The genuine teacher is also a learner,
And can even learn from his students.

The pedagogic process.

The pedagogic system must take into account the nature of the child, the features of the age group, and the characteristics of every child. Hence, it must be child-centred and humanistic.

Education must respect every child’s innate potential.
At the same time, it must descend to the child’s level.

It must also be value-based, which means that values must be integrated into the academic curriculum and must imbibe the whole school life, avoiding any kind of dualism –values/academics–.

Integral education must raise the consciousness of the growing child towards an ethical value-based human being who unveils all his potential and deepest Divine nature.

In conclusion, integral education must aim at the formation of character in the most profound sense, as its most essential goal.

The curriculum must stress an interdisciplinary approach since reality is essentially multidimensional and holistic.
Education must teach interconnectedness and interdependence.
The pedagogic process must encourage and nurture the curiosity, the spirit of inquiry and the creativity of the children. Education must also cultivate the capacity of wonder.

Quality is more important than quantity. We should not burden children with useless information.

Discipline must avoid physical punishment and fear; it must be humanistic, inseparable from love, aiming at a positive transformation of character.

Evaluation must avoid mechanical tests; it must foster the creativity of the children and their capacity of thinking and expressing themselves.

Apart from the mere academic subjects—according to the syllabus—value-based education on spiritual grounds can utilize a diversity of techniques, keeping in mind that this can never constitute a fixed system closed once for ever, but rather an open process encouraging the creativity not only of the children but also of the teachers.

Sri Sathya Sai schools often propose a five-fold value-based pedagogy:

- Direct teaching (of human values)
- Story telling and use of quotations (obviously inspirational)
- Group activities (which can integrate the arts) and group singing (with mantras, hymns, etc)
- Prayer
- Silent sitting (meditation).

The enumeration is not homogeneous, and we can find slightly different versions of the same list of pedagogic tools. This can only be seen as positive, since the Master never wanted to provide a fixed closed system. He mentioned Himself a diversity of pedagogic means, and in the Museum of His Ashram, for instance, there is a long list of pedagogic practices that exceeds the typical five-fold scheme.

The Master was also very keen on intercultural/inter-religious dialogue, emphasizing the unity of all faiths to imbibe the curriculum and the activities in the horizon of the unity of mankind.

Finally, the Master stressed the pedagogic potential of social service—always through ways adequate to the age group and under teacher/school’s supervision—.

Service evolves the coherence between thought, word and deed, the unity of heart, head and hand, the integration of knowledge and action.
➢ The systemic nature of integral education.

Integral education in any particular school will be what the teachers who are there working every day will do with it. Hence, it is of paramount importance to choose adequate teachers and to train them—not only academically but even more from the point of view of value-education. Teachers’ training—from this holistic perspective—must be offered to all teachers, for which special institutes can be established to welcome educators from anywhere.

Integral education must seek the involvement and support from parents/families.

It must take into account the context or environment, and it must be adapted to the culture of the place. It must also develop links with the community.

However, an integral school must eschew politics.

It cannot be money-minded; hence, it cannot be purely commercial. Education is a Divine right and gift, and it is for all.

Preferably, education should be free and accessible to all.

Educators must be vigilant with the abuse of technology predominating today.

They must also be vigilant with the most vulgar and negative cultural products prevailing in the media.
IV. SOME REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SRI SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES.

This universally recognized spiritual master has presented a philosophy of education and pedagogy both at the levels of the theory and practice: EDUCARE or EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES (EHV), which constitutes a modern formulation of the Ancient Sanskrit concept of BALA VIKAS.

Educare is certainly a character education which enhances positive values, such as responsibility, maturity, cooperation, self-reliance, honesty, etc. It is also and primarily an integral or holistic education which comprises all the dimensions of the human being: physical, intellectual or cognitive, emotional or vital, relational and communitarian, aesthetic, psychic (love) and spiritual. Hence, Educare stresses the intimate link between academic excellence and spiritual life.

We should never forget that education in human values means, first of all, EDUCATION. Many books published about the topic deal mainly or exclusively with values, while they do not tackle proper educational issues. This approach misunderstands the main points, and it does not work—as it has become evident.-

When we do a presentation of value education, we must first of all speak about education; if we do not consider the pedagogic system in an appropriate way, the value perspective will be useless. Does it make sense to introduce values in a robotic pedagogy based on rote memorizing that atrophies the sensitiveness, intelligence and capacity of thinking of children? (As it happens so often in India and Asia.) The pedagogic framework and dynamism should be adequate. Provided that it is so, we can broaden the educational process towards values and character in holistic terms.

Finally, we should not add values to academics—while keeping them separately in a dualistic way—; what we should try is to closely interweave them, so that the academic field already incorporates the values—like the whole atmosphere of the school—.

This integral philosophy of education designed by Sathya Sai Baba follows the inspiration of the lofty tradition of the Gurukula of India, the community of master and his pupils; in this kind of atmosphere, filled with love and purity, the greatest scriptures such as Vedas or Upanishads were transmitted for generations to come.

Sri Sathya Sai Schools must try to keep alive the innermost spirit of the Ancient Gurukula, while they must prepare students to deal with the modern world, not only with professional skills but also with profound values and ethics. So, these schools must combine tradition and modernity, spirituality and secular life, the West and the East.
Following the guidelines provided by the Founder, Sathya Sai Baba, these schools must remember that education cannot be reduced to mere bookish knowledge. Education should be primarily seen as a process of transformation of the human being towards higher levels of consciousness and vibration. Only transformed men and women, with professional skills but also ethical principles and human values, can bring a positive difference into society and help building a better world, based on peace, cooperation, sharing, dialogue, love and compassion.

It should be the goal of Sri Sathya Sai Schools to put into practice through the educational process a real –ontological– transformation of the human being, so that we do not fall into the repetition of history and we do not recreate a new version of catechism or a new system of beliefs –something merely mental and emotional, while we do through our daily actions the opposite of what we preach, as it has happened so often in the past.

“Education is intended for the transformation of the heart.”
“The aim of education is to purify Man’s heart and make it sacred.”

Sathya Sai Baba.

In “First and Last Freedom” and “The Awakening of Intelligence” (vol. I, “The Root of Conflict”), J. Krishnamurti warns that the revolution in society must start by the internal, psychological, transformation of the individual. In his own and powerful words, this world needs a tremendous change, but all of us need a fundamental revolution inside us.

Nevertheless, Krishnamurti acknowledges that, for many people:

“We do not think in terms of total transformation, we think only in terms of superficial change.”

In Sri Sathya Sai Schools, the most fundamental goal should be to raise the children towards those higher states of consciousness that the greatest poets, not only in India but also in Europe, have expressed through the unique language of poetry, the only linguistic means that can utter the ineffable:

“There was a time when meadow, grove and stream, The earth, and every common sight, To me did seem Apparelled in celestial light, The glory and the freshness of a dream.”

William Wordsworth.
We can recall here Sathya Sai Baba’s words:

“The real education is that which helps you to manifest your innate Divinity.”

As the Master has repeated so many times, true spirituality implies the coherence between thought, word and deed. When there is real transformation, service to man is service to God. As the Master has said, hands that help are holier than lips that pray. When the action contradicts the discourse – and in particular the pretension to be spiritual that comes from the ego – it is clear that there has been no transformation yet. Obviously, this still happens quite often in our world; but the most important for each one of us is to check whether it is not happening within ourselves.

“Knowledge is not enough; we must apply.
Willing is not enough; we must do.”

Leonardo da Vinci.

Sathya Sai Baba clearly asks us to be the change that we want to see in the world.

“Teaching is of two kinds.
One method is to teach by word of mouth. This can be accomplished by imparting information and knowledge.
The second method of teaching consists of the spiritual master himself setting an example by his behaviour for the disciples to follow.”

Sathya Sai Baba.

Sri Sathya Sai Schools must basically aim at nurturing good open-minded citizens who are at the same time awakened human beings, capable of understanding our common humanity above the differences of race, culture, religion, etc, and therefore, aware of the Unity of mankind. This means that Sri Sathya Sai Schools must welcome children and teachers from all nationalities, casts, social strata and religious backgrounds in a spirit of brotherhood.

This kind of pedagogy will certainly implement academic excellence, always directed towards conceptual education, the capacity of thinking in freedom and self-expression, beyond the mere memorizing without understanding so common in India and Asia. But critical and analytical thinking must be twinned to moral character and the awakening of human values from inside.
Although we may be concerned about quality in academic terms, we should not reduce the depth and beauty of the educational process to academics, and we should bring students to discover by themselves the divine purpose of life and their own divine nature, the uniqueness of their pure individuality inseparable from the oneness underlying the diversity of beings and things.

“Many educationists and Vice-chancellors are present here today. Their vision is turned outwards towards the external physical world. I am concerned with the inner vision.”

“Education must endow man with compassion and spirit of service. Education must not only inform; it must also transform.”

Sathya Sai Baba.

In “Education and the Meaning of Life”, J. Krishnamurti expounded in touching terms the deepest content of education: in its true meaning, he declares, education implies the process of understanding oneself; it is inside each one of us that the totality of existence can be found.

Still more amazing, in his “Letters to Schools”, Krishnamurti insisted that education in depth can be seen as a human relationship, the interaction between free beings on an equal basis and in the communion of love. Here, the Reluctant Messiah of the XXth century, who broke with the Theosophical Society and always warned about the inherent dangers of human organizations, comes back to the most profound and beautiful spirit of Vedic and Upanishadic education –the ancient Gurukula-.

That is why Sri Sathya Sai philosophy of education is not merely academic but integral, founded on spiritual grounds that do not imply systems of beliefs, dogmas or organizations, that are not to be sought outside, since they lie inside each one of us –that is, the mystical dimension in all inseparable from the quantum dimension of the cosmos-. This corresponds to the etymological meaning of Educare/ E-ducere in Latin or Bala Vikas in Sanskrit.

Then, education becomes a caring guidance through which the most profound and unique nature of the child unfolds from within –E-ducere, Bala Vikas-.

“Self-realization, the understanding of one’s basic Reality, should be the fundamental purpose of education, and not the mere acquisition of information about the external world.”

Sathya Sai Baba.
As Sathya Sai Baba has always stated, the teacher must be first of all a living example. Genuine teachers should be inspiring and exemplary.

“There are three kinds of teachers: those who inform, those who explain, and those who inspire.”

Sathya Sai Baba.

It is the goal of the educational career to become one of those who inspire. All the great educators have inspired their students beyond mere information or explanation. The teacher who inspires is the one who is really a living example, the embodiment of the human values to be awakened in the children.

“The first rule of moral training is to suggest and invite, not command or impose. The best method of suggesting is by personal example.”

Sri Aurobindo.

In conclusion.

It must be the vocation of Sri Sathya Sai Schools not only to train professionals who will be competent in their respective field and who will be intellectually prepared, but also to educate human beings aware of themselves and aware of the unity underlying diversity -in social and cosmic terms-, in the awakening of the most profound values from inside.

“Modern students are growing like the giraffe, which has its head in one place and its heart a long way off.”

Sathya Sai Baba.
Can there be peace outside if there is not inside? Through centuries, innumerable treaties of peace have been signed, and there have been more and more wars which have been more and more devastating. In the name of God or Freedom the worst atrocities have been committed. Have not all revolutions brought but the repetition of the same old history of domination and conflict?

The clothes have changed many times, but not those who got dressed. The only true revolution is that from inside. Only when there is a real, ontological, transformation within, at the level of consciousness and at the level of the vibration that is inseparable from consciousness, is there a genuine change that will positively affect outside, since, as J. Krishnamurti repeated so many times, you are the world.

Many have tried to change the world, and for that they have committed the most horrible crimes against mankind. We can only change ourselves. And this is what will help to change the world around us, since we are not separated. Those who want to save others live in illusion and dualism.

At the same time, superior to human limitation and supporting human effort and his relative free will, there is Something that we cannot utter, although so many words have tried to express It; there is this Grace that accompanies us and brings us to realize one day that, in spite of the illusion of separation, difference and diversity, there is a Unity that is felt only in Joy, in the Love that does not put any condition, and in the Compassion towards all beings.

“Nations are many, Earth is One.
Stars are many, Sky is One.
Beings are many, Breath is One.
Jewels are many, Gold is One.
Religions are many, God is One.
Appearances are many, Reality is One.”

Sathya Sai Baba.
V. Quotations of Sathya Sai Baba about education.

Education in human values
or integral education from the self.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba walked slowly to a boy, and offered a fruit himself.

- What do you want? –Sri Sathya Sai Baba said.
- Education –the boy answered.

Everyone was pleasantly surprised.

- I will arrange that –promised Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who asked again:
- What more do you want?
- Nothing, except education –the boy answered.

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Who am I?

The one I believe I am:
A child with a name and surname,
Who goes to school to learn,
Who has parents and friends.

The one others believe I am:
A good or bad child,
Beautiful or plain,
According to their judgment.

The one I really am:
A soul with a body,
Light shining on its own accord,
Regardless of the judgment of others,
And the changes of age.
Education today is a process of filling the mind with the contents of books, emptying the contents in the examination hall, and returning empty-headed.

The educational system is beset with many problems.

Alongside with the growth of knowledge, ignorance is also growing.

Above all, realize that children are precious treasures.

**What exactly is education?**
It means opening wide the doors of the mind. It means cleansing the inner tools of consciousness, the mind, the senses, ego and reason. Education, when it gets linked with egoism, loses its wider purpose. It becomes supremely purposeful only when it is directly related to spirituality.

The word “education” has its origin in the Latin word Educare which means “to elicit”. Educare has two aspects, the worldly and the spiritual. Worldly education brings out the latent knowledge pertaining to the physical world. Spiritual education brings out the inherent divinity in man. So, both worldly and spiritual education are essential, without which the human life has no value.

The rainbow in the sky is formed by dispersion of one single pure white ray by raindrops. It symbolises multiplicity in nature caused by the prism of the mind. The diversity of the five elements in creation has its origin in the pure Divine Light within. **Revelation of this truth is Educare.**

That which has no origin knows no beginning. It was before everything or anything was. There was nothing prior to it. For that very reason, it has no end. It expands as far as It wills, progresses as diverse as It feels, and through Its Fullness, It fills the universe too. Knowledge of this Supreme Principle is known as Vidya, Knowledge, Wisdom, Awareness.

The Soul is our inner reality. To experience the Self, the Soul, you require only Self-knowledge. Self-knowledge alone is true knowledge.

We must either know the Supreme Truth of the One Being behind all becoming, or at least know the practical Truth of Love and Brotherhood. These two points are the limits which education must ever keep in mind, the starting point and the goal. Recognize the oneness of all beings.
There are three kinds of teachers: those who inform, those who explain, and those who inspire.

Knowledge about what this author says or that sage teaches is not what your study circle must aim to acquire. Not information, but transformation; not instruction, but construction should be the aim. Theoretical knowledge is a burden, unless it is practised, when it can be lightened into wisdom, and assimilated into daily life. Knowledge that does not give harmony and wholeness to the process of living is not worth acquiring.

The actual syllabus is not as important as the creation of an atmosphere where noble habits and ideals can grow and fructify.

Education must promote ethical human behaviour.

A school should not be considered to be just a commonplace arrangement designed for teaching and learning. It is the place where the consciousness is aroused and illumined, purified and strengthened.

Education must instil the fundamental human values. It must broaden the vision to include the entire world and all mankind.

Education should help to make students the embodiments of human values such as truth, love, right action, peace and non-violence.

The end of education is character. Character consists of eagerness to renounce one’s selfish greed.

Character manifests itself as the unity of thought, word and deed.

True education should inspire one with feelings and thoughts to lead an ideal life.

Good education is that which teaches the method of achieving world-peace; that which destroys narrow-mindedness and promotes unity, equality and peaceful co-existence among human beings.

Education is for Life, not for mere living.
From the most impressionable years, the children should be taught to cultivate love for all. Love leads to unity. Unity promotes purity. Purity leads to Divinity.

You teach love to students only through love.

Love alone can alleviate anxiety and all fear. Love is joy, love is power, love is light, love is God. Love helps you to see God in everyone, everyone as Divine.

The fundamental basis for everything is love.

There is only one religion: the religion of love.

Educare means to bring out the divine love latent in man.

Love is the undercurrent of all human values.

Education must elicit the fundamental human values.

A school is assuredly a sacred place where a holy task is being put into action.

The educational process is basically a holy endeavour.
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Sri Sathya Sai Schools and University.

Pioneers for Integral Value Education

In India and all around the World.
The experience of Sri Sathya Sai Schools and University.

I. SHORT HISTORY OF SRI SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES (SSS EHV)/ EDUCARE.

In 1969, Sathya Sai devotees from India started a programme under Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s inspiration and guidance to impart sacred teachings from the Holy Scriptures through more active and modern teaching techniques. In 1971, the programme chose the name Bala Vikas, which is an ancient Sanskrit concept elucidating the vision of spiritual value-based education unfolding from within. Therefore, Bala Vikas could be translated as the Blossoming of the Boy—and, by extension, the Child-. Sometimes, this special pedagogy has also been called Sai Spiritual Education—SSE—.

In the early 1970s, the Bala Vikas Programme was begun in the United Kingdom, and in 1977 in the United States of America. From these first experiences abroad, the model would develop around the whole of the Western World and in other continents. Sathya Sai Bala Vikas is designed for children whose parents are devotees of Sathya Sai Baba; the classes are conducted at the local centres of Sri Sathya Sai Organization by devotees who have been trained in the Organization.

In the early 1980s, a modification of the Sathya Sai Bala Vikas was developed for children whose parents are not necessarily Sathya Sai devotees; it was given a new name: Sathya Sai Education in Human Values—SS EHV— or Educare.

The new EHV programme does not pretend to teach about Sri Sathya Sai Baba or any other specific spiritual master or tradition. Rather, it is designed as a secular programme, equally respectful of all faiths and putting forward the dialogue among all of them. Moreover, this new programme is intended to be put into practice in normal academic schools in coherence with a standard syllabus—regional, national or eventually international, which has still not happened—.

In the early 1970s, Sri Sathya Sai Organization began establishing Sathya Sai primary and secondary schools in India. The positive impact produced in the country, even recognized by the highest public authorities, encouraged Sathya Sai devotees and the branches of the Organization to start similar schools in their respective countries all around the world. At the beginning of the XXIst century, there would be around 150 schools: around 100 in India and around 50 more in 30 other countries in all the continents. As we have indicated above, a proper programme of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values was established in the early 1980s.

Soon after, in the late 1980s, the new Institutes of Sathya Sai Education were established as the number of Sathya Sai Schools and SSEHV classes rapidly increased in India and around the world. For that reason, there was need for more standardisation and quality assurance. In the late 1990s, such kind of Institute was created in Dharmakshetra, Mumbai. However, the first Institute was opened in Europe, in Denmark, in 1987.
Last but not least, the Sathya Sai System of Education in Human Values would even set up a full University which is still quite unique in India and the world until today.

In 1968, Sathya Sai Baba inaugurated a College for girls in Anantapur, the District Capital for the Ashram Town, Puttaparthi. Only one year later, in 1969, the counterpart for boys was opened in Brindavan Ashram, Whitefield, in the outskirts of the cosmopolitan city of Bangalore. In 1978, Sathya Sai Baba laid the foundation stone of the University Campus in Prashanti Nilayam, His main Ashram in Puttaparthi, in the extreme south of Andhra Pradesh, 140 km from Bangalore.

After the creation of the 3 colleges, Sathya Sai Baba founded the common structure for them: Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, which would be later renamed as Sri Sathya Sai University in 2007 –and considered as a deemed university-. For legal reasons it has had to come back recently to the old denomination –Institute of Higher Learning-.

In 2000, another specific Music College was started in Prashanti Nilayam. Just recently, a new campus for boys has been created in Muddenahalli, at the foot of Nandi Hills, near Bangalore, within the frame of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust.

However, the most interesting is not the historical development, but the qualitative dimension of this peculiar University, which harmoniously combines the needed academic excellence in the modern world with a spiritual foundation respectful of all faiths, and finally, the fundamental character/value education at the university level until Ph.D.

Another campus outside India that should be mentioned would be Sri Sathya Sai School and Institute in Thailand, with the headquarters in Bangkok and a beautiful campus outside the capital. Here again, Sri Sathya Sai School has been highly praised by the Government of Thailand, and the educational work undertaken by Sathya Sai Baba devotees in this Buddhist country has arisen interest worldwide. Not very far, Sathya Sai Organization of Singapore and Malaysia has been very active in the field of values and education.

Needless to say, in other areas of the world there has been an earnest effort in that direction, from the famous Miracle School in Zambia to the prolific activities in the United Kingdom. Outside India, Latin America is the continent that has worked more intensively for value education and that has followed Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings more fervently and lovingly.

“Global Overview of Sri Sathya Sai Education”, a beautiful book published by Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, offers an inspiring presentation of the huge pedagogic work undertaken by all the institutes around the world following Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values.
II. SRI SATHYA SAI EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD.

➢ 24 Institutes of Sathya Sai Education (in 24 countries in all the continents).
➢ A Sri Sathya Sai University in India with 3 campuses.
➢ 4 Sri Sathya Sai Colleges in India affiliated to local universities.
➢ Around 100 Sathya Sai Schools in India.
➢ Around 50 Sathya Sai Schools throughout the world (in 30 countries).
➢ 95 countries with non-formal/informal educational programmes.

Together with the official Sri Sathya Sai Organization (India and Overseas), there are many independent initiatives all around the world inspired by Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

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We must also mention the educational endeavour implemented by Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust. This Trust, legally independent from the official Sri Sathya Sai Organization, was initially created by Madiyal Narayan Bhat with the later direct involvement and blessings from Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

- Apart from the two oldest campuses, Muddenahalli and Alike, both highly reputed,
- This educational team has started a new pedagogic venture: Sri Sathya Sai Saraswati Trust, which is rapidly creating new Sathya Sai Schools.
- This educational organization is also opening new colleges.
- It is also launching hospitals and other initiatives of social service.

In connection with the Muddenahalli campus, various ashrams are being set up all around the world in all the continents comprising schools, hospitals and other kinds of social service.
III. An example of Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values: The Boys’ Higher Secondary School in Prashanti Nilayam (Sathya Sai Baba’s Ashram in Puttaparthi, South India).

School schedule:

- The boys wake up at 5 AM.
- 5:15/ 5:30: practice of yoga (“pranayama”).
- 5:30/ 5:50: hostel prayer.
- 5:50/ 6:15: physical exercise or yoga.
- 6:15/ 7 00: free playing.
- 7:00/ 7:45: breakfast in hostel.
- 7:45/ 8:10: the boys get ready, and go from the hostel to the school.
- 8:10/ 8:35: school prayer.
- 8:35/ 12:00: 4 periods (of 50 minutes each).
- 12:00/ 1 PM: lunch in hostel.
- 1:00/ 2:40: 2 periods.
- 2:40/ 3:30: tuitions, special classes, fine arts, music, or rehearsal for performances.
- 3:30/ 4:00: the boys take tea and get ready to go to the “mandir” (temple).
- 4:00/ 6:00: “mandir” (temple), with Sathya Sai Baba’s “darshan” (when the master, following the Indian tradition, comes to see the people gathered in the temple).
- 6:00/ 6:15: the boys come back from the temple to the hostel.
- 6:15/ 7:00: tuitions, special classes, fine arts, music, or rehearsal for performances.
- 7:00/ 7:45: dinner in hostel.
- 7:45/ 10:00: study hours.
- 10:00: meditation.
- 10:15: the boys go to bed.

NB: This was the classical schedule for many years. In the last period, and due to later “darshan” of Sathya Sai Baba, the timings had been adapted and slightly changed in the evening.
In this paradigmatic school, the value perspective is integrated through different pedagogic strategies:

- a direct teaching of human values (one period);
- incorporating a value-centred pedagogy in all academic subjects;
- infusing the values through a life-style, primarily in the hostel;
- unfolding the depth of human values from inside through proper spiritual tools: meditation, yoga and prayer;
- the direct contact with the “guru” – Master- in the “mandir” – temple.

* The leitmotiv of the school could be: Simple life, high thinking.

* Another pedagogic principle would be: Youth led by youth, which implies a system of monitors through which the elder children take care of the younger.

* Self-reliance is also highly appreciated, that is, the direct responsibility of the students in hostel for a series of activities, such as: cleaning their room, serving the food, maintenance of the hostel stores, etc.

* Finally, the whole pedagogy would follow the inspiration of the Gurukula, the community of the master with a small group of disciples. In this boarding school, teachers live with the boys, take care of them, and supervise not only their formal instruction but also all the other activities.

* In this special atmosphere, the hostel life is imbued with values such as brotherhood, community life and sharing.

With regard to the spiritual practices:

- The meditation practice would be linked to the great Vedantic tradition, as restated by Sathya Sai Baba: meditation in the light, especially suitable for children and adolescents.
- The two longer periods of collective prayer – in hostel and school- would include a diversity of activities, among which: a speech delivered by a student facing the audience, Vedic chanting – in Sanskrit-, and collective prayer.
IV. Sri Sathya Sai University as the paradigm of Educare.

Sri Sathya Sai University (legally called Institute of Higher Learning) is quite unique in some respect, since it also follows a pattern of holistic value education until Ph.D., which is pretty rare in this world at the College/University level.

In the undergraduate and postgraduate courses, the direct teaching of human values is called Awareness Class, and may incorporate a more philosophical approach.

The motto of this singular university would be:
Academic and human excellence.

Its distinctive features could be summarized in a few points:

- free education
- open admission irrespective of income, cast or religion
- A disciplined environment
- Residential character following the Indian tradition of the Gurukula
- Self-reliance and other positive values
- Community spirit and sense of brotherhood
- Service to society
- Holistic education
- Integrating ethics/human values with secular knowledge
- Favourable teacher/student ratio
- Harmony between the Indian heritage and a universal outlook
- Spiritual ambience
- Synthesis of science and spirituality
- Awareness programme and moral classes reinforcing education in human values
- Direct relationship with the spiritual master, Sri Sathya Sai Baba (until Maha Samadhi)

To graduates from Sri Sathya Sai University:

“You have received all-round instruction through the system which your University appropriately calls Integral Education. But above all, you have received here a sense of Human Values.”

Sri R. Venkatraman,
President of India.

(Convocation, November 1990.)
In general terms, all Sri Sathya Sai Institutes are based upon a pedagogic triangle:

- the school or college: for academic knowledge – with ethics and values -;
- the hostel: for community life and brotherhood;
- the “mandir” – temple: as a symbol of the foundation of everything, spiritual life.

However, the key of this holistic system of education would be in the integration of the three peaks of the triangle, which implies the fundamental coherence between thought, word and deed.

In particular, hostel life would be based upon several principles:

- community living;
- sharing and caring;
- understanding and adjustment;
- responsibility;
- discipline;
- simple living;
- human relationship and love;
- service;
- spiritual life.

“The concept of Integral Education which is a Divine gift of Sri Sathya Sai Baba to this University, comes closest to ancient ideals. Blessed indeed are the students who have had the privilege of going through an ancient programme which combines deep appreciation of the method of modern science and technology and the ancient Indian knowledge and wisdom accumulated over the centuries. This type of education can be a powerful means of self-perfection and social redemption.”

Dr Manmohan Singh,
Finance Minister, Government of India;
Today Prime Minister of India.

(Convocation, November 1995.)
It would be the aim of Sri Sathya Sai Institutes through Education in Human Values to train responsible global citizens.

Most of schools and colleges in the world deal exclusively with the mind. Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values also tries to open the heart and unfold love. Furthermore, it strives for spiritual self-realization, from which these responsible global citizens will be able to better serve their fellow beings in society.

The essence of Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values would be a lay spirituality incarnated here and now, directed to service and social welfare, and open to the dialogue between all religions or cultures and the unity of mankind.

Hence, the undercurrent of this holistic value-based education would be self-transformation; but not in a monastery among monks (with all our respect for this path), but rather at the very heart of the modern world, and manifested in service to the community and mankind.

We can only become change agents in society if we have changed ourselves from within. Otherwise, history will repeat itself as it has happened until now; the clothes will change, but not those who wear them. We must be the change that we want to see in the world.

As Sathya Sai Baba has shown: without the “S” – of Spirituality- skill becomes kill.

This is what we have too often on the planet Earth: a lot of knowledge that, without ethics and values, destroys the planet and mankind.

“The students of this University are not just students, but seekers of Truth. The Divine guidance of Sri Sathya Sai Baba has elevated even education to the level of worship of God. The education imparted here is of the liberative kind. The higher learning which the pupils here receive facilitates their integral development, and enables them to become better human beings with a finer, culturally richer character.”

Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee,
Prime Minister of India.

(Convocation, November 1998.)
V. Official recognition of Sri Sathya Sai Education in India.

“This Institute will be pace-setting for the future of higher education.”

Dr Madhuriben Shah,
Chairman, University Grants Commission of India.
(Convocation, Prashanti Nilayam, November 1983.)

“This University is a pioneering and unique seat of Learning; spiritual and ethical values permeate this University. It is in such an environment that our ancient sages transmitted knowledge to their disciples. For myself, I would like to humbly study this Institution, understand the process of how it grew from strength to strength, and then see what can be done to extend the influence and the halo of this University far and wide in India.”

Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao,
Prime Minister of India.
(Convocation, November 1991.)

“The Sri Sathya Sai Campuses at Prashanti Nilayam, Brindavan and Anantapur are an invaluable asset in the crucial task of promoting Integral Education. Indeed, these constitute a blessing of far-reaching significance. There is much to be learnt here by students, teachers, educationists and policy-makers.”

Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma,
President of India.
(Convocation, November 1992.)

“The purpose of real education is to initiate a learning process that transforms students into good human beings with knowledge and value systems. Is value-based education possible? Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning has given an answer in the affirmative. I am in a place where university learning takes place in a divine environment. Here students get education with a value system. I would like to congratulate Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning for this noble education.”

Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam,
President of India.
(Convocation, November 2002.)
“The Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (Deemed to be University) was one among the various institutions of higher learning visited (...) in order to draw insights relating to the philosophy and practice of value-based education. (...) It is clearly visible (...) that these observations have been greatly influenced by the message and philosophy of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Revered Chancellor (...) This institution is perhaps one of its kind in the country and elsewhere, which has been successfully executing a value-based education model at the university level for more than three decades.”

Supreme Court of India.
(Judgement. Original Civil Jurisdiction Writ Petition (Civil), No 98 OF 2002.)

“What is done here should be emulated in other educational institutions. That would make students in other universities efficient, broad-minded, far sighted, artistic, and spiritually surcharged.”

Sri Shivaraj Patil,
Leader of the Opposition, Parliament of India.
(Convocation, November 2001.)
Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (Deemed to Be University) is the only Institute in India to have received an A++ tag evaluation by the National Accreditation Council of India.

In August 2009, some of the major financial personalities of India gathered in Prashanti Nilayam (Sathya Sai Baba’s ashram) to hold a national conference on finances and ethics in the horizon of a value-based economy.

The conference included financial leaders of India such as Dr Duvvuri Subbarao (Governor, Reserve Bank of India), Dr Yaga Venugopal Reddy (Former Governor, Reserve Bank of India), Mr K.V. Kamath (Chairman, ICICI Bank), Mr Jagdish Capoor (Chairman, HDFC Bank), etc. The presence of so many distinguished figures of the Indian financial world in Prashanti Nilayam in August 2009 implies a double recognition: first, a homage to the unique mission of the greatest spiritual master of India, Sathya Sai Baba; secondly, an acknowledgement of the pioneering role of Sri Sathya Sai schools and university throughout India and the world in the field of value-based education.

Acknowledgements from external experts or institutes all around the world have included –among others:-

The Tata Group, Mumbai
Citibank, Chennai
Capital International, Singapore
International Livestock Research Institute, Kenya
Karolinska Institute, Sweden
University of Maryland, USA
Arizona State University, USA

For instance, Mr Ratan Tata and the industrial Group that brings his name have been so positively impressed by the value-education system of Sri Sathya Sai institutes, that they have started sponsoring a new programme, Vidya Vahini, under Sathya Sai Baba’s guidance, to help improve the educational standards of India, especially at the local level.


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VI. Academic survey and official recognition throughout the world.

There has already been some amount of observational research and studies produced by independent evaluators.

- In 1999, for instance, Dr P.C. Manchishi, an independent scholar of the University of Zambia, conducted an objective evaluation of the Sri Sathya Sai School established in the country. The goal was to find out the impact of value education on students, their families and teachers, and to assess the suitability of this kind of holistic pedagogy for the schools of Africa in general. In the words of this African scholar, the most difficult children recruited in the school, who were initially truants, rebellious and bullies, completely changed for better through the implementation of the value system of education. The professor of Zambia University also stressed that in Sri Sathya Sai School there was no vandalism—unlike government schools. Furthermore, in the conclusions of this independent report, we can see that value education is inseparable from academic excellence, since the school registers the highest performance and success in exams. According to the academic report, the teachers and the parents also changed for better.
  
  In 2005, the Sathya Sai School in Zambia would be awarded the International Gold Star by the Business Initiative Directions (Paris).

- In the same continent, Sathya Sai Schools received an even more official recognition when Prof. Kadar Asmal, Minister of Education of South Africa, publicly supported in 2005 their value system of education and recognized their impressive achievements.

- Travelling from Africa to a very distant country like Indonesia, the students of the Sri Sathya Sai School in Bengkulu show positive features in terms of attitude and behaviour. (Cf the report by S. Harihar and H. Seshadri, “Educare for Parents, Teachers and Students”, Sathya Sai Books and Publication Trust, Puttaparthi, 2004.)

- Changing again to another continent, we can examine the evaluation of the Sathya Sai Primary School in Murwillumbah, Australia, by K. McNaught. The assessor concludes that there is abundant qualitative evidence manifesting the sound values-based behaviour of children educated in this kind of integral pedagogy.
In the United Kingdom, we have the report of inspection of the Sri Sathya Sai School in Leicester (November 23, 2004), where an official inspector of the Office of the Standards in Education of the United Kingdom praises the institute as being a distinctive school. This governmental report in England stresses the personal development of children in the school and the good role model of teachers. Students develop confidence and raise their self-esteem; they are valued as responsible citizens.

Crossing the Atlantic, supervisors of the Ministry of Education of Ecuador have extolled in similar terms the Sathya Sai School in Guayaquil.

Last but not least, Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values has been recognized at an international level by United Nations. Since 2001, the Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Africa has been assisting the United Nations (UN-HABITAT) in implementing a Human Values-based Water Education Programme in Africa. An independent evaluation of the Phase I of the Programme conducted by the United Nations in 2004 concludes that this kind of initiative may be vital for the future of Africa, a continent that had the values in its own tradition, but has largely lost them with the breakdown of the last generations.

Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values has also forged new partnerships with other international agencies, such as the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

There is a beautiful book that summarizes the valuable educational work undertaken in the last decades by Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values: “Global Overview of Sri Sathya Sai Education”, published by Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation in 2007.
Empirical evidence about the positive effects of value education.


Through appropriate survey, Dr Jumsai observes that teachers who have come to the institute exhibit a very high degree of transformation as could be concluded from their testimony. They have become highly motivated to continue work or further their studies to become a good teacher. The changes in teachers can be summarized below:

Sharper understanding of life, seeing more value in life, and identifying more easily the good in others;
More sense of responsibility, becoming a better example to children and others;
Greater calmness and peace, better control of emotions, higher concentration in work, and more self-confidence;
Deeper love and compassion, giving service to others;
Greater feeling of unity in living together.

The survey on students and alumni has consisted of direct reply to questionnaire from children and also of replies from parents about their children. The conclusions draw the many benefits derived from the value-oriented pedagogy for children:

They become more responsible, and show a clearer ability to solve problems;
They are calmer and more peaceful;
They become more patient and less selfish;
They learn naturally to give service to others;
They get used to live with others in a spirit of community and brotherhood.
Other case studies manifesting a real transformation of children, their families and teachers through integral value education in Sri Sathya Sai Schools around the world.


Attitudinal and behavioural changes are clearly evident in the children from the time they join the kindergarten to the time of graduation. Having a sense of responsibility, showing love and concern, doing meditation; these are some of the comments from the parents. Children with reading disability, discipline and concentration problems have shown improvement. Teachers have also shown improvement in practicing values as they have to set an example for the children. Parents transform when they see their children transformed. They become more supportive and less demanding and aggressive. Parents have requested for workshops and to learn meditation so that they can practise with their children at home.


The students come from critical and extreme poverty class. They stay all day in the school, getting all their meals. The school covers all required needs to its students totally free of cost. “A” was a girl who came to the school as a very aggressive child, and very destructive with all school material. She spoke using bad language. With the Human Values Education Programme, she has become a sweet child, more harmonious and collaborative in the school and her home. She has also developed social relationship based on love and mutual respect with her classmates. Today she takes care of her materials.


Once marginalized students are admitted into the school, they are taught human values, not only on a personal level but also in interacting with others. It is therefore not surprising that within a short time of admission in this serene atmosphere, a marked transformation in the behaviour and attitude of students becomes evident. When “B” joined the school, he was a rude and selfish boy, lacking discipline and commitment towards his work. Within a year he changed and started working hard. He has become polite and courteous, and he has calmed down emotionally.

So many cases of transformation have been recorded in the institute in Zambia, that it has come to be known as the Miracle School. However, there are also many Miracle Schools in Brazil or Colombia, where a boy who received love in the Sathya Sai School transformed his brutal father by transmitting the same love to him.
Some final considerations.

Any human attempt is obviously imperfect –by definition-. Even human language is limited, as all mystics have always stressed. Still, negative or hyper-criticism is as immature as ignorance. There is a middle path between both extremes, where a constructive awareness of problems or limitations fosters positive strategies to help improving and building a better world.

Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values has performed a highly valuable educational work through many years that will certainly continue, open to dialogue with other institutes and organizations and also open to improvement or evolution –like all human life-. As Sri Aurobindo beautifully expressed, the human process continuously evolves towards the Life Divine.

Needless to say, we may recognize the estimable task of similar institutes in India and all around the world –such as the Ramakrishna Mission, Tagore’s Shantiniketan, Sri Aurobindo’s integral education, the Theosophical Society’s educational endeavour, Krishnamurti schools, Waldorf schools following Rudolf Steiner, Montessori schools following Dr Maria Montessori, the educational institutes in North America inspired by Prof. Dewey and Prof. Kilpatrick, etc-.

Integral value education is not the property of anybody. It is the patrimony of the whole mankind.

Its implementation is a collective endeavour, always open to sharing and dialogue –which lies at the core of the new paradigm in emergence for the future of mankind-.

Finally, the wonderful educational task performed by Sri Sathya Sai Schools in India and all around the world has a silent inspiration behind: a genuine spiritual master that never wished His name to be advertised, but who, from the purity and depth of the Vision, has lovingly guided so many to make this educational success happen.
VII. A SAMPLE OF PEDAGOGIC MATERIALS FOR SRI SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES.

Sathya Sai Baba on integral value education.

- BURROWS L., ed., “Sathya Sai Education in Human Values”.
- SATHYA SAI BOOK CENTER OF AMERICA, “Sathya Sai Speaks on Education”.
- SRI SATHYA SAI BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS TRUST, “Benedictory Addresses”.
- SRI SATHYA SAI WORLD FOUNDATION, “Sri Sathya Sai Educare. Human Values”.

A theoretical frame for Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values.

- BEBEDELIS G., “The Teachings of Plato on Education. A Parallelism with Sathya Sai Baba’s Teachings on Education in Human Values”.
- BEBEDELIS G., “Aristotle on Virtue and Ethics. A Parallelism with Sathya Sai Baba’s Teachings”.
- HIRAMALINI SESHADRI, SESHADRI HARIHAR, “Educare. For Parents, Teachers and Students”.
- PUSHPA BALA JAGAM, “Educare. The Essence of Real and Complete Education”.
- RAMARAO N.B.S., “Sri Sathya Sai Educare. For Devotees”.
- RUHELA S.P., “Philosophical Foundations of Value Education in India”.
- RUHELA S.P., “Values in Modern Indian Educational Thought”.
- SOMENATH MITRA, “Science and Mankind. Sai Baba and Human Values”.

Sri Sathya Sai Organization for integral value-based education.

- SRI SATHYA SAI WORLD FOUNDATION, “Global Overview of Sri Sathya Sai Education”.
- SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING, “Sri Sathya Sai System of Integral Education. An Overview”.

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Pedagogic materials for schools, teachers, educationists and parents.

- CRAXI A. and S., “The Human Values. A Voyage from I to We”.  
- MEETA KHANNA, “Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Concept and Programmes of Education in Human Values”.

Publications comprising several volumes.

From India:

- FORMER NATIONAL BOARD FOR SRI SATHYA SAI BAL VIKAS, “Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas”. (Several volumes).
- ARTI SRIVASTAVA, “Spiritual Science. Human Values”, 12 volumes (one for each class or standard).

From Western countries:


Sathya Sai Baba’s human values and the world of management.

- RACHERLA KUMAR BHASKAR, “Man Management. A Values-Based Management Perspective”.

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Part II.

Philosophy of Education.
Section VII.

Integral education in Ancient India

From Vedas and Upanishads to Neo-Vedanta.

The Past Glory of the Indian Gurukula.
Introduction.

Indian educational philosophy through history.

It is well known that an integral philosophy of education was already developed in India by the Gurukulas—communities of masters and pupils—of the Vedas—the most ancient holy books, which constituted originally an oral tradition from teacher to student, as it also happened in other spiritual contexts. The Vedic tradition was continued by the enlightening contribution of the Upanishads and Vedanta.

As the renowned scholar R. Panikkar stressed, the whole Vedic culture continuously emphasized that philosophy must be based on experience; not the empirical experience of the senses but the inner mystical experience or the third eye of knowledge.\textsuperscript{152}

The Vedic sage did not play with ideas or words like so many Western thinkers or scholars; his knowledge was not merely intellectual or bookish—as in modern mainstream schooling. The Vedic sage investigated something that became of the greatest interest for quantum physicists such as M. Planck or R. Goswami: he explored and described fields of energy and consciousness, and hence layers of reality beyond the empirical spectrum of the senses. That is why so many quantum physicists have been fascinated by the Vedas of India. This philosophical experience of Ancient India has nothing to do with the merely intellectual bookish “philosophy” of modern Europe; Greece, and in particular Greek philosophy from Orphism to Neoplatonism, was closer to Vedic India than to modern Europe.

In this Vedic context, education could not be the merely intellectual bookish training of modern mainstream schooling; Vedic education was essentially—to put it in modern terms—experiential towards self-learning; it was also child-centred. Quite obviously, it would have been highly appreciated by the modern precursors of integral or progressive education, such as Rousseau, Steiner, Montessori or Dewey, who unfortunately did not know anything about it or very little.

According to Vimala Thakar, reputed translator of the ancient scriptures and herself a genuine seeker, the time of the Vedas was a time of geniuses, lovers of nature, lovers of life, lovers of all things and all that exists, from the cosmos entire to the smallest reality vibrating in the depth of every atom. The Vedic sages were true seekers and seers, who tried to apprehend the manifest and the non-manifest, and who understood—thousands of years before quantum physics and relational theory—that the key lies in the relation and in interdependence.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{152} Cf Panikkar R., 1997, p 19-20.

\textsuperscript{153} Cf Vimala Thakar, 1991, p 3-5.
After the Vedas, the **Upanishads** underline the unity of Man and Cosmos, and constitute a profound and sincere research into the nature of Reality. Quite often, this research is unveiled through the beautiful dialogue between master and pupil, imbued with mutual love and respect, and total freedom of inquiry. Ultimately, Upanishad education is the search for the meaning of Life, and the realization of it in each one of us. In this genuine pedagogy, self-experience could never be replaced by any teaching coming from outside.

This inspiring heritage from Ancient India would be revived in the modern age by the major spiritual masters of the country, such as Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and her spiritual companion, the Mother of Pondicherry, and great poets like R. Tagore. In the last years, Sri Sathya Sai Baba has kept alive this legacy in touch with the modern world in order to transform it from inside and from the real change within each one of us.

Vimala Thakar captured with touching words all the depth of the Vedic and Upanishadic Gurukula. In her “Glimpses of Ishavasya”\(^{154}\), she proclaims that the era of Vedas and Upanishads was an era of total and unconditional freedom of thought; Westerners who reduce the striving for freedom of thought to Western history should take it into account. In simple and poetic terms, she explains that Vedas and Upanishads was the era of the living word: the profound communion between master and pupil. This pure kind of relationship was not institutionalized; it was not organized. Contrary to what many Westerners wrongly assume about India and other Ancient traditions, there was no authority from the side of the master, but an unconditional love at the service of the education of the pupil. In Vimala Thakar’s own words, Vedas and Upanishads was the era of absolute freedom between master and pupil, with such a cordiality and warmth, respect, affection and love between them.

Few times in history has education reached such a height and purity, and has cast such a pristine light over this world. Unfortunately, Western culture still ignores these treasures from the Ancient civilization of India. But even more deplorable, contemporary India also ignores to a great extent its own treasures from its deepest tradition.

The Vedic/ Upanishadic heritage would be refined by the major school of mystical philosophy of India, **Vedanta**. Nevertheless, the same kind of Gurukula-based education and the same spirit of philosophical inquiry through “sadhana” – inner work–were cultivated by other traditions and schools, like Samkhya, Tantras, and the different sects within Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Shaktism.\(^{155}\)

Unfortunately, this profound Indian heritage is still largely ignored in the West, and virtually forgotten in India today. Still, several spiritual and educational organizations are striving through their daily work to revive it. The **Indian Renaissance** already started with Swami Narayan and Sri Ramakrishna; it was further expanded by

\(^{154}\) Cf Vimala Thakar, 1991, p 7-8.

Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, etc, and has been enhanced in the last years by the vast mission of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Besides, the typically Indian educational community of master and pupils would develop in the transition from the Ancient World to the Middle Ages, and would become more institutionalized through the **Medieval universities**, both Hindu (Taxila, Mithila, Nadia, Varanasi, etc) and Buddhist (Nalanda, Vikramashila, Odantapuri, etc), culminating an unparalleled history of spirituality, mysticism, philosophy, science and education -and, in short, self-inquiry into the deepest truths-. In the Middle Ages, before the Muslim invasions of North India, the Indian universities emerged as an extension in the number and seize of different kinds of communities of teachers and students, called “**parishads**” or “**tols**”.\(^{156}\)

In the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad we already find the word “parishad”. In the VIth chapter, we can Shvetaketu Aruneya joining in the “parishad” of the Panchala.\(^{157}\)

In the Dharma Sutras of Gautama, Vasishtha and and Baudhayana, and also in the Laws of Manu, a set of regulations is established on the composition and running of the “parishads”.\(^{158}\)

In some places like Taxila, the capital of Gandhara in the North-West of the Subcontinent, all sorts of academic studies flourished mingled with spiritual inquiry, both in the Hindu and the Buddhist lineages, with illustrious students such as Panini. This resplendent city of Ashoka’s Empire, rebuilt by the Greeks who came with Alexander the Great, became one of the major centres for intercultural dialogue in the Ancient World.

Both in South and North Asia, through the Theravada or Mahayana schools, the **Buddhist community –Sangha-** would also evolve profound and beautiful expressions of this kind of holistic education on spiritual grounds. Among the Buddhist universities, Nalanda stands as the brightest gem. This kind of Buddhist university –like the Hindu- would be in modern terms both higher secondary school and college. Above all, it developed an integral and interdisciplinary curriculum and a spirit of inquiry and freedom of thought that could inspire many in Asian countries like India today in order to transform the present scenario dominated by rote memorizing and robotic education.\(^{159}\)

Outside Buddhism, we should not forget other Asian traditions like Taoism, or the priceless contributions of Sufism. In many other cultures of mankind, even among the so-called “primitive”, education has been regarded in holistic and spiritual terms.


\(^{157}\) Cf Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, VI, 2, 1.


\(^{159}\) Cf Mookerji R.K., 1989.
At the outset, what is the Sanskrit word for “education”?

In the richness and depth of Sanskrit language, there is not a single word but many, already expressing the very core of the Indian philosophy of education—which is totally integral or holistic on spiritual grounds. 

- “Shiksh” is a verb that we find in the Vedic hymns meaning “to learn”.
- The word “adhyayana” is used in later sacred books –Brahmanas, Upanishads and Sutras- meaning “going near” (the Guru, the teacher).
- “Upadesha” refers to the oral teaching that the student receives from the master.
- “Svadhyaya” refers to the study that the student carries on alone after the teacher’s instruction.
- “Vinaya” is closer to the Latin term “educare” from “educere” –to unfold from within what is already inside.
- “Bala Vikas” –the blossoming of the boy/ child- constitutes the most beautiful Sanskrit expression to render the Latin idea of “educere”.
- “Gurukula” is another major Sanskrit concept, cardinal in the historical development of Indian spirituality, philosophy and civilization; as we have seen above, it is the community of the master and the disciples.
- “Upanishad” –which gives name to the mystical/ philosophical books developing the Vedas- literally means “sitting near” –the master or teacher-.
- “Upanayana” literally means “to be brought to” –the master or teacher for initiation-. It hence refers to the most important form of initiation for boys in the history of Indian civilization.

Let us see now which were the educational institutions in the Indian tradition.

- “Ashram”: the house of the master/ teacher with disciples.
- “Parishad”: the assembly of learned men who welcome students for their education. In fact, “parishad” means sitting on a circle -around the teacher-.
- “Tol”: similar to the “parishad”, a simple house where the master/ teacher receives students for their education.
- During the Medieval period, “parishads” and “tols” came together forming the Indian Universities, some of them especially famous like Taxila, Mithila, Varanasi or Nadia.
The oldest and major sacred books of India, the Vedas, are constituted by four collections – “samhitas”- of hymns: Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Veda.

The oldest collection, the Rig Veda, contains around 1000 hymns divided in 10 books – “mandalas”-. Each book is related to a sage or “rishi”, which implies a whole lineage from father to son or from master to disciple. Quite early, the pedagogic function of the father was completed by a “guru” – master- that the student – “chela”- would find outside the family through the initiation – “upanayana”-.

Some form of incipient education is already manifest in the Rig Veda, VII, 103, which becomes even more clear in later hymns of the Rig Veda such as X, 71.

R.K. Mookerji warns us that the Vedic pedagogy is very far from modern schooling; the Vedic teacher and pupil seek for the highest knowledge or wisdom – “jnana”- very different from the merely intellectual bookish knowledge in utilitarian terms in modern mainstream schooling. Then the very method of the educational process is determined by these higher goals and this spiritual/ metaphysical world view.160

The Vedic pedagogy was supported by the double method of “upadesha” and “svadhyaya”:

- the first meaning the instruction given by the teacher;
- and the second the personal study undergone by the student.

The Vedic syllabus was truly integral, incorporating the learning of the hymns and rituals, the correct pronunciation of the Sanskrit “mantras”, grammar in a broader sense, etymology, logic, astronomy and cosmology. There was a scientific and mathematical content in the Vedic syllabus – obviously not in the mechanistic frame of mind of the modern age- which was inseparable from the spiritual quest-, a unity of science and spirituality that we also find in Pythagoras and Plato in Ancient Greece-.161


This profound kind of education was provided through **three successive steps:**

- **“Akshara-prapti”** or **“shravana”**, listening to the master and learning the hymns by heart.

- **“Artha-bodha”**/ **“arthavada”** or **“manana”**, when the master explained to the disciple the meaning of the hymns in depth, in metaphysical terms. This means that Vedic education had nothing to do with the robotic system predominating today in India, where there is only rote memorizing without even understanding. Vedic education was truly conceptual and also integral. Indian education was also **Socratic**, which means that the **dialogue** was essential to the educational process.

- **“Nididhyasana”**/ **“Dhyana”** – meditation- and **“tapas”** – wrongly translated as penance, when it would be closer to our notion of contemplation-. In the third stage, the student shifts from intellectual understanding to the inner experience; the Vedic teaching is a living experience from inside – that is why Prof. R. Panikkar insisted on the notion of the Vedic Experience-. With the third stage, Vedic education reaches its depth and truly integral nature. It is not a mere intellectual training, even less rote memorizing for future priests; it brings the student towards an ontological transformation, the unfolding of the metaphysical truth from inside.

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**The metaphysical insights of the Vedas were developed by the Upanishads,** jewels of human culture, heights of the human spirit, praised in the highest terms by Western scholars like J. Mascaro, a Catalan indologist from Majorca, or the German scholar M. Muller. Some of the Romantic authors already knew about the Upanishads and were deeply impressed by them, just as the forerunners of quantum physics later.

The pedagogy of the Upanishads deepens into the Vedic educational system, producing the finest expression of the Indian Gurukula, still developed by the later Vedanta with major figures such as Shankara or Ramanuja. The Upanishadic/ Vedantic Gurukula constitutes one of the summits of human culture and one of the peaks of education in human history. Only the obstinate cultural imperialism of the West has overlooked the grandeur of this unique educational philosophy and practice, from which the modern world could certainly learn a lot, and find deep insights for the future of education.

When we understand the philosophical method of J. Krishnamurti, the renowned sage of the XXth century, we can realize that the pedagogic depth that he unveils is deeply akin to the Upanishads and Vedanta. The Upanishadic/ Vedantic Gurukula cut with the paraphernalia of the Brahmanical world; it is like a lighthouse casting a clear light upon the most important things of life. It does not impose anything to anybody. We are free, like the Indian “chela”, to open eyes or to decide to continue to be blind. Similarly, Krishnamurti cut with the paraphernalia of the Theosophical Society to go to
the essence of Theosophy, to the most important things; and like the Indian “guru”, he just invited his audience to observe and investigate within themselves in order to experience by themselves.

In the words of J. Mascaro, the Upanishads are the Himalaya of the human soul. The Catalan scholar from Majorca was always amazed by the grandeur of the questions and the simplicity of the answers. The Upanishads are basically dialogues between master and disciple –like Plato’s Dialogues;- this dialectical character already points at the very nature of the cosmos –which seems to be basically relational-, as quantum physics and relational theory have comprehended in the XXth century.\footnote{Cf Mascaro J., 2001.}

Through these fascinating and beautiful dialogues, trough this genuine Socratic pedagogy, the Upanishads unveil the most important things of life: the depth of our consciousness and the breath of our life, through a passionate exploration of reality and ourselves, finding the Light of the Pure Consciousness inside. According to Mascaro, the Upanishads sing the glory of light and love, and beyond the darkness of sorrow and death, they proclaim the victory of life, the plenitude of life and our participation in this plenitude. Few scholars have grasped the beauty and the depth of the Upanishads like the Catalan indologist from Majorca.

For the philosopher and sage of Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo, the Upanishads are the unifying spirit blending science, spirituality, philosophy and poetry. The Upanishadic philosophy is not a mere intellectual speculation, but all the depth and breadth of the living word and the living truth, grasped by the inner sight in the joy of the pure word. The Upanishads do not repeat what others say. They do not build systems of beliefs to be imposed upon others. They do not tell us what we must think. They constitute the awakening of oneself to the inner being, the awakening to our own reality. In this fascinating adventure of human consciousness and life, they evolve through free inquiry and genuine dialogue in the warmth of love.\footnote{Cf Aurobindo, “The Upanishads”, p 1.}

Krishnamurti’s pathless land can be trodden on the shining shores of the Upanishads, precisely because in the Upanishads there are no paths other than self-inquiry in freedom and dialogue in the warmth of love. Krishnamurti’s highest ideals were realized by the Upanishads –and by some schools of later Vedanta-. Krishnamurti’s pedagogy was based on a genuine relationship imbued with love and free self-inquiry through dialogue with a truly spiritual mind. This is exactly the educational philosophy of the Upanishads. The core of the Upanishadic pedagogy was not the syllabus but the relationship between master and disciple –the major theme of Krishnamurti-. The Upanishad is inseparable from the Gurukula.

Unfortunately, India has forgotten it –we can only observe the aberrant robotic system prevailing still today in education- and the West has ignored it –the inertia of cultural imperialism is stronger than many may think-. 
As we mentioned above, a deeply spiritual and penetrating person who was very close to Krishnamurti, Vimala Thakar, beautifully expounded all the depth and light of the Upanishadic Gurukula. In her own words, the era of Vedas and Upanishads was an era of total freedom of thought; it was the era of the living word: the communion between master and disciple. This relationship was not institutionalized or organized; there was no authority nor coercion. There was total freedom between master and disciple, and profound respect, affection, and love. Krishnamurti’s vision totally fulfilled –in the Upanishads of India; a lighthouse for mankind, if only mankind wants to look towards the light.  

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The ancient Gurukula of India.

As we have seen above, the Gurukula is the community of the master and his disciples. This educational institution of Ancient India, through which the highest culture of the subcontinent has been formed, presents a set of characteristics.

- The master had a small number of disciples around him, around a dozen to a maximum of twenty.
- The boys would be above the age of reason (8/11) till adulthood (21).
- The Gurukula was residential, hence master and disciples were living together.
- The relationship between master and disciples was imbied with pure love, respect and communion.
- The master was a guru, guide and friend, father and mother –the ideal teacher according to modern educationists such as Steiner, Montessori or Dewey-.
- He was naturally and sincerely respected and venerated by the students.
- The boys saw each other as brothers in a spirit of community life.
- The master deeply respected the freedom of thought of his pupils;
- Which means that the main pedagogic methods were the Socratic dialogue and free self-inquiry towards self-realization.
- The teaching was basically oral.
- The master combined collective classes and personalized tuitions, though the pedagogy was basically individualized –child-centred-.
- Elder students were taking care of the younger at the same time. (This pedagogic practice was discovered by the British in India and then incorporated into the British Public School system –though the original spirit was deeply altered-.)

• The educational process usually evolved in natural surroundings, arising a sense of beauty and communion with Nature and the Cosmos.
• The whole life of the Gurukula was imbibed with a certain ethos or atmosphere, which was value-based and essentially spiritual.

• The syllabus was truly integral—in the context of that epoch—, although its foundation was inherently spiritual/ mystical—realizing by oneself the highest truth—.
• Together with the proper educational process, the boys were also invited to perform some manual work and have some responsibility in the community life.

• The educational process was inseparable from an initiation—Upanayana—.
• In a few words, the Gurukula combined a simple life with the highest or deepest thinking.
• However, the profound integral nature of this kind of education was not satisfied with the second eye of knowledge—the intellect—and linked it to a deeper more experiential form of inner realization.
• Therefore, the education of the Gurukula was essentially transformative rather than informative.

• The Indian Gurukula complied with the most salient features of Platonic philosophy: beauty and love, together with the highest truth and a higher good, all that the history of conflict and violence upon Earth has devastated, all that modernity has buried in the name of “progress” to exalt a purely technocratic civilization.

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The Chandogya Upanishad presents a boy, Narada, who pays a visit to Sanatkunara, requesting the master to teach him.\(^{165}\)

The master asks the boy what he has studied and the boy replies:

• The four Vedas
• Brahma-Vidya -the knowledge of the Absolute-
• Deva-Vidya -the knowledge of the Gods-
• The knowledge of the demons and the spirits
• Bhuta-Vidya -the rituals-
• Itihasa-Purana -epics and mythology-
• Nidhi -the science of chronology and chronicles-
• Ekayana –ethics-
• Kshattra-Vidya -political science-
• Rasi –mathematics- and Vakovakya –logics-

\(^{165}\) Cf Chandogya Upanishad, VI, 1, and VII, 1.
- Nakshatra-Vidya -astronomy/ astrology-
- Vedanam Veda -the Veda of Vedas, gramar-
- Sarpa/ Devajana-Vidya -the arts-.

As we can see, a truly integral syllabus.
The boy has not been lazy, he has studied a lot.

However, the master lovingly replies to the student with a mind filled with knowledge that now he must learn what lies beyond all that knowledge, which is not outside –in external teachings- but inside: his deepest identity or true self. This is his own reality, and also his true freedom. But this cannot be taught from outside; it must be discovered and realized by oneself from within.

This was the core of this profound educational philosophy from India.

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Conclusion.

The Renaissance of Indian educational philosophy in the modern age.

Following the deepest education from India and Buddhist Asia, modern students may learn not only to understand by themselves but to understand themselves, to realize whom they are in depth, so that they become aware of their true self and they realize it in freedom. Students may then awake to higher levels of consciousness, where love and compassion for all beings develop naturally into service to others in true solidarity with all and the cosmos entire.

India has a long, outstanding, and probably unique tradition of mystical philosophy and integral education on a spiritual foundation. In the modern age, from the XVIIIth century onwards, the subcontinent has nurtured again an astonishing lineage of sages and spiritual masters, such as: Swami Narayan, Mohan Roy, Dayananda Sarasvati, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Ramalinga Swami, Shirdi Sai Baba, R. Tagore, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta Maharaj, Yogananda Paramahamsa, Ma Anandamayi, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Swami Ramdas, Shivananda, J. Krishnamurti, Vimala Thakar, Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada, Mata Amritanandamayi, Ganapati Saccidananda, Sathya Sai Baba, etc.

One of the first masters who revived the depth of the Ancient Gurukula, the community of teacher and pupils, conveniently adapted to the modern world, was the privileged disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, who received in his youth a scholarly education and who travelled to America and Europe, producing a tremendous impact on the Western mind. Vivekananda tried to renovate both the mystical philosophy of India, in particular Vedanta, and the holistic education on spiritual grounds coming back to Vedas and Upanishads. In particular, he pointed at the convergence between
science and spirituality, something that would develop more clearly with the development of quantum physics and relational theory, and that is still going on today. This spiritual master was also a pioneer of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

In terms of education, his revival of the Ancient holistic education of India emphasized the spirit of the Gurukula and the formation of character of children with positive and spiritual values. Needless to say, Vivekananda made an attempt to adapt the Ancient heritage to the modern world, in coherence with his synthesis of science and spirituality. Until today, the Ramakrishna Mission has continued to carry on the shining legacy of Swami Vivekananda and his master, Sri Ramakrishna.\textsuperscript{166}

In this period that has been called the Hindu or Indian Renaissance, the renowned poet of Bengal, R. Tagore, would also offer enlightening directions towards humanistic education linking the best achievements of the West and the treasures of the Indian tradition. Like Vivekananda, Tagore would contribute to develop an understanding and appreciation of Indian civilization in Western countries.\textsuperscript{167}

Another sage of the modern age who has brought a decisive contribution to holistic education with human and spiritual values has been the world-famous “guru” of Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo, together with his spiritual companion, Mirra Alfassa, known as the Mother. Their spiritual and educational endowment constitutes a treasure of wisdom still to be rediscovered. There are educational institutes, attached to the main ashram of Pondicherry and the centre in Delhi, which implement their educational philosophy. Moreover, there are many schools throughout India which follow this model of integral education with a spiritual basis.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{166} Cf Vivekananda:  
- “Education. Compiled from the Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda”, ed. By T.S. Avinashilingam, 1957  
- ”Education”, 1999  
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{167} Cf Tagore:  
- "Morada de paz (Santiniketan)", 1995  
- "Sriniketan", 1991  
- “Ideals of Education”, 1929  
- “The Centre of Indian Culture”, 1921
\end{flushleft}
According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the human being is essentially a soul and a divine reality, capable of removing the veils of ignorance, and acquiring the awareness of his or her true I. Hence, the human being can progressively transform its limited human nature into a divine infinite nature. Consciousness presents several levels or layers until super-consciousness. This integral vision of human condition requires an equally integral concept of education. Instead of pressurizing the child from outside in order to insert him or her into pre-established social moulds fabricated by the adults, education should help the youth to unfold from within its harmonious growth as an organic and integral being towards its own human and divine realization. Since the human being is ultimately a soul in spiritual evolution, education should teach the child how to educate itself, and how to develop its own inherent capacities—of different kinds: practical, intellectual, aesthetic, moral and spiritual.\(^\text{168}\)

The educational institutes inspired by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother promote through an integrated pedagogy:

- the harmonious growth of the body
- the development of personality and character, with ethical principles and positive values
- the training of mental faculties in the different fields of sciences, social studies and humanities, stressing the unity of knowledge and the link between the sciences and the humanities
- the cultivation of aesthetic taste through the arts
- and the awakening of the soul destined to rule the whole being.

\(^{168}\) Cf Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education:
- Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education”, ed. by Vijay, 1973
Cf Sri Aurobindo on education:
- "A System of National Education", 1970
- “Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo”, ed. by A.B. Purani, 1982

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Last but not least, **J. Krishnamurti** was an original and fascinating sage of the XXth century. The famous writer A. Huxley said about him that it was the most impressive talk that he had ever listened to; it was like hearing a discourse of Buddha himself. Like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and Sri Sathya Sai Baba today, Krishnamurti was especially fond of education, and he naturally developed a beautiful relationship with children that could easily remind us of the Ancient “guru” with his pupils. While he was always reluctant towards spiritual organizations, he embodied in depth the very spirit of Vedas and Upanishads.

According to this “reluctant messiah” of our time, as he has been called, there should not be in the educational relationship any kind of superiority or inferiority; teacher and student should interact on an equal basis –as it was in the Vedic and Upanishadic Gurukula, or in the lay and monastic community around Buddha-. Moreover, Krishnamurti insisted that true education could only be based on mutual respect, profound affection and pure love –again, as it was in the Indian Gurukula and the Buddhist Sangha-. Only then, said the modern sage, can there be a natural and free relationship between teacher and pupil, and mutual understanding. Otherwise, we will have fear and oppression, as it has so often happened in this world. Only from this freedom and love, can education become an assistance to understand oneself.\(^{169}\)

From Krishnamurti’s point of view, modern education has ended up in a historical failure; instead of teaching how to think, it has become an instrument to teach what we must think. This oppressive and at the same time technocratic pedagogy has finally destroyed humanity and created the chaos around us.

In front of this desolate scenario, Krishnamurti defends an education that helps children to understand the significance of Life in their own existence, in joyful community and the warmth of love -the only state of consciousness that can change the world, since it represents the only true change inside each one of us.

In Krishnamurti’s words, we are not separated; we are the world.

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\(^{169}\) J. Krishnamurti on education:  
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- “La educacion como servicio”, with an Introduction by Mrs Annie Besant, 1913  
- "Letters to the Schools", 2 vols, 1985  
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Section VIII.

Integral education in the Buddhist tradition.

The Past Glory of the Buddhist University.
Introduction.

Prince Siddhartha and the middle path.

While King Suddhodana ruled his kingdom at the foot of the Himalaya, he was especially concerned about the education of his fair son, Prince Siddhartha, who very soon appeared to be a special boy. The King decided to over-protect his heir by avoiding any contact with the misery of the external world, so that the Prince would grow up cheerful surrounded by happiness only.

The wisdom of Buddhism presents an enthralling end to the story: one day, when the prince was already a young man, he happened to trespass the boundaries of his paternal over-protection, and he witnessed the miseries of human condition: sickness, old age and death. The meeting of a monk would suggest the only path ahead: to investigate into the deepest causes of human suffering and to find the way out of it, which Prince Siddhartha would finally achieve after several years of research and self-inquiry, leading ultimately to Enlightenment, after which Prince Siddhartha would be the Buddha, the One who has awakened.

There is a fundamental message about education in the legendary life of Lord Buddha. Let us examine it by opposing two extreme positions that still co-exist in our world.

- On the one hand, there are parents and educational institutes that over-protect their children—like King Suddhodana—, by prohibiting many things considered as harmful or negative and strictly eluding any contact of the youths with some realities of this world. This has typically been the more traditional approach, prevailing in Europe until IIInd World War, and still common today in societies like India.
- On the other hand, from the decade of the sixties onwards, the Western World has sometimes fallen into the opposite extreme. Through some kind of reaction against the rigidity of the traditional patterns, many adults have given virtually unlimited freedom to children, who have come to the point of ruling not only themselves but even their elders. In the last years, a whole legion of children have grown up without proper limits, and also without a proper model offered by their elders, since adults have too often dismissed their pedagogic role. In this cultural background, children have soon been exposed to everything so that there was no more secret for them—even in the matters that were reserved to the adult society in the traditional patterns—.

As in any other field of human life, the wisdom of Buddhism suggests a middle path in education that avoids the extreme positions in which mankind easily falls. The Buddhist tradition also offers other treasures in terms of educational philosophy.
Lord Buddha and pedagogics.\textsuperscript{170}

The very teachings of Buddha can be seen as a pedagogy per se.
In the words of venerable Master Chin Kung:

“Buddhism is Buddha Sakyamuni’s educational system (...) The goal of Buddhist education is to attain wisdom. (...) He further taught us that everyone has the potential to realize this state of ultimate wisdom, as it is an intrinsic part of our nature, not something one obtains externally.”\textsuperscript{171}

Quite obviously, this philosophy of education differs from modern mainstream schooling and its merely intellectual bookish learning from a materialistic and utilitarian world view. The issue of the world view or paradigm is fundamental to understand cultural diversity through history and geography. When a modern scholar or educator approaches Buddhist education, the first thing he or she must keep in mind is that in this context education is not only different from modern mainstream schooling, but more exactly it is different because it unfolds from a different world view.

According to W. Wisadavet:

“Buddhism has as its ultimate goal the transcendent (“lokuttara dhamma”), which is a state that each individual must experience personally.”\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{170} Cf - "The Living Thoughts of Gotama the Buddha", ed by Coomaraswamy, 2000
- "Buddhist Texts through the Ages", ed by Conze, Horner, 1964
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\textsuperscript{171} Ven. Master Chin Kung, sd, P 4
Cf also Manish Meshram, “Role of Buddhist Education in Ancient India”, 2013

\textsuperscript{172} Wisadavet W., “The Buddhist Philosophy of Education. Approaches and Problems”, 2003, P 5
In the holy scriptures known as “sutras” or “suttas”, Buddha gives a series of teachings often in the form of dialogue that disclose a profound pedagogic method. Not surprisingly, Buddha’s pedagogy in the “sutras”/ “suttas” could be regarded as deeply Socratic: through the dialogue between master and disciple, the former brings the latter to experience by himself and reach his own conclusions, which constitutes the underlying spirit of any genuine humanistic pedagogy.

- In the Kalama-Sutta (Anguttara-Nikaya),\textsuperscript{173} Buddha requests us not to be subdued to any religious text, authority or tradition, neither by logical arguments nor by the finest speculation.

- In the Canki-Sutta (Majjhima-Nikaya),\textsuperscript{174} the master expresses the positive side of the previous request: instead of following anything outside us, we must verify by ourselves. He even exhorts us to examine by ourselves the teachings given by our spiritual master –instead of blindly believing what he has taught–.

- Especially interesting from an educational point of view would be the Assalayana-Sutta (Majjhima-Nikaya),\textsuperscript{175} where a young Brahmin, Assalayana, encounters Buddha to defend the cast system that the master has questioned. This beautiful dialogue constitutes a masterpiece of Socratic education. Whenever the young Brahmin presents the traditional brahmanical point of view, the master replies with a fact or a reflection that questions the doctrine and manifests its lack of proper foundation. It is important to realize how Buddha deconstructs the casts’ ideology: instead of frontally attacking the discourse or the person behind it, he brings the young Brahmin to ponder over it and realize by himself.

- The Uttiya-Sutta (Anguttara-Nikaya)\textsuperscript{176} conveys more insights into Buddha’s pedagogy. This Sutta presents Uttiya, a “paribbajaka” who comes to see Buddha. The “paribbajakas” were young mendicants from Brahmin origin with scholarly knowledge and metaphysical curiosity. Uttiya asks Buddha some metaphysical questions, in front of which the master replies with ambiguity, which means that Buddha is reluctant to provide a doctrine about the ultimate truth that would obviously be translated into a system of beliefs by the ordinary human mind. Instead, the master brings the human mind –Uttiya- towards self-inquiry –the cornerstone of integral education-. Before the metaphysical questions of the young Uttiya that seek for clear answers, doctrines and systems of beliefs, the master replies with silence –the silence of Buddha, which is the deepest

\textsuperscript{173} Cf Anguttara-Nikaya, I, 187/ 191.

\textsuperscript{174} Cf Majjhima-Nikaya, II, 164/ 177.

\textsuperscript{175} Cf Majjhima-Nikaya, II, 147/ 157.

\textsuperscript{176} Cf Anguttara-Nikaya, V, 193-195.
pedagogy, an invitation to shift from doctrines to self-inquiry, from outer beliefs to the inner experience of oneself, and ultimately, from alienation to freedom.

Vihara/ Sangha: Buddhist education through 25 centuries. 177

- According to the Buddhist tradition, Jetavana, near Sravasti, was the first Buddhist monastery, arranged by the merchant Anathapindada to welcome the master. We can presume that during Buddha’s life monasteries already spread in North India. The number of disciples, both religious and lay, was rapidly increasing, and monasteries –“viharas”- were created to host the new communities of monks –“sangha”-. During the dry season monks would spread the teachings –Dharma-, but during the rainy season travelling would be more difficult, for which monasteries were gradually set up in a number of locations.

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The Buddhist monastic community offers two ways of access according to the age of the candidate. Boys can join after 7/8 through the minor ordination – “pabbajja”-; through it, the boy becomes a novice – “samanera”. Buddha’s son, Rahula, would be the first novice in Buddhist history. After 20/21, men can join through the major ordination – “upasampada”-; through it, the man becomes a monk – “bhikkhu”. With the support of Ananda, the Master’s cousin and most beloved disciple, Buddha would also allow women to become nuns; his own auntie, Mahaprajapati or Prajapati Gautami, would be the first nun – “bhikkhuni”.

From the very beginning, the Buddhist monastic community – Sangha - was very keen on education, probably due to the fact that the monasteries had many elder children or adolescents as novices. We can get a lot of information about Buddhist education in the monasteries through the chronicles of several Chinese pilgrims who travelled throughout India, which means that at that time – end of the Ancient world/ beginning of the Middle Ages- Buddhist monasteries in India had become important cultural and educational spots whose prestige was irradiating through the whole of Asia till China. One of these Chinese pilgrims, Fa-Hien, visited India between 399 and 414. Hiuan-Tsang came to the subcontinent between 629 and 645. Another famous Chinese pilgrim would be Yi-Tsing, who stayed in India between 671 and 695.

According to the chronicles left by the Chinese pilgrims, the Buddhist Viharas not only taught the Buddhist scriptures but also general knowledge through a diversity of academic subjects, which means that both religious and lay students were welcome in the monasteries. Buddhist Viharas also promoted some kind of basic instruction for local children living in the surroundings of the monastery. From this point of view, we can say that Buddhist monasteries in India and Asia developed a schooling function together with a university vocation and the transmission of the Dharma. In conclusion, they became important cultural and educational hubs for many centuries.
Buddhist universities. The example of Nalanda.178

- The most famous Buddhist educational centres in India would be Kanchipura, Kashmir, Odantapuri, Vikramashila and Nalanda. These were large monasteries with a high number of teachers and students, both monks/novices and lay persons, teaching not only the Buddhist Dharma but also a general scope of academic subjects.

- Among these, Nalanda would probably be the most famous Buddhist “university”. Two Chinese pilgrims, Hsuan-Tsang and Yi-Tsing, visited this reputed educational hub. The location has been identified with modern Baragaon in Bihar. The famous philosopher Nagarjuna praised this university, and the kings of Magadhha granted to it a special recognition and status, so that some alumni would always be offered a good job in the royal administration.

- Nalanda comprised six big monasteries with a huge library; the architecture was grand and fine, with elaborate Buddhist carvings in the buildings. The number of monks, novices and lay students amounted to several thousands.

- In terms of age, this mythical university would welcome not only young men but also teenagers and probably elder children, for which it would be considered today as both a higher secondary school and college/university. We must remember that medieval universities in Europe also accepted boys from fourteen onwards. Students could be religious or lay. Many rich or influential families would send their sons to Nalanda due to its prestige that irradiated beyond the Himalaya to Central Asia and China. However, it was not easy to get an admission to Nalanda, due to its fame and high number of candidates; the exams for admission were severe, and many candidates failed.

- The most important facet of this famous Buddhist university would be its pedagogic spirit, totally akin to modern holistic education—and today, a source of inspiration in India itself in order to transform the predominant robotic system towards conceptual and integral education-.

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178 Cf - KEAY F.E., “Ancient Education in India”, 1992
- CHAUBE A. and S.P., Education in Ancient and Medieval India”, 1999
- GILES H.A., "The Travels of Fa-hsien (399-414). Or Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms", 1923
For the vast majority of children, the present educational system of India consists of blind rote memorizing without proper understanding. This mass of undigested and excessive information is just poured down into mechanical tests that do not leave any space for real education; both teachers and students only have time to prepare the tests, and both the educational institutes and the parents only take into account the number of marks, even if the student does not remember anything after coming out of the exam hall. The example of the Buddhist university of Nalanda, which was a product of the Indian genius, can help many people in India today realize the aberration of the present robotic system and radically change it for better. The example of Nalanda can also remind many Westerners that other civilizations such as India have made highly valuable contributions to the history of education. Nalanda can still echo with all the fundamental principles of humanistic and integral education. It stands as a brilliant achievement showing how the deepest philosophy of education can become a living reality in this world.

According to the Indian scholar Manish Meshram:

“The main aim of Buddhist education is to make a free man, an intelligent man, a wise, moral, talented, non-violent and secular man.”

- Sanskrit grammar was fundamental in Nalanda’s syllabus. Other important subjects were composition –prose and verse-, Buddhist history and scriptures, logics and metaphysics/ philosophy; medicine was also offered on an optional basis. India had a great mathematical and philosophical tradition, certainly evolved by the “Hindu” Gurukulas but also by Buddhist universities like Nalanda.
- The humanities were equally promoted, and together with the schools of debate, Nalanda encouraged poetry and literary activities and contests. Even more significant, this University appreciated the value of music, and chanting constituted another valued co-curricular activity very present in the campus life.
- Even physical exercise was highly praised, and the practice of long walks beyond the monastic compound became a fundamental part of Nalanda’s daily life.
- The major teaching method was oral, like in the Hindu/ Brahmanical Gurukula – although Nalanda had one of the best libraries of India at that time-. The educational practice certainly incorporated the memorization of scriptures, but this was totally different from the present robotic system, since Buddhist universities like Gurukulas encouraged conceptual understanding, discussion and freedom of thought.

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179 Manish Meshram, “Role of Buddhist Education in Ancient India”, 2013, P 8
• Needless to say, this Buddhist university included the practice of meditation and inner work; the student was brought from the second to the third eye of knowledge, from understanding to experience, from the outer to the inner world, from the surface to deeper layers of consciousness and reality. It is well-known that the Buddhist tradition offers a very rich spectrum of meditative techniques and instruments of inner work.

• In Nalanda and other Buddhist universities, the educational process was two-fold, comprising both lectures and tuitions/tutorials, which means that an individualized attention was given to students through some kind of child-centred pedagogy. In fact, the core of Nalanda’s pedagogy was not the lecture in the auditorium but the personalized human relationship between master and disciple in the line of the Vedantic Gurukula.

• Another striking feature of Nalanda would be the community spirit in spite of the diversity of opinions and schools in an atmosphere of freedom of thought. Nalanda was so open-minded that it welcomed not only Buddhist students but people coming from other religious traditions. Hence, the population was not homogeneous at all, but still there was a profound respect for everyone and through this diversity a profound sense of unity arose in harmony.

• The dialectical or discussion method was implemented in parallel to what would be termed today intercultural or interreligious dialogue. But the foundation for this culture of dialogue and respect was the human quality or the human relationship, genuine bonds of affection between students and between students and teachers, and the depth of real community life.

• For all these reasons, Nalanda became a major open forum of India, a genuine “vivarium” in a spirit of dialogue, freedom of thought and unity through diversity. Few times in history the world has had such a cultural and educational jewel, still a lighthouse for the present educational scenario, darkened by the robotic system, over-discipline and competition in India and Asia, and by an academic/rationalistic reductionism in the West that overlooks other dimensions of humanity and reality.

• In conclusion, Nalanda offered all the major features of what today would be considered as integral education. Not only the syllabus was comprehensive and global, covering all the domains of humanity; but also, it was a child-centred and value-based pedagogy directed towards freedom of thought and self-inquiry, where relation, dialogue and community life were equally fundamental.

• To sum up, a genuine experiment of integral education in the transition from the Ancient world to the Middle Ages in the Indian subcontinent and within the spirit of Buddhist philosophy.
Conclusion.

Prof. R. Panikkar strove throughout his academic and intellectual career after intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, convinced that Western culture still carries along a deep silent inertia of cultural imperialism. In spite of some rhetoric and discourses, most of the general textbooks and syllabi are not intercultural yet, and we can easily realize that Indian or Buddhist education are usually absent from academic teaching and publication.

If we consider integral education for instance, we must acknowledge that the Western world only takes into account the renowned Western educationists, such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Steiner, Montessori, Dewey or Kilpatrick, while the major educationists of India are usually ignored. However, they are very present in Indian life, and they can offer invaluable insights to the Western public too. The educational philosophy of Indian sages and educationists such as Vivekananda, R. Tagore, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Sathya Sai Baba, etc, is as important as the contributions from the Western pedagogues mentioned above, but Western culture only examines the Western authors while it easily overlooks what comes from other civilizations.

The cultural phenomenon described here also applies to the Buddhist tradition. There are virtually no books in our bookstalls or libraries about Buddhist education. Almost all the handbooks or essays presenting Buddhism as a religion or philosophy do not even contemplate that there might be a Buddhist pedagogy. This paper tries to show to the Western public that there has been a Buddhist educational philosophy that can be undoubtedly enriching for us. The same reflection would be valid for the whole of India as suggested above. Most of the books about Indian philosophy or Hinduism forget the educational philosophy of this major tradition and civilization.

Through this introductory paper we try to open the academic and cultural scenario of the Western world to the depth and beauty of other pedagogic traditions, the Buddhist for instance—in other papers we do the same with the Indian/Hindu tradition-. Let us hope that all the efforts undergone by Prof. Panikkar will be fruitful, and that the Western world will be more open in the future to a real intercultural dialogue—also in the field of education-. This paper constitutes a humble contribution in this direction.

W. Wisadavet explores the possibilities of developing an educational system based upon Buddhist philosophy that may be truly considered as Buddhist education. The author makes it clear how complex it can be to develop a genuine Buddhist education

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today in the post-modern world even in Buddhist countries such as Thailand, that have
obviously been modernized and Westernized.\footnote{Cf Wisadavet W., “The Buddhist Philosophy of Education. Approaches and Problems”, 2003}

Precisely for this reason it is even more important to come back to the very spirit of Buddhist education, not mere theoretical teaching of Dhamma in the very frame of modern mainstream schooling, but the genuine philosophy of education of Buddha Himself and the Buddhist tradition following Him as exemplified in its educational institutions. This certainly requires to be aware of the crucial issue of the paradigm as emphasized above. Buddhist philosophy of education implies another world view or paradigm as compared to modern mainstream schooling. If we are not aware of this fundamental matter we may overlook the main points and we will undoubtedly distort or misunderstand Buddhist philosophy of education.

This is what this paper tries to offer to the contemporary reader, hoping that he or she might awaken an interest to do further research into the genuine educational philosophy of this great master of humanity and this great tradition of human history –by the way, the author is not a Buddhist but a Christian, however trained in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue by Prof. Raimon Panikkar-.

Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi makes a sound reflection on parallel lines from the Buddhist Publication Society:

“One major reason for this sad state of affairs (mainstream schooling) is a loss of vision regarding the proper aims of education. (…) Such a conception of the aim of education (in the modern world) is quite different from that consistent with Buddhist principles. (…) Above all an educational policy guided by Buddhist principles must aim to instil values as much as to impart information. It must be directed, not merely towards developing social and commercial skills, but towards nurturing in the students the seeds of spiritual nobility.”\footnote{Bhikkhu Bodhi ven., “Aims of Buddhist Education”, 1997, p 1-2}
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Section IX.

European Philosophy: Plato, Kant, Rousseau, and Hegel.
Introduction.

The XXth century has witnessed the emergence of holistic value-based pedagogies both in Europe and North America that have deeply questioned mainstream schooling while making a strong case for values and ethics in the educational process. In the old continent, Steiner and Montessori have been the major sources of inspiration within a more spiritual world view; in the new world, Dewey and Kilpatrick have played a major role. It is commonly acknowledged that these modern forerunners of integral value-based education were somewhat anticipated by the pioneering work of Rousseau and his direct heirs, Pestalozzi and Froebel. But Western educators and scholars have often forgotten that holistic value education can be supported by the giants of European philosophy, in particular, Plato, Kant and Hegel, and with the last one, the whole movement of Romanticism and German Idealism –with their central notion of Bildung-.

Kant’s philosophy acquires a special significance, since nobody will question that he represents the peak of European Enlightenment, and nobody can deny either that modern civilization in the Western world pretends to be based upon the ideals of Enlightenment. This paper tries to show that this influential philosopher paid attention to education –which is often overlooked-, and even more important, that his educational philosophy is undoubtedly value-based, deeply ethical and also integral, much closer—in depth- to Hegel than many scholars would assume, and certainly much closer to Hegel than to mainstream schooling.

Hegel, and with him German Idealism and Romanticism, has also outlined an educational philosophy that is ethical, value-based and integral within a spiritual/ metaphysical world view while consciously being the heir of Plato. The cultural influence of Idealism and Romanticism in Western civilization cannot be underestimated, which reveals the historical significance of this kind of Idealistic and Romantic pedagogy - obviously connected with renowned figures such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel-.

Last but not least, Plato advocated in a totally different context a philosophy of education that is deeply coherent with modern Idealism, Romanticism and even Kant, since it opens the pedagogic process to an integral horizon while emphasizing at its very core the ethical foundation within a spiritual/ metaphysical vision.

It is widely accepted that Plato has had a tremendous impact throughout the history of Western philosophy, but we must take into account more specifically the Platonic influence upon Goethe and the whole Romantic movement and Philosophical Idealism.

“Over the years Goethe came to have the highest regard for Plato’s accomplishment. (...) Goethe displayed his anti-Newtonian stance and adherence to a Platonic view of Nature.”\textsuperscript{183}

\textsuperscript{183} Lillyman W.J., 1893, p 129.
In this paper we try to show that this “anti-Newtonian stance and adherence to a Platonic view” stressed by Goethe lies at the very core of integral value-based education within a spiritual/ metaphysical world view as defended by Hegel and the Romantics and after them by authors such as R. Steiner. It is well-known that Steiner repeatedly made reference to both Goethe and Plato as major sources of inspiration.

Certainly, Kant -and with him Enlightenment- would not outline this kind of mystical/ metaphysical horizon nor a clear adherence to a Platonic view. Still, Kant would share with Idealism and Romanticism a sharp criticism of the limitations inherent to the typically utilitarian mainstream schooling, and would share with them an ardent defence of the ethical value-based dimension of education towards human emancipation.

In this paper we also try to show that this kind of spiritual/ metaphysical world view is common to both Europe/ the West and India/ the East. And in the modern world, both European and Indian spiritual philosophers –such as Steiner or Aurobindo- have been fully aware that their metaphysical vision constitutes a dissident thought in front of the predominant paradigm –which is, to use Goethe’s words again, Newtonian, that is, materialistic, mechanistic and utilitarian, and ultimately technocratic-.

Within this prevailing utilitarianism –also at the academic level- the weight of the historical/ cultural context has been overemphasized to the detriment of the comprehension of reality itself. Prof. Raimon Panikkar questioned this frame of mind that has overlooked some aspects of reality. Panikkar used the term “homeomorphic equivalents” to refer to human experiences –such as the mystical/ metaphysical- that are universal though expressed through relative contextual expression.

In Panikkar words, “Homeomorphism (...) represents a functional equivalence discovered through a topological transformation. Brahman and God are not merely two analogous names; they are homeomorphic.”

Therefore, spiritual/ metaphysical philosophers from various lands and centuries (Europe/ India, Antiquity/ modern world) have expressed a world view and a view of education that in spite of relative context and expression present profound similarities because they are rooted in common experiences that are human experiences, and by being human they are universal; they constitute “homeomorphic equivalents” through topological transformation.

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I. ANCIENT GREECE: PLATO AND NEOPLATONISM.


As we said above, Plato’s education would be holistic, since it embraces academic knowledge, vocational skills, physical exercise, music, art, ethics and philosophy/wisdom. Though his educational philosophy leans towards meritocracy and aristocracy, still he prefigures later democratic philosophy of education. Plato proposes the differentiation of children according to their intrinsic qualities suitable to the various social groups; the most gifted would receive the highest education so that they could act as guardians of the city. From this point of view, he would oppose a demagogic imposition of the same pedagogy for all irrespective of the talent or inclination of every child. Any sensible educationist today would acknowledge that this kind of populist standardization has not worked in the modern age; hence Plato’s ideas would make some sense. Moreover, his educational philosophy would be democratic in a crucial point: talent may be found in children irrespective of the social class where they were born, for which his proposal would be purely meritocratic, never elitist as we usually understand it–through inheritance–.

The educational philosophy in “The Republic”:

Socrates’ first account of education:

- Aim of Guardians’ education
- Musical education
- Narrative style of tales
- Gymnastic Education.

Socrates’ second account of education:

- Aims of education
- Knowledge of The Good
- The Cave Analogy
- The Philosopher-King’s education.
Socratic education in Plato’s “Republic”.

The whole dialogue known as the “Republic”, which leads to the Cave Analogy, appears to be an example of Socratic education. Nevertheless, many of Plato’s dialogues are concerned with education, which the great philosopher was certainly very interested in. His legacy has inspired Western thought for 25 centuries till today. The most comprehensive and mature holistic pedagogy in the modern Western world, Steiner’s Waldorf Schools, has been deeply influenced by Goethe and Plato.

Especially significant for education would be the Cave Analogy, presenting prisoners in a cave, chained and unable to turn their faces, seeing only what is directly in front of them, that is, shadows cast by objects behind them which are illuminated by firelight further behind; the objects are carried along a low wall behind the prisoners, and the bearers of the objects are hidden behind the wall. This well-known metaphor refers to the greatest metaphysical illusion of the human mind, explained by the great philosopher of India, Shankara, through the metaphor of the rope and the snake. In Plato’s words, the shadows of artefacts constitute the only reality people in this situation would recognize.\footnote{Cf “The Republic”, book VII.}

The implications for education are tremendous: mainstream schooling teaches students about the shadows, whereas a more profound kind of education—inegral or holistic—must help the growing human being to become aware of the illusion and grasp the deepest truth. The prisoners of the cave do not realize that they live in total illusion, cut from truth or reality—both concepts are expressed by the same word in Sanskrit, Satya-. True education must bring the growing human being from illusion to truth or reality—to its deepest metaphysical layers-. In this educational process, the approach must be holistic, and ethics and philosophy acquire a prominent role.

Even the exercise for the body—“gymnastike”—is primarily aimed at the soul, and of course cultural studies—“mousike”. Story-telling, poetry, music and singing, dance, should instil in the youth’s soul rhythm, harmony, grace, good character and love of beauty. However, mathematics and philosophy play a primordial role to operate this shift in consciousness from the illusion to the ultimate truth. “Gymnastike”, “mousike”, mathematics and philosophy would be complementary facets of a holistic pedagogy, successive steps in the educational process or upward journey allowing the prisoner/human mind moving up and out of the cave/illusion into the light of day/metaphysical truth or reality. Here lies the major goal of education according to Plato, which corresponds to the transformative aim defended by the forerunners of integral education: the transformation of the human being towards a more ethical being and higher states of consciousness and reality.\footnote{Cf “The Republic”, book III: 398-403 and book VII: 522/525, and “The Laws”, book I: 627-631, book II: 653-664 and book VII: 796-802, 809-813 and 816-822.}
The typically modern scholar has often misunderstood Plato’s philosophy, so akin to Indian Vedanta in depth—and also to the conclusions of contemporary quantum physics stating the primacy of consciousness and its transformation towards higher levels. This pedagogic ascent from the cave to the day light is basically seen as a cognitive process, whereas it is clear that it has an ontological depth transcending the mere intellectual level—the only level that modern culture has acknowledged. Like Shankara and also like quantum physicists, Plato was aware of other layers of consciousness and reality, and the Socratic pedagogy accompanies the growing youth through this metaphysical ladder from lowest to higher planes. Plato’s educational philosophy is nothing else but mystical philosophy, the most emblematic representative in Western civilization for Philosophical Idealism.

In this kind of world view, ethics cannot be reduced to a merely cognitive/mental process of the ordinary mind nor to merely sociological/cultural factors; ethics is ultimately grounded in metaphysics, in the awakening to higher levels of reality and consciousness through this upward journey of the soul from the cave of illusion to the light of higher truths. This is the theoretical foundation for genuine integral value-based education as expounded by R. Steiner in the West or by Aurobindo in India, something amazingly coherent with the discoveries of quantum physics and astrophysics in the last decades, in particular the notions of a multiverse and a multidimensional holographic cosmos incorporating an implicate order, a unified field, hyper-dimensions or akashic fields, etc, under the primacy of consciousness—a multidimensional and holographic consciousness too.

The Socratic pedagogy is essentially ethical, transformative and liberating, and all this means metaphysical and spiritual—mystical. Platonic education attempts to free the soul from the illusions turning it upward while reorienting it towards the awareness of the highest truth. The main aim of Plato’s educational philosophy is nothing else than self-realization—in terms deeply akin to Buddha or Vedanta. Here lies the greatest formulation of Philosophical Idealism and holistic value-based education for the Western world—something that great philosophers of India like Aurobindo will always acknowledge.

B. Neo-Platonism till the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

The key ideas of Plato’s philosophy of education are not totally original; many aspects of his pedagogic design directly stem from the Pythagorean tradition, and even from older schools like Orphism. In any case, Plato inherited the most profound mystical philosophy from Greece and gave a new shape to it, leaving the major legacy of Philosophical Idealism for centuries to come in the Western world.

Plato also founded a memorable school, the Academy, that would last for a long period of time, and would still be revived by spiritually inclined scholars and intellectuals in Renaissance. A grand tradition of Neo-Platonism has developed the Platonic heritage for 25 centuries. Already in the Ancient world, a whole lineage of Greek and Roman learned men continued to design curricula for boys from the higher classes under Plato’s aura. This Neo-platonic education would be transported into the Middle Ages with the needed adaptation to the new Christian context.

The Neo-platonic syllabus crystallized through two academic frames: the Trivium (grammar, rhetoric and logic) and the Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music theory). With Roman authors such as Cicero and Seneca, the Neo-platonic legacy from Greece was reshaped as the Artes Liberales, suitable for the education of a Roman boy from a good family, though studied not for practical reasons but for the sake of knowledge as a training of thinking.

In the Middle Ages, several authors such as Martianus Capella or Isidore of Seville developed the Ancient curricula with the needed adaptation to a Christian world. The first universities like Paris-Sorbonne or Oxford were still built under the influence of these old ideas. However, as it always happens in human condition, the medieval syllabus became a dull dry scholastic shell void of the depth and inner life of the original Platonic pedagogy, or the previous Pythagorean or Orphic philosophy.

That is why the Renaissance genius, in its quest for freedom of thought and its spirit of inquiry, would question and reject the ossified scholastic heritage from the Gothic period. At the same time, there would be a rebirth – “renaissance” in French- of the true spirit of the Platonic heritage and the whole of Greek civilization. The greatest man from Italian Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci, was imbibed with this new Platonic revival, and the creation of the Platonic Academy of Florence or Florentine Academy is meaningful enough.

Later on, the deepest spirit of Platonic philosophy would nurture the last great cultural movement of Western history: Romanticism. Even the most mature system of integral education in modern Europe cannot be understood without Plato’s influence; it is well known that R. Steiner inherited Platonic mystical philosophy together with the major Romantic ideas, in particular through Goethe – who was in his turn already influenced by Plato-. Hence, we can reasonably conclude that all the history of Philosophical Idealism and integral value-based education in the Western world has evolved under the light of Plato’s aura.
II. MODERN EUROPE: ENLIGHTENMENT AND ROMANTICISM.

THE BILDUNG.
KANT, ROUSSEAU, PESTALOZZI, FROEBEL AND HEGEL.

1. Kant and European Enlightenment.

We cannot understand such a great cultural movement of Europe and the Western world as Romanticism without the Platonic legacy; but we cannot understand it either without taking into account the influence of the brilliant professor from Koenigsberg (Kaliningrad) who would decisively shape European and Western Enlightenment: Immanuel Kant, whose ideas about education and ethics are particularly important for the Western world. Romanticism is the heir of both mystical philosophy and Enlightenment, Plato and Kant, and probably, in this dialogue between the wisdom of spiritual philosophy and the emancipating project of Enlightenment lies the future of Western civilization and our world.

The XVIIIth century of Enlightenment has been described as the age of pedagogics. Just like many other Enlightened thinkers, Kant turned his sharp attention to education on ethical grounds. The major legacy of European Enlightenment would probably be subjectivity: to see the human being as a subject. Heirs of the XVIIIth century like A. Renaut acknowledge that Enlightened subjectivity has been degraded into individualism and alienation by the lowest tendencies of the modern age. However, this was not the Enlightened dream of human dignity, and the Western world and the whole mankind owe Kant a debt of gratitude for his deepest formulation of the human subject.

As a professor in a faculty of philosophy, Kant was required to give lectures on education, and in general terms he took great pains to have a suitable pedagogic attitude towards students. Especially meaningful would be his lecture “On Pedagogics” (1776-1787).
The two cornerstones of integral value-based education are already present in Kant’s pedagogy.

- The transformative basis of holistic value-based pedagogies is explicit in Kant’s philosophy when he argues that children should not be educated simply to achieve the present level but towards a possible better future level of the human race—in ethical terms. In the philosopher’s words, it is delightful to imagine that human nature can be increasingly enhanced through education.\(^\text{188}\)

- The ethical foundation of integral value-based pedagogies becomes clear in Kant’s statements on education when he concludes that good education is itself the source of all that is good in the world.\(^\text{189}\)

- Finally, anybody in the field of integral value education can only share Kant’s Enlightened dream of human dignity lying in a mature ethical subject that has reached the historical majority of age.

- Moreover, the cosmopolitan spirit of modern holistic pedagogies and the International Baccalaureate is also present at the core of Kant’s philosophy of education; for him, educational strategies must follow a cosmopolitan spirit with a commitment to all that is best in the world.\(^\text{190}\)

### Ethical education based upon human values finds a solid foundation in Kant’s philosophy.

- From his point of view, the educational process must develop in the growing child an attitude so as to choose good purposes only—that is, those which may at the same time be the purposes of everyone, and therefore may secure universal approval. To mould the moral character of children by imparting moral rectitude should be one of the major functions of education.\(^\text{191}\)

- This moralizing function is indissolubly twined to the dignity of the human being and its coming of age towards the historical majority of age and emancipation of humanity.

- However, Kant is aware that this constitutes a historical process, in which education has a major role to play. Then, good education can bring about a gradual improvement of mankind. It is a task for many generations, each taking one step further towards the perfection of humanity.\(^\text{192}\)

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\(^\text{188}\) Cf Kant, 1989, I. p. 74-78.

\(^\text{189}\) Cf Kant, 1989, I. p.73.

\(^\text{190}\) Cf Kant, 1989, IV. p.150.

\(^\text{191}\) Cf Kant, 1989, I. p. 82-83.

\(^\text{192}\) Cf Kant, 1989, I. p. 77.
For Kant, human dignity is universal; education must teach a rich child to give the same respect to poorer kids. Compliance with universal human rights must be at the very foundation of value-based education.\textsuperscript{193}

We can easily realize that the Enlightened project of Kant’s philosophy provides the soundest philosophical foundation to integral value-based education.

In spite of contextual differences, Kant’s discourse on ethics and values within the educational process is strikingly coherent with that of modern sages of India such as Vivekananda or Sathya Sai Baba. It is amazing to realize that somebody who left a poor school of rural India at 14 –Sathya Sai Baba- provides an entire discourse on education in human values deeply akin to Kant’s philosophy of education. The godfather of the Hindu Renaissance and Neo-Vedanta –Vivekananda- also put forward many ideas totally coherent with Kant. This kind of parallelism may help the advocates of holistic value-based pedagogies become aware of the philosophical depth of this kind of education in front of the materialistic and utilitarian reductionism of mainstream schooling. From Kant in Europe to Vivekananda or Sathya Sai Baba in India, we get a philosophical reaction in front of the prevailing utilitarianism inherent to modern mainstream schooling; Kant could see the beginning of the modern school in XVIIIth century Germany, Vivekananda and Sathya Sai Baba witnessed the development of modern schooling by the British in XIXth/XXth century India; in the three of them, the humanistic reaction claims for an ethical value-based pedagogy that is an education for consciousness and an education of the human being as such –beyond mere functional academics-.

With Kant’s work in our hands, do we need any further justification in front of that army of cynics or sceptics who were already criticized by the Enlightened philosopher from Koenigsberg? Holistic value education –both in the West or the East, with Steiner or Vivekananda- manifests the sharp limitation of mainstream schooling consisting of reducing the educational process to mere utilitarian academics –valueless and soulless-. This is exactly the major critique that Kant put forward at the end of the XVIIIth century. Kant and the whole of Enlightenment shall clearly support the claims for integral value-based education in our time.

The philosopher from Koenigsberg brought other invaluable contributions to ethics and pedagogic thought, like the middle path between freedom and discipline/compulsion, the orientation of academic training towards free thinking, or the notion of a cosmopolitan education towards world citizenship—which is at the core of the prestigious International Baccalaureate-. Kant is well known for his transcendental-critical method of philosophical inquiry, and he is commonly considered to be the founder of German Idealism and probably the greatest figure of European Enlightenment.

\textsuperscript{193} Cf Kant, 1989, IV, p.149.
Unfortunately, some scholars have overlooked the significance of his educational philosophy for holistic value-based pedagogies. He can be regarded as one of the modern forerunners of integral education in human values, and his Enlightened pedagogy can certainly support the historical strive towards holistic value education beyond mere academics and technocracy.

2. The precursor of Romanticism: Rousseau.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1778) wrote the most influential treatise on education after Plato’s “Republic”. In fact, this Romantic precursor presented a theory of human development quite different from Plato, though he paid his respects to the great philosopher of Greece. Whereas Plato held that children are born with various tendencies suitable to different social groups—not through inheritance-, Rousseau saw a developmental process common to all human beings. This constitutes a natural process that sensible pedagogy must take care of without pre-imposing upon the child artificial constructs made by adults or society. Needless to say, both perspectives can be seen as complementary.

For the forerunner of Romanticism, the first manifestation of this natural developmental process in terms of behaviour would be curiosity, something so highly praised by Albert Einstein in education. For Rousseau and the Romantics, education can never be the “tabula rasa” of John Locke and Liberalism, but rather it should be an active process deriving from the child’s nature adequately guided by the adult respectful of the tendencies of the child.

In his major work, “Emile” (1762), Rousseau warns against the negative influence of corrupt society, for which he advocates educational spaces removing the child from social life and raising him up in natural settings. Many educational institutions in the modern world, especially in India, have followed this typically Romantic mood. Rousseau is convinced that human beings are inherently good, but they become corrupted by the evils of society. For this, he recommends everyone to be in touch with Nature and to be as natural as possible.

In his famous “The Social Contract” (1762), he explores in depth his political philosophy, centred upon a social contract where people recognize a collective general will supposed to represent the common good or public interest. All citizens should participate in this process. The famous cry of liberty, equality and fraternity, certainly corrupted by the French Revolution and the subsequent French Republics, originally stems from Rousseau’s political philosophy, which has tremendous implications in education—fully developed in the immortal “Emile”.

Cf Rousseau, 1993, p. 66.
Rousseau’s treatise on pedagogics outlines the individual tuition of a boy in line with the principles of natural education and in coherence with “The Social Contract”. Education should try to preserve as much as possible the original perfect nature of the child. Through education we must make the citizen good, says Rousseau. Two centuries later this statement would be echoed by a major spiritual master of India, Sathya Sai Baba, who repeatedly advised us to see good, do good, be good.

Rousseau’s model will always be Nature—a great Romantic theme—, and his influential philosophy will stress wholeness and harmony within a deeply ethical world view, for which the illustrious thinker from Geneva can be regarded as the direct forerunner of integral value-based education for the modern age.

- Holistic value-based pedagogies historically reacted against the overemphasis on the academic lecture method in mainstream schooling and also against the child’s treatment as a small adult irrespective of the characteristics of the different age groups. Rousseau anticipated this historical revolution brought by the greatest educationists of the XXth century such as Steiner, Montessori or Dewey.
- The Romantic philosopher put forward a view of children as different from adults, innocent and naturally good, entitled to freedom and happiness.\(^{195}\)
- He also insisted on the idea that the growing child develops through different stages, hence different pedagogies must be designed for the different periods according to the features of each age group. Steiner, Montessori or Dewey can be seen as the heirs of Rousseau from this point of view.\(^{196}\)

- Another main feature of integral education would be its child-centred orientation. Rousseau was also one of the first intellectuals in the modern age to defend that the educational process must be individualized in order to unfold the unique nature of every child.\(^{197}\)
- Moreover, he strongly defended the self-education of the child, especially after the age of reason, that is around 11/12, something that has been incorporated by many schools of holistic education in the XXth century.\(^{198}\)

\(^{195}\) Cf Rousseau, 1993, p. 43, p. 50-51 and p. 100.

\(^{196}\) Cf Rousseau, 1993, the five chapters I-V corresponding to the five stages of growth and hence education. Cf p. 109.

\(^{197}\) Cf Rousseau, 1993, II. p. 113.

• If we analyze the International Baccalaureate, whose headquarters are in Rousseau’s birthplace, Geneva (something almost symbolical), we can immediately realize the emphasis given on free creative thinking by this prestigious syllabus. This fundamental point of genuine academic excellence was also anticipated by Rousseau, who always underlined the importance of developing ideas by ourselves and make sense of everything in our own way.199

• Rousseau rejected the authoritarian role of the teacher, while claiming the etymological meaning of the Latin “auctoritas” –closer to the spirit of the Indian Gurukula–.

• In his immortal novel, the boy, Emile, is encouraged to draw his own conclusions from his own experience—which lies at the core of the International Baccalaureate and holistic pedagogies like Steiner’s or Dewey’s.

• Rousseau defended other pedagogic tools which are characteristic of holistic schools, such as: observation and direct experience, learning by doing, research and discovery, play-way methods, teaching through the living example, etc.

• In parallel to this holistic pedagogy, the teacher is defined by him as a guide—something taken up again by Montessori or Dewey–.

• For Rousseau, freedom should be combined with a pedagogic use of discipline towards a positive transformation of character.

The natural development of the child and education through stages.

According to Rousseau, the educational process must unfold the natural development of the child with its inner tendencies and skills. The ideal boy, Emile, should become a good human being before becoming a good soldier, churchman or magistrate. From Rousseau’s point of view, education should basically aim at making the child a real human being. Here, the Romantic educationist anticipates the most reputed value-based education from India with sages such as Vivekananda or Sathya Sai Baba, who stressed the formation of character and human quality or values above academics.

Nevertheless, the concrete aims of education must change according to the age groups. For Rousseau, the child is not an adult in the miniature, and childhood is not uniform either, for which the different stages of the child’s development require suitable pedagogies for each age group. Here, the XVIIIth century philosopher preconceives the developmental psychology of the XXth century –Piaget- and the concern for childhood of Maria Montessori.

• **Infancy and childhood: from birth to eleven.**

  At the initial stage, it is far more important to foster the development of the child’s body and its senses. The infant can be taught many things through a normal conversation that also develops linguistic ability.

  From six onwards, Rousseau is still reluctant to use text-books; instead, he prefers to give the child a chance to learn through direct experience and observation. Here again Rousseau anticipates major themes of the XXth century holistic pedagogies. Rousseau does not want Emile’s mind to be stuffed with loads of information through dry bookish learning. Emile must be given freedom to play and move at his own will –something impossible in the typical classroom of mainstream schooling--; only then, can he go through a variety of experiences and learn through different activities --which will be later advocated by Dewey or Kilpatrick-. The educator’s role consists at the most of arranging pedagogic spaces, contexts and tools for this free natural self-learning of the child --which constitutes a major theme of the Montessori method-. At this stage, morality must be taught through the natural consequences of deeds.

• **Adolescence: from twelve to fifteen.** At this stage the adolescent is ready for a more formal curriculum, which, however, should not be reduced to the classical academic subjects, but should also incorporate all the arts and crafts, social life and manual training. Rousseau anticipates once more the holistic nature of the curriculum in integral pedagogies. Even at this stage, Rousseau would warn against an abuse of lecture methods and bookish knowledge, still defending direct experience and self-learning.

• **Youth: from sixteen to twenty.** At the last stage, Rousseau insists on spiritual and moral education together with cognitive/academic training --in deep coherence with R. Steiner-. Experience should still be cultivated beyond books.

A. Pestalozzi.

J.H. Pestalozzi (1746-1827) was a Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer who inherited key ideas from Rousseau and who exemplified the “Weltanschauung” – world view – of Romanticism.

In 1801, he gave a full account of his educational philosophy in “How Gertrude Teaches her Children”. He established his own school at Burgdorf. He even did his best to try to influence Napoleon on a scheme of good national education. As we can easily imagine, the politician did not pay so much attention to the educationist.

Pestalozzi tried to reform the educational system of his time on two particular points:

- He opposed both corporal punishment
- and rote memorization.

Two structural flaws that have been erased from European schooling but are still massively common in Indian and Asian contemporary schools. Pestalozzi’s reform in Europe two centuries back is still pending in India and Asia.

Pestalozzi was praised by some of the finest spirits of that time, like Fichte, Humboldt or Mme de Stael. He stands as a lighthouse of the educational reform that was started by Kant, Rousseau and Hegel, and would be culminated by Steiner, Montessori and Dewey.

- From an oppressive schooling based on lecture methods, memorizing, military discipline and physical punishment, treating children as adults irrespective of the age group;
- towards a humanistic, ethical and integral kind of education respectful of childhood, the specific needs of each developmental stage and the unique nature of every child.

The reform is still not finished, and in Asian countries like India we still must brandish these great educational reformers to eradicate massive flaws like rote memorizing or physical punishment.
B. Froebel. Pestalozzi’s heir.

F. Froebel (1782- 1852) was a German pedagogue disciple of Pestalozzi. He highly contributed to lay down the foundations of humanistic integral education.

- He insisted, for instance, on the unique needs and capabilities of every child, requiring a child-centred pedagogy.
- Hence, he understood the child as a living whole.
- He was also one of the founders of the modern idea of kindergarten; in fact, he was the intellectual who coined the word, now commonly used in German and English.

Froebel directly worked with Pestalozzi in Switzerland, though he started his educational career in Frankfurt. His major pedagogic treatise would be “The Education of Man”. He founded several magazines and institutes. He even designed educational play materials known as Froebel’s gifts.

This great educationist of the Romantic movement clearly prepared the pedagogic innovations of Steiner, Montessori and Dewey by emphasizing the child’s need for activity and playing, and the pedagogic role of both. All the play-way and experiential methods in vogue today were anticipated by Froebel, who brought a decisive contribution to question the authoritarian school system of that time and transform it towards a more humanistic and holistic pedagogy.

Among the activities introduced by Froebel, we could mention:

- Self-directed plays, singing, dancing and gardening.
- The Romantic pedagogue coined another important concept: Freiarbeit/ free work, while he understood in depth all the pedagogic potential of the game and play-way methods.
- In general terms, Froebel understood activities as self-activity developing creativity and self-discipline with genuine freedom.

Already in the XIXth century, and obviously at the beginning of the XXth, a number of kindergarten were established throughout Germany, other European countries and the USA, sometimes using Froebel’s name. In 1892, some of his followers created a College of Education in London.

His name would soon become a synonym to educational reform, and we can certainly consider this Romantic pedagogue, disciple of Pestalozzi, as one of the most illustrious forerunners of humanistic and integral education in the modern age.
4. The German Bildung: integral value-based education “avant la lettre”.

The German term “Bildung” originated in the XVIth century in Pietistic theology, according to which Christians should cultivate (Bildung) their talents and dispositions in coherence with the image of God—which is already there, innate in the soul-. Still closer to the meaning of the Sanskrit Bala Vikas, the XVIIIth century godfather of Jewish Enlightenment, Moses Mendelssohn, used the German term in the sense of unfolding one’s potential.

It is not surprising that German Enlightenment, Idealism and Romanticism produce similar notions to those of Vedanta and Indian Philosophy. The German Bildung totally corresponds to the Sanskrit Bala Vikas—the boy/child’s blossoming from within—and in this correspondence, German educational philosophy at the time of Enlightenment, Idealism and Romanticism lays the path for modern integral education.

It is meaningful enough to realize that from Mendelssohn’s standpoint, Bildung becomes a synonym of Enlightenment. The educationist J.H. Campe developed the pedagogic implications of the Bildung, and through the whole Romantic period Bildung became a symbol of true education and liberation from oppression. Herder, for instance, defines Bildung as human development into some sort of organic unity that will gradually unfold its deepest nature and abilities while it will also contribute to social progress. Herder’s educational philosophy is essentially transformative—the quintessence of integral education—education as Bildung will transform human beings and hence social life.

After Herder, Goethe brought another decisive contribution to the German Bildung theory. The younger Goethe of the Sturm und Drang was totally Romantic, while the elder Goethe of Weimar Classicism tried to encompass the deepest insights of Romanticism with the clear reason of Enlightenment. The genius of Weimar also sought the Kantian emancipation of humanity, and his vision is deeply integral or holistic since it attempts to unify all the domains of humanity, body and mind, reason and feeling, thought and intuition.

Goethe’s novel “Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship” stands as the paradigm of the Bildungsroman, the novel of formation. The protagonist strives for rising above a soulless bourgeois life, and aims at unfolding and serving a deeper or greater Good. Goethe’s novel announces holistic pedagogies of the XXth century, while it echoes the integral education of Upanishadic India: the formation of the human being does not consist of imitating social patterns outside, but rather of unveiling the hidden inner character that is unique to everybody. Not surprisingly, Goethe would inspire the major figure of modern holistic pedagogies, R. Steiner.

Gardner’s contemporary Theory of Multiple Intelligences, supporting holistic value-based pedagogies, is already outlined by Goethe, who clearly states that the educational process must take into account the diversity of talents that human beings present. A mature society will allow wide scope for the unique development of each person, which will globally generate the desirable social harmony. According to Goethe, self-realization and social responsibility are indissoluble.
5. Hegel and the German Bildung.

Another major figure of German Idealism, Hegel (1770 – 1831), was certainly influenced by Goethe and his neo-humanism. In particular, Hegel was first and foremost concerned with the notion of Bildung in terms of a double process: the self-development of the individual human spirit inseparable from the self-development of human society.

Some scholars have read Hegel’s major work, “The Phenomenology of Spirit”, as a Bildungsroman or novel of formation. The core of Hegel’s philosophy deals with the individual’s as well as humanity’s self-development from within –the timeless perspective of Philosophical Idealism and integral education-. As is typical of a Bildungsroman, Hegel shows in his “Phenomenology” the self-development of a sensitive soul in a complex society that lacks fundamental values. The protagonist, to some extent typically Romantic, encounters a variety of experiences, through which he unfolds his full rounded personality and inner depth.

Hegel also forecasted some major themes of quantum physics, like the Observer Effect. For the German philosopher, there is no subject/object dualism, because the self is one with his environment.

We can also realize that Hegel’s famous Dialectics constitutes a form of Bildung or integral education. Periodically the self encounters an obstacle to its inner project outside, which Hegel terms a negation. Through analysing this negation, the self designs solutions that will affect the object and will modify its project. Then, consciousness can be reunified, and the self can resume its inner project with some kind of progress or growth. The self gradually unfolds from experiences of this kind, not only reunified but also enlarged, because it gains experience.\(^\text{200}\) From this point of view, Hegel’s philosophy of education pretends to be more mature and profound than some Enlightened or Romantic conceptions about the alleged natural goodness of children turning into the typical idealization of childhood –cf Rousseau–.

In Hegel’s views, knowledge is basically drawn from experience, something that may justify the experiential methods in learning within the frame of holistic pedagogies in front of the abuse of the chalk and talk lecture method predominant in the mainstream school system.

Furthermore, for Hegel learning involves activity, which supports the active role of the child in holistic or humanistic pedagogies. In Hegel’s standpoint, learning requires an ardent search for truth; it is conscious self-development involving personal effort and responsibility. For the father of German Idealism, the educational process would tantamount to self-knowledge or knowledge of the self, of our own nature and deepest inclinations and abilities –another major theme of integral education-.\(^\text{201}\)

\(^{200}\) Cf Hegel, 1991, p. 133-139. (Pedagogic Report of October 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 1812.)

Cf Hegel, 1991, p. 41-44.

For Hegel, activity also means work; children must work in some way, since work is inherent to humanity. This kind of educational work is inseparable from an activity-oriented pedagogy that requires understanding and direct experience. This means that Hegel was sharply critical towards the advocates of play-way methods such as Froebel.202

As it happened with Kant’s enlightened philosophy, the German Bildung and Hegel’s Idealism can deeply support the main claims of integral value-based education for the Western/modern world; all the major topics of holistic pedagogies were already present in the educational philosophy of such great figures as Kant or Hegel.

The father of German Idealism showed the desirable middle path in education.203 While he was Rector of the Nuremberg Gymnasium (Higher Secondary School) he treated students with respect and encouraged discussion in class –which was quite innovative at that time--; but he would never give students complete freedom as in Summerhill.

Hegel always put forward the main goal of integral education: liberation from alienation and oppression towards a self-formed person, though he warned about the social nature of the self, unable to totally transcend its social context.204

Spiritual masters of India, such as Vivekananda, Aurobindo or Sathya Sai Baba, insisted that education should be value-based while it should incorporate the deepest dimension of the human being, which we dare to call spiritual. The founder of German Idealism, undoubtedly one of the major philosophers of the Western world, defended that education must shape the subjective mind, impart a sense of ethics to the child, and work for the rebirth of the human being, for his transformation of his first nature into a second spiritual nature. This is the only way through which the human being can unveil and manifest his own true spiritual nature. The most profound contents of integral value-based education—axiological and spiritual—are present in Hegel’s philosophy.205

In front of the prevailing utilitarian and materialistic trends of our civilization, it is important to stress that for both Hegel and before him Plato as well as the spiritual masters of India, true ethics can only stem from genuine spirituality: the inner dimension, which means all the depth of consciousness within a metaphysical world view deeply akin to quantum physics and contemporary astrophysics—with theories such as quantum mechanics, Strings/M. Theory, the multiverse, the multidimensional/holographic nature of the cosmos, etc.—. For Philosophical Idealism, both Western—from Plato to Hegel—and Indian—from Vedas to Neo-Vedanta—the ontological nature of ethics unfolds from


203 Cf Hegel, 1991, p. 90-91. (Speech of September 14th, 1810.)

204 Cf Hegel, 1991, p. 139-145. (Pedagogic Report of October 23rd, 1812.)

205 Cf Hegel, 1991, p. 94. (Speech of September 14th, 1810.)

Cf p. 102-103. (Speech of September 2nd, 1811.)
within, from the depth of consciousness, and it can only be fulfilled through a transformative process that is truly spiritual.

The profound parallelism can be explained by R. Panikkar’s concept of “homeomorphic equivalents”; in the modern world, all spiritual philosophers –both in the West and the East- defend their inner vision –homeomorphically equivalent- in front of the prevailing technocratic trends of mainstream civilization. Through the XXth century, quantum physicists have debunked modern materialism and stated the primacy of consciousness, aware that human condition is ultimately transformative and –for many of them- reality essentially spiritual.206

Quantum physicists have totally agreed with Hegel, Plato and Vedanta on two fundamental points: I. consciousness is the key. II. Since the cosmos is not a machine but pure consciousness –and vibration-. We try to show in this paper that this kind of spiritual philosophy –both Western and Eastern, ancient and modern- constitutes a sound philosophical foundation for integral value-based education –as expounded by Steiner or Aurobindo-, since all holistic value pedagogies share the basic assumptions of spiritual philosophy in their homeomorphic equivalence.

Within this metaphysical/ ethical world view, Hegel underlines two other principles of integral value-based education that Indian sages have always emphasized.

- First, he makes it clear that this profound transformation cannot be imposed and is only feasible if the human being drops the selfish most superficial desires and caprices. In parallel terms, Sathya Sai Baba repeatedly taught the ceiling on desires.
- Secondly, he would totally agree with the Indian sage on the double principle of a humanistic pedagogy: love and discipline.

Without idealizing childhood or adolescence –so getting ahead of Rousseau- Hegel showed that kind of empathy towards the students through his professional career; at the same time he always insisted on the necessity for discipline, which made him pretty reluctant to play-way methods –as emphasized by Rousseau’s heir, Froebel-. In any case, Hegel’s pedagogy is integral and deeply ethical, and ultimately spiritual and metaphysical. While being sharply critical with the pedagogic system of his age –utilitarian and authoritarian-, he defends a kind of education that integrates the academic/ cognitive, the active/ ethical, the aesthetic, and the transformative/ spiritual domains. In front of the purely academic mechanical pedagogy of Industrial Revolution promoting selfishness and ultimately alienation, Hegel shares Kant’s Enlightened dream of human liberation and realization, which lies at the core of integral value-based education as expounded by R. Steiner or Aurobindo.207


That is why Hegel did not like Sophist pedagogies of Ancient Greece, which reduced all the depth of education to merely individualistic, selfish valueless and strategic interests –without any deeper system of reference-. Hegel wanted to bring back to modern education some deeper system of reference –which he found in Plato’s Idealism as opposed to Sophism-. In this point, his educational philosophy directly supports integral education.

The eminent German philosopher was the Director of a Higher Secondary School –Gymnasium- and University Lecturer –like Kant-. Above all, he made a decisive contribution to philosophy of education that has unfortunately been often overlooked by narrow-minded scholarship. Like Kant again, and also like Rousseau, his educational philosophy criticizes the mainstream schooling of the modern age and opens the door to a more humanistic and holistic kind of education. In spite of the differences among them, these three major figures of European philosophy unfold a radical criticism of mainstream schooling and an ardent defence of integral value-based education.

Hegel opposed “the misery of endless inculcating, reprimanding, memorising”, etc. He put forward the respect for the student and his freedom of thought. Still more important, he brought back to education that philosophical depth that was at the core of Plato’s pedagogy but was totally lost by the advent of a materialistic soulless civilization.
Conclusion.

Enlightenment, Romanticism and Idealism, that is, the most profound and influential cultural movements of the modern Western world, have never supported the mainstream school system, essentially technocratic and utilitarian, and hence reductionist and alienating; rather, they have endorsed integral value-based, deeply ethical and child-centred pedagogies. This historical fact can bring an undeniable philosophical support for holistic value-based pedagogies among contemporary debates, and it should be seen as an invitation for public authorities to reconsider the reductionism of mainstream schooling and seriously contemplate the deepest meaning of holistic value-based pedagogies with their earnest ethical concern—and in their deepest formulations, within a spiritual world view-.

In an atmosphere of economic crisis, conflict among nations, questioning of welfare policies, etc, Europe seems to forget its cultural heritage and come back to the sharpest technocracy and utilitarianism of the modern age. An increasing number of intellectuals and educators weep upon the collapse of European humanism, and the tendency to suppress philosophy as a subject in higher secondary school or philosophy of education for the training of teachers is seen as a symbol for many. When the European crisis seems to bury philosophy of education in a climate of cultural decay, this paper tries to show that the humanistic and spiritual questioning of mainstream schooling towards more holistic and value-based pedagogies can find an undeniable and solid support in the major figures of European philosophy: Plato, Kant, Rousseau and Hegel, for whom there is no true education without a sound ethical foundation, and ultimately, without a spiritual vision.

We also claim that this kind of ethical and spiritual philosophy of education is deeply akin to similar formulations in India, which becomes especially significant in the modern age. Panikkar may help us to understand the parallelism in depth through the concept of “homeomorphic equivalents”. However, sociological inputs will make us realize that all humanistic/spiritual philosophers in the modern world—both in the West and the East—share a common reaction against the prevailing trends of civilization—utilitarian and technocratic-. All of them somewhat feel that anti-Newtonian stance expressed by Goethe.

One of the most fascinating developments of the XXth century would be the advent of quantum physics and what has been called as “new science”. All the major figures of quantum science have reached the same conclusions than spiritual philosophy, and very especially, they have been aware of the convergence and have explicitly talked about it. They have all outlined a new holistic paradigm coherent with spiritual philosophy that has certainly a pedagogic translation: not the utilitarian mainstream schooling anymore, but rather integral value-based education, that is, an education for consciousness that has a sound ethical foundation, that educates the human being as such.

–beyond mere intellectual skills or amounts of information to be poured down through mechanistic exams–.

It is an irony of history that scholars and educationists must recall the deepest contributions of the major philosophers of Western civilization when the continent that nurtured them, Europe, takes an increasingly technocratic evolution in a dull scenario of economic crisis that tends to suppress philosophy from the school and university system. Whether European or Western public authorities will pay attention to this message goes far beyond the scope of this paper. But it is in our hands to remind Westerners and in particular Europeans that the prevailing mainstream schooling, essentially technocratic and utilitarian, can be questioned by the most profound thought that has shaped the Western world –from Plato to Hegel and Goethe, and before the two last, Kant and Rousseau–.


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Section X.

Philosophical Idealism and the Schools of Educational Philosophy.

The need for integral education from an open mindset.
Introduction. The role of philosophy of education and the scope for Philosophical Idealism.

Continental Europe was well-known for being somewhat the bastion of philosophy, but things have changed in the last years; philosophy has certainly undergone a process of decay, and some scholars dare to say that it has been intentionally undermined by the states, the European Union and the neoliberal reign. It is evident that philosophy has lost its traditional academic strength in various countries, and in many faculties of education philosophy of education has been discarded to the detriment of technological and practical subjects. That is why this paper reclaims the fundamental role of philosophy of education in a scholarly scenario that seems to be more hostile than ever; it also focuses on the millenary tradition of Philosophical Idealism amongst the various schools of educational philosophy.

What is the role of philosophy in an increasingly technocratic civilization that seems to overlook it more and more? Let us take the main tools of progressive or integral education as advocated by R. Steiner or M. Montessori. Pedagogic techniques such as self-learning, experiential learning or child-centred education will be void, distorted and ultimately useless if the teachers who implement them do not understand in depth the underlying educational principles. Montessori stressed something that Montessori Schools have not always followed: the techniques are not so important, the state of mind, the intention if the key. Without the adequate mindset, the mere technique will be fallacious and the illusive teacher will unconsciously repeat the old mainstream patterns with new cheerful colours only. The issue of the intention or the mindset puts forward the capital role of philosophy. Quantum physicists have understood and defended the foundational nature of consciousness, and this unveils the deepest role of philosophy in general and in education too. Neuroscience cannot inform us about the goals of education and its uttermost purpose and meaning. These are philosophical issues, which means that philosophy of education constitutes the very foundation of the educational process.

The Indian scholar, S.S. Ravi, stresses the need and importance of philosophy of education:209

Philosophy provides answers to ultimate questions, also for education.  
Philosophy defines the goals and aims of education.  
Philosophy lays down the values to be imparted in education.  
Philosophy determines the direction of education.  
Philosophy informs the pedagogic methods –which Montessori emphasized-.  
Philosophy is the very basis of teachers’ training.  
Education is the practical side of philosophy.  
Great philosophers have been great educationists.  
Education is the means for propagation of philosophy.

Another Indian scholar, R.N. Sharma, underlines the direct and profound connection between education and philosophy, which gives to philosophy of education a basal role in the educational process that only a technocratic civilization like ours could overlook. According to Sharma, there is no education without values, since any educational system will impart some values, while axiology is precisely one of the major fields of philosophical thinking. Similarly, there is no education without knowledge, since education is nothing else than imparting knowledge, while epistemology constitutes another core of philosophical inquiry.\(^{210}\)

After clarifying the role and importance of educational philosophy by itself, we may ask about the significance of Philosophical Idealism amongst the various schools of philosophy of education. The present civilization, increasingly technocratic, has certainly not favoured Philosophical Idealism, but rather realism and pragmatism. We are probably living in the historical period that has more sharply withdrawn from this millenary school of philosophical thinking. This paper tries to recall the message and importance of this philosophical vision precisely because it has been overlooked more than ever, knowing that there is a lot of misunderstanding and even prejudice today in relation to this ancient and venerable school of philosophy present in all civilizations, not only in Europe and the Western world.

The renowned philosopher of science, E. Laszlo, has been an ardent defender of the new holistic paradigm that blends new science and Philosophical Idealism. The title of one of his most acclaimed books is meaningful enough: “Science and the Re-enchantment of the Cosmos. The Rise of the Integral Vision of Reality”. After a roundtable of leading thinkers he concludes:

“Despite the outdated world view most people associate with modern science, and notwithstanding the lingering scepticism of some scientists, science at its cutting edge rejects the idea of a disenchanted universe heading ineluctably toward a desolate destiny. The new cosmology discovers a world where the universe does not end in ruin, and the new physics, the new biology and the new consciousness research recognize that we are part of an instantly and enduringly interconnected integral reality.”\(^{211}\)

In particular, this paper tries to elucidate the profound connection between Philosophical Idealism and integral education. If we understand the educational process in holistic terms—not only in merely cognitive or intellectual parameters— we will discover that Philosophical Idealism provides the soundest basis and framework for this integral approach to education. Not by chance, both Steiner and Montessori were directly connected with Philosophical Idealism; both of them were members of the Theosophical Society, which makes the connection obvious and explicit.


\(^{211}\) Laszlo E., 2006, p 196.
Philosophical Idealism among the major schools of educational philosophy.\(^{212}\)

By integrating the different dimensions of humanity and education, the pedagogic process should be truly integral or holistic, with a genuine spiritual foundation unfolding human values from within. In this horizon, the philosophical affiliation of integral education will be the traditions of Philosophical Idealism, both in the East and the West, coming back in Europe to Orphism, Pythagoreanism, Socrates and Plato, and in India to Vedas, Upanishads and Vedanta. Philosophical Idealism is the oldest school or tradition of educational philosophy in the world.

After the different schools of Neo-Platonism from Ancient Greece to Renaissance, European Idealism would blossom through the great Romantic movement, particularly keen on education, with eminent educationists such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel—who can also be seen as representatives of Naturalism-, and great intellectuals such as Goethe, Schiller, Schelling, Hoelderlin, Novalis, Jean-Paul, etc, close to German Idealism—Fichte and Hegel-. In the XXth century, R. Steiner, founder of Waldorf Schools, would inherit Goethe’s legacy and Western Idealism or mysticism. We could still add some other names such as Comenius, J.F. Herbart, R.R. Rusk, T.P. Nunn, A.N. Whitehead, T.H. Huxley, etc.

In modern India, the Vedic heritage would be pursued by the Hindu Renaissance - Neo-Vedanta-, with spiritual masters such as Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Swami Yogananda, until the contemporary teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. We should also mention the great spiritual poet from Bengal, R. Tagore, and the eminent philosopher, S. Radhakrishnan.

In this philosophical vision, ideas would have a real existence in higher planes, and consciousness would be seen as the fundamental reality. Ultimately, the totality of the universe would be Spirit or Consciousness in essence, a major statement of Philosophical Idealism upon which quantum physics has totally agreed. Still, modern Idealism, in Hegel for instance, acknowledges that ideas do not exist outside time and space, which implies society and history.\(^{213}\)

At the same time, the philosophical tradition of Kashmir Shaivism would remind that consciousness is inseparable from energy or vibration—“cit”/“citi”-, establishing an intimate connection between the Vedantic outlook, more focused on consciousness, and the Tantric view, more centred on energy. The primordial Consciousness vibrates; from this Source or Oneness emanates the whole process of Creation or Manifestation with some goal or purpose—Idealism is essentially teleological-. It refutes mechanistic determinism, whereas it is very close in spirit to quantum physics and new science in a

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\(^{212}\) Cf the classic Suchodolski B., 1960.

\(^{213}\) Cf Chambliss J.J., 2013, p 370.

multidimensional world view with interdependence and some sort of supremacy of consciousness.

In any case, all forms of Idealism would understand reality as essentially spiritual. Hence, the knowledge of the spiritual reality would be the highest and worthiest. This superior kind of knowledge could not be grasped by the intellectual mind or the senses, but only through the mystical insight, that is, the exploration within oneself or self-inquiry, through which we become aware of the Source of everything in us and everywhere, and the fundamental unity underlying the apparent diversity of things.

The Indian scholars, B.N. Dash and R. Ghanta, remind us that the European/Western concept of philosophy has usually remained at the merely intellectual or cognitive level, whereas in the Indian world view the idea of “darshana” – equivalent to philosophy - implies another dimension beyond the intellectual which is internal and experiential in terms of vision and realization. In parallel terms, the European/Indian philosopher and scholar, R. Panikkar, always spoke of “the philosophical experience of India”. In Dash and Ghanta’s words:

“Indian philosophy is primarily dominated by metaphysical interests.”

However, many Western or modern scholars would misunderstand the statement made by the Indian professors. The metaphysical interests of Vedas or Upanishads do not constitute a matter of intellectual scholarship but the expression of an inner experience and realization, as Panikkar also stressed.

From the Idealistic perspective, education becomes then a process of self-discovery in depth, leading towards the highest moral and deepest spiritual awareness, developing character and positive values, and unfolding the universal human values that constitute the inherent patrimony of human and divine Consciousness. Self-realization would be the ultimate goal of education; only this can bring true freedom. Idealism looks at the child as a Self, as a spiritual being to be perfected through a process of transformation. This means that the teacher and the pupil are fundamentally equal, since both are spiritual beings in the process of self-realization. In the words of another Indian scholar, Prof. S.S. Ravi:

“Since Idealism believes human personality to be the most important, it wants education to aim at the development of human personality and the attainment of self-realization.”

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Dash and Ghanta make it clear that Indian terms for education such as “shiksha” or “vidya” – amongst others – go beyond the Western/modern notion of merely intellectual training, and coherent with the metaphysical and experiential dimension of Indian philosophy and Philosophical Idealism, imply the idea of a deeper realization which is an inner experience and has an ontological texture.\textsuperscript{217}

In fact, the etymological root of the term “education” is purely Idealistic. “Education” derives from the Latin “educare” which stems from “educere”, which means to unfold from within, from an inner deeper dimension. This Latin origin of the concept of education closely corresponds to another Indian/Sanskrit term for education, probably the most beautiful: “bala vikas” which literally means the blossoming of the boy/child – from within.\textsuperscript{217}

R. Ghanta and T. Mrunalini still add that this “bala vikas” implies no less than the liberation of the soul, something that would certainly find echo in Plato’s philosophy.\textsuperscript{218}

B.N. Dash recalls in another work the connection between education and initiation in the Indian tradition and in Philosophical Idealism in general, something that modern Europe obviously devastated and modern schooling seems to hold in abhorrence, notwithstanding Lord Baden-Powell tried to rebuild it through the creation of boy-scouts – one of the major educational ventures of the XXth century, often neglected by scholarship.\textsuperscript{219}

From the point of view of the curriculum, Idealism attaches a higher importance to the humanities, understood in terms of knowledge of the human condition and process, and therefore, in terms of self-knowledge, since each one of us belongs to this human condition and participates in this human process, which basically implies transformation and spiritual awakening.

However, Idealism does not discard the scientific study and mathematics, and in general terms, the use of reason. In fact, the oldest Idealist schools of Europe, such as Pythagoreanism and Platonism, incorporated the study of mathematics at the highest level, and another Idealist like Aristotle, pupil of Plato and deeply spiritual, integrated the scientific study into the spiritual insight. Idealism favours the interdisciplinary approach towards the development of an integral personality in a vision of interdependence between Man and Cosmos.

Idealism also favours the study of the cultural and spiritual heritage of mankind, especially from an intercultural perspective, underlying the fundamental values that are common to all philosophical and spiritual traditions.


\textsuperscript{218} Cf Ghanta R., Mrunalini T., 2008, p 213.

Cf also Frank, Lodge, 2000, or before it, the well-known classic, Nettleship R.L., 1935.

\textsuperscript{219} Cf Dash B.N., 2005, p 15.
The Indian scholar, R.Sh. Pandey, stresses the key to the Idealistic curriculum, which is not so much about one subject or another, but rather about the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge in connection with the value-based dimension of human life.

“Thus, we see that the Idealist does not advocate the teaching of any one subject. But he emphasizes that there must be realization of truth, goodness and beauty in all the subjects.”

With regard to the pedagogic methods of teaching, Idealism advocates the use of value-based and ideal-centred methods. While teaching any subject, the emphasis should be placed upon the dignity of humanity, the worth of human life, the highest goals of living, and the ideals of brotherhood and unity of mankind, together with the spirit of sharing and cooperation in a culture of peace. Idealism has also stressed the crucial importance of the most vital amongst human values, love.

Idealism also believes in the self-education of the child; here, self-inquiry and inner work or meditation become totally necessary. Since the main goal of education would be self-realization, Idealism naturally defends a child-centred kind of pedagogy.

When facing the role of the teacher, Idealism prefers the Socratic method, that is, the dialogue between teacher and pupil, avoiding the passive role of the youth and bringing him towards understanding and realizing by himself. Idealism would also encourage the discussion method in the class-room in the same spirit. In conclusion, Idealism would always favour a participatory approach to pedagogy.

In this philosophical school, the teacher becomes essentially a loving and caring guide, who accompanies and suggests but never imposes through pure love for the pupil, showing the path that the youth will have to tread by himself. Idealism grants the highest place to the educator; although it fosters the self-education of the child, this should never be to the detriment of the teacher’s crucial role.

The Indian scholar, R. Sh. Pandey, beautifully expresses it:

“The teacher’s role in the Idealistic philosophy is best explained by Froebel’s familiar metaphor of the Kindergarten – The school a garden, the pupil a tender plant and educator the careful gardener.”

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220 Pandey R.Sh., 1993, p 75.


223 Pandey R.Sh., 1993, p 73.
We can find this profound educational philosophy beautifully expounded in the Socratic Dialogues of Plato. We can also follow it through the interaction between master and pupil in the Upanishads. Rarely has education reached such heights in the history of mankind.

In other great traditions like the Sufi in the Islamic world, the Taoist in China, or the Buddhist in India and Asia, we come across the same kind of Socratic pedagogy in an Idealistic horizon towards the realization of the youth under the loving guidance of the master. Even the indigenous peoples cultivated this kind of Socratic guidance; only modernity has destroyed it.

Still, the modern world has witnessed the emergence of new forms of Idealism through the profound Romantic movement and German Idealism –the Bildung-. In the XXTh century, Western Idealism has produced a mature integral pedagogy through Waldorf Schools, set up by R. Steiner.

In parallel to that, India beheld a revival of Vedic/ Vedantic Idealism through the movement known as Neo-Vedanta, with major figures such as Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. In the last decades, Sri Sathya Sai Baba held the torch of Indian and Western Idealism on the verge of a paradigm shift.

In connection with discipline, Idealists like to give freedom to the child –without excess-. In fact, Idealism would pursue the ideal balance between love and (self) discipline. Hence, freedom would be allowed to the youth in a wise way, as qualified or regulated freedom, which should be directed towards activity and creativity. Freedom would be twinned to responsibility and would develop maturity.

Finally, the emphasis would be put on self-discipline. Idealism does not believe in external controls and repression, even though they may be necessary in social life to some extent; rather, it prefers the development of internal controls and self-discipline, which means that the place of volition is highly valued.

“Understand the importance of disciplined freedom in education.”
“Today the talk is all about freedom. But freedom should be within limits.”
“Be self-disciplined.”

Sathya Sai Baba.
The deepest philosophical affiliation of integral education will be found in the millenary traditions of Idealism, in particular in the European and the Indian contexts, coming back to Platonism and Vedanta. At the same time, we will be open to the Idealist views of other traditions of mystical philosophy, like Buddhist Asia, Sufism, etc.

However, integral education should also be open to the valuable contributions of the other major trends of educational philosophy: existentialism, naturalism, realism, and pragmatism—which apparently seem to be so far from Idealism-. Avoiding any kind of narrow-minded dogmatism, we do believe in dialogue and mutual enrichment with an aperture of mind.

Therefore, the foundation of integral education in Idealism and the traditions of mystical philosophy should not discard the worthwhile insights of other philosophical schools, believing that all the philosophical schools of human history keep their own truth and value, like different windows open towards a vast reality that has been apprehended in many ways from different points of view -still complementary in depth-.

From this perspective, integral education should follow a truly integral philosophy. Ultimately, we should attempt to integrate the various constituents of different facets of reality:

- **the 5 basic domains of human personality**: physical, intellectual, emotional, psychic (love), and spiritual;
- **the 5 basic dimensions of education**: I. physical and health, together with the contact with Nature and the environment; II. the relational and communitarian nature of the human being, together with emotional intelligence, positive values, ethics, and love and compassion; III. intellectual/academic training towards free creative thinking and self-expression; IV. aesthetic and artistic formation, with its counterpart in terms of emotional education and creativity; V. the spiritual path towards self-inquiry and self-realization, education from the self unfolding human values from within;
- **the 5 major historical schools of educational philosophy**: Idealism, Existentialism, Naturalism, Realism, and Pragmatism.

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Let us see in more detail the main contributions of the other major schools of educational philosophy (that we should also integrate in any holistic pedagogy).
Existentialism, as expounded in the modern age by Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Berdyaev, Buber, Marcel, Jaspers, Sartre, Camus, etc., would assert that existence precedes essence, reversing the Idealist order, according to which essence would precede existence. Only in some existentialists like Sartre would this position have an agnostic connotation, while in others such as Kierkegaard, Berdyaev, Buber, Marcel, and Jaspers, there would be a spiritual outlook. Therefore, the apparent contradiction between Idealism and Existentialism could vanish from a deeper understanding of human condition and cultural history. Then, the Idealist and the Existentialist views could just be complementary ways to approach the same reality, depending on the standpoint where we start from.

Furthermore, a positive criticism in relation to the Idealistic tradition, either Platonic in Europe or Vedantic in India, should be always welcome, since the highest truths get distorted in the process of human history, and become ossified in dogmatic systems which do not correspond to the genuine spirit of inquiry in total freedom of the original masters. Existentialists assert the value of our inner life and experience against any form of system-building and generalization. In this sense, Existentialism would be radically subjectivist.

However, it is interesting to realize that this existentialist spirit can be found at the very core of the teachings of Socrates, Buddha, or the Upanishadic masters. The existentialist revolt should be directed against the ossification and the building of systems in the later traditions, rather than the free spirit of the original masters themselves, and in that sense the existentialist revolt should be welcome and becomes necessary; it can help us go back to the original message of the great masters of Idealism, who requested us to look towards ourselves, to experience by ourselves, and not to stick to any system outside. This was also the true spirit of Romanticism, which revolted against the ossification of neo-classicism in order to come back to the genuine grandeur of Classical art.

In the field of education, existentialists would help the child realize the best that he is capable of, so that he can understand himself and his own existence. From this point of view, education should be deeply child-centred. Moreover, every individual would be unique, and education should develop this uniqueness. Hence, education should cater for individual differences and a multiplicity of geniuses.

Existentialism would not believe in prescribing a rigid curriculum; the pupil should choose his or her own curriculum –self-education of the child, in parallel to his or her innate freedom-. This can be difficult to implement today in many places, since most of the schools are legally affiliated to a specific board. However, even within the prescribed framework can we allow a certain space for the selection of the student under the teacher’s guidance, through optional subjects, the combination of different afternoon workshops for integral education, the realization of projects, essays and thesis, etc.

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Like Idealism, Existentialism would also give more importance to the humanities in order to come to terms with existential problems and human condition.

Like the Idealist school, existentialism would also favour the Socratic method of teaching, and would give more individual attention to the student, something that any good school should try to implement, mainly through the role of guardians, tutors and monitors.

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**Naturalism** would have its oldest roots in Thales of Miletus, Democritus, Epicurus and Lucretius. Thus, it would be connected to pre-Socratic schools such as Atomism and more significantly Epicureanism and Stoicism, both Greek and Roman. In the modern age, Hobbes, J.J. Rousseau, Comte and Herbert Spencer would follow Naturalistic trends of thought. The Naturalistic philosophy of India would crystallize in the Charvaka school of Brhaspathi.

In philosophy of education, Naturalism would inspire great educationists like Rousseau himself, and also Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori and Piaget. A certain kind of Naturalism, in particular through Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel, would intermingle with Romanticism, and therefore with Idealism. After Idealism, this is the second oldest school of educational philosophy.

In general terms, one of the main concerns of philosophy would be about reality. For Idealism, reality would be ultimately consciousness –inseparable from vibration and energy-. Another main concern of philosophy would be epistemology, the theory of knowledge. For Idealism, the most valuable knowledge would be the spiritual one. In Naturalistic thought, the focus would fall upon nature itself as it is, and the preferred kind of knowledge would be the scientific; Nature is the best teacher.

Then, Naturalism views education as the process of development of the natural life in the growing child; here, balance and harmony would be highlighted. Education becomes a natural necessity. This means that the educational process of development must be natural and integrated. In this horizon, education would be basically for the body and mind.

But it should always be adapted to the nature of the child, which means that the child is put at the very centre of the educational process: child-centred pedagogy. In the words of Prof. R.N. Sharma:

“Naturalist education is paido-centric. The child occupies the central place in it.”

Naturalists look at the child as different from the adult. A major contribution of Naturalism has been its emphasis on the progressive evolution of education through the successive age groups while respecting the characteristics of each stage. Naturalism also considers that the child is able to educate himself or herself until a certain point. So,

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225 Sharma R.N., 2011, p 73.
kindergarten and even primary school should be largely based upon the spontaneous activities of the child and self-learning.

Naturalistic philosophy of education has nurtured developmental psychology, with scholars such as Piaget, Kohlberg, etc, who have studied the order and pattern, the very rhythm in the growth and development of the child.

We should warn about some limits in this kind of approach, which become visible through the intercultural perspective; then, we may realize that what seems to be normal for a Western scholar of the modern age was quite different in another place or in another period of history. That is why this kind of developmental psychology should be counterbalanced by anthropology and cultural studies, with the fundamental intercultural dimension that will become so crucial in the XXIst century.

The Naturalistic methods of teaching emerged as a revolt against the old-fashioned bookish pedagogies, stressing the value of the inductive method and observation in a scientific spirit. The teacher should tell the students as little as possible in order to allow them to discover as much as possible by themselves. Nature should be regarded as the best teacher, and education should be provided as much as possible in a natural environment so that the child can evolve his or her own nature.

Undoubtedly, this kind of pedagogy has become very popular in many progressive schools. Direct experience and the contact with Nature should be some of the pillars of the pedagogic system. Then, knowledge emerges naturally out of experiences and situations that have been arranged by educators. For naturalists, observation and experimentation should replace the chalk and talk method; moreover, the relation with Nature would be crucial. Certainly, there is something very true in the Naturalistic approach.

However, we can observe today in the Western world how this Naturalistic pedagogy has sometimes been pushed too far, producing an excess that has turned to the detriment of academic standards. The fundamental teaching of wisdom, the middle path and moderation, should certainly apply to this domain. Any sensible pedagogy should find the middle path between the chalk and talk, that is, the necessary teaching given by the educator, and the direct observation and experimentation by the student.

Naturalists have also advocated the play-way method, especially for the earlier stages, since playing reveals the very nature of the child. Again, we face here an interesting pedagogy that has been fully implemented and has become quite popular, even though we should avoid the excess that has also been committed. Once more, the middle path in a wise way will find the necessary balance.

The teacher must always give the basic information, supply the materials and provide the opportunities, and very especially, he must help the student understand, think by himself and express himself, something that neither the experimental nor the play-way methods can bring; here, we require the dialectic dimension: relationship, dialogue and guidance from the elder.
When speaking about the curriculum, Naturalism would clearly make a difference between the earlier and the later stages. For the younger children, Naturalism would prefer sensory training, since senses are the doors opening to knowledge and experience. This has certainly become integral part of primary education in progressive schools. For the elder youths, Naturalism would emphasize scientific study in the general framework of academic training.

From the point of view of discipline, Naturalism defends that the child should be given freedom to develop his or her natural tendencies. It also advocates self-discipline, disapproving the practice of punishment, especially of a physical kind, but also of a psychological nature.

Here we find another fundamental issue of modern education. Naturalism has revolted against the tough tradition of punishment and outer discipline coming from traditional schooling and home education. But, as it happens so often, mankind goes from one extreme to another one, and from the necessary correction brought by Naturalism, we have sometimes fallen in the Western world into the opposite extreme of misunderstood freedom, discarding the needed (self)-discipline too easily.

In the original writings of the classical exponents of Naturalism, such as Rousseau, we find a more balanced approach. In his famous “Emile”, Rousseau gives the example of the child who breaks a window; instead of the traditional physical punishment, Rousseau suggests that we allow the child to experience the cold of the night. Of course, we can also make him repair what he has broken. According to the classical forms of Naturalism, punishment should be determined by the natural consequences of the wrong deeds towards a positive transformation of character.

Another interesting contribution of the Naturalistic school would lie in the organization of the school as a free natural society, where children could learn about the rights and duties of citizenship and democracy through participation.
In front of some extreme positions of modern Idealism, in Berkeley for instance, there was a reaction led by Locke, who emphasized that the world around us is real and not a fantasy. **Realism** has strongly postulated the objective reality of the world, discarding the view of a subjective reality depending on the perception of the individual. Before this kind of modern Realism reacting against the extreme positions of modern Idealism –from Locke to B. Russell-, the standard scholarship would trace the origins of Realism back to Aristotle in Greece or Saint Thomas Aquinas in the Middle Ages.

Nonetheless, these common assumptions about the history of philosophy should be qualified.

First, we should tone down the apparent opposition between Idealism and Realism, especially if we take into account the classical authors. Aristotle would be the best example. The father of the Lyceum could be considered both as an Idealist and as a Realist. In fact, Idealism and Realism combine together as two sides of the same coin in Ancient Philosophy. The mystical philosophy of Platonism in Greece and Vedanta in India never denied the real existence of the external world. There has been a tremendous misunderstanding about the Vedantic concept of Maya. The metaphysical illusion does not mean that the world outside is not real; it means that the world outside is not the whole reality, since there is much more than that. Hence, true Idealism postulates the existence of a complex universe with different levels of reality, from the gross matter of the physical world to the ultimate reality; in between, there would be intermediate subtle stages until the causal plane. Here, the coincidence in depth between Greek, Indian, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, and Sufi metaphysics would be striking. In conclusion, Realism and Idealism could be totally compatible; they would just behold different dimensions or levels of reality.

Secondly, the sharp affirmation of the objective reality of the world against an extreme Idealism, with its consequent materialism and mechanism, would face some difficulties after the development of Quantum Physics and Relational Theory, showing the interdependence of subject and object, of consciousness, matter and energy, in a profound approach that converges with the great traditions of mystical philosophy.

Prof S.S. Ravi also reminds us that we can identify different forms of Realism, such as humanistic realism (Erasmus, Rabelais), social realism (Locke), scientific realism (Bacon, Ratke), neo-realism (Bertrand Russell), etc.²²⁶

In any case, the Realist school of the modern age has also brought valuable contributions to philosophy of education. From the realist point of view, the biological origin of Man should be turned into a cultural and social being; hence, the crucial necessity of education. For Realists, education should basically be a preparation for life, so that the child can later perform his role in society. Education should also unfold all the potentialities of each individual.

²²⁶ Ravi S.S., 2011, p 128-134.
With regard to the methods of teaching, Realism would promote the use of lectures and discussions. It would also encourage the Socratic method of teaching. Realists certainly defend the use of memory, especially in the earlier stages, without excess. In the Realist school of education, the motivation of the child should play a central role.

It is needed to point out that Realism defends the role of the teacher as a scholar, reacting against the excesses of other pedagogic schools that have dismissed the teaching responsibility under a certain aura of progressive pedagogy centred on playing methods, direct experience of the child, etc. Realism would not deny the pedagogic possibilities of such ways, but it would not accept the dismissal of the teacher as a scholar and lecturer. We do believe that this Realist reaction has been totally necessary in front of some abuse that has occurred in the Western world.

In terms of curriculum, Realism would certainly prefer the sciences without despising the humanities, which would be the opposite preference compared to Idealism. We must stress, however, that there is no contradiction between the two schools, between the sciences and the humanities. The preferences of Realism or Idealism would be a matter of accents or tendencies only.

The realist pedagogy would never be satisfied with a simple use of memory, but would require understanding and later application of knowledge. Realism would also advocate a solid basic education or general knowledge in the earlier stages until the middle school; specialization should come later. This Realist appreciation of general education/knowledge is also welcome in a world like ours that has produced an abuse of specialization, creating ignorant specialists that know nothing outside their area and are unable to connect their own area with other fields.

In the Western world, Realism has been the established pedagogy of public education directly controlled by the state and also most of prestigious private schools; in general terms, this educational philosophy has largely shaped the modern school system primarily based on academics and the rational mind, being French rationalism and the French Baccalaureat its finest formulation.

In front of this over-emphasis on reason, science, academics and discipline, the Western World has produced a Naturalistic and Romantic reaction, from Rousseau to Montessori, together with different trends of progressive pedagogy, and more radical formulations through libertarian pedagogies like Neill’s, the famous founder of the equally well-known Summerhill School.

Realism has often been criticized for its undue over-emphasis on academic knowledge and neglect of the child as a human being. Sometimes, Realism has fallen into an excess of academics. Then, the reaction of the paido-centric or child-centred vision has become necessary. However, these child-centred views have also produced their own excess and have sometimes resulted in a neglect of academics. Then, the Realist priority on academic knowledge must be welcome. Again, the middle path could bring a desirable harmony between the academic stress on knowledge and the paido-centric pedagogy focused on the child.
Pragmatism is derived from the Greek word “pragma” which means action. The concept was coined by William James in his famous book “Pragmatism”. As a philosophical school, it turns away from abstractions, systems and generalizations, first or absolute principles, and then turns towards the concrete facts of life, action and its consequences.

While Idealism is characteristic of the Ancient traditions and Romantic moods, while the somewhat disturbing insights of Existentialism and the more scholarly concerns of Realism are typical of the strenuous thinking of modern Europe, Pragmatism easily fits the American mind, less predisposed than the European towards pure thinking and more directly attracted by action.

Basically, Pragmatism is more an attitude or frame of mind than a system of ideas. Before modern Pragmatism, this kind of mental predisposition has been traced back to Greece, in particular to the school of the Sophists, the rivals of Plato, among whom the famous Protagoras and Gorgias. In Renaissance, Francis Bacon would be a main figure, and after him this kind of approach would be nurtured by the dominating currents of the modern age: Utilitarianism, Empiricism, and finally Liberalism. Another kind of Pragmatism would be found in the historical enemy of Liberalism, Marxism. In the XXth century, Ch.S. Peirce, William James and John Dewey would be the most salient figures. In particular, Dewey would bring many interesting contributions to philosophy of education and would help shaping the XXth century school system. Dewey’s pedagogy would be developed by W.H. Kilpatrick. We could also add Bertrand Russell among the godfathers of pragmatism.

In the field of education, Pragmatism would encourage the capacity of the child to learn by himself or herself through active participation, direct experience, creative projects, etc. Pragmatism does not see the child in passive terms, as a mute listener, but as an active, creative participant. In the words of Prof R.N. Sharma:

“The aim of education, according to Russell, is to create individuals who are creative and may realize a creative society. Such a system will be democratic.”

Among the general aims of education, Pragmatism would emphasize social efficiency, economic competence and good citizenship. From this point of view, Pragmatism would be very functional in its relationship with the established social order, something that would be inevitably criticized by Marxist and critical thought.

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227 Dewey’s pragmatism would be criticized by spiritually-oriented philosophers of education such as Th.E. Shields; cf Shields Th.E., 2009. In spite of Dewey’s contribution to progressive education, his secular vision could be seen as a limitation to the integral nature of education that should also incorporate the spiritual domain in emancipating non-dogmatic ways.

228 Sharrma R.N., 2011, p 106.
As Gingell and Winch write:

“Peirce believed that education had more than instrumental purposes and that by pursing education for its own sake one would serve instrumental purposes, almost as a by-product.”

Pragmatists would dislike the traditional rigid curricula heavily charged with information and based on scholarly lectures. Instead, they would propose units of integrated knowledge around significant social issues and problems of life, an interesting pedagogy that has been implemented in the last decades. So, the Pragmatist pedagogy would avoid the rigidity of the classical division into different subjects and lessons.

Here, we should once more underline the pedagogic potential in a moderate way, warning at the same time against the possible abuse that has certainly occurred and has sometimes produced an educational catastrophe in Western countries in the last years. Without a minimum of classical systematization through subjects and lessons, children get lost in an ocean of attractive issues and problems arising amidst confusion and ignorance of the most basic trends and facts. It would be wiser to combine a moderate use of teaching through issues and problems together with a basic and more classical teaching through subjects and lessons. Once more, the middle path and balanced perspectives with wisdom, avoiding opposite extreme points: neither a traditional, scholarly, dry and boring exposition of lessons and lectures only, nor a total confusion and mess through attractive but chaotic issues, topics and problems discarding an orderly process of learning.

In the area of methods of teaching, Pragmatism would prefer activities rather than books: learning by doing. Learning should happen through activity rather than lectures. The child should be enabled to search for information by himself or herself, instead of being given the information in a passive way. Students should be encouraged to investigate and discover. So, the fundamental method of teaching should be experimental.

Here, the same question arises as in the previous point, both of them being closely related. Certainly, this experiential pedagogy in a spirit of investigation and discovery brings a huge pedagogic potential, but without excess, without totally denying the contribution of the teacher in terms of lectures in order to bring some basic information adequately presented together with fundamental understanding.

The teacher can never be replaced by the own investigation of the pupil. Both pedagogies should be complementary. It is undoubtedly enriching for the child to discover and experiment by himself. But no child will learn to think by himself and to express himself alone. The teacher is also needed and has a fundamental role to play. He cannot be just cancelled or downgraded to a secondary position. In education, the teacher has a major role to play, and his major contribution to the child’s growth will be to help him understand, think by himself and express himself, something vital that nobody can learn alone without any model or guidance.

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Pragmatism will also stress the pedagogic value of projects, something that has become very trendy in the last years and has again a profound pedagogic significance. However, an intelligent and sensible pedagogy will implement the evaluation through projects under an appropriate guidance from the teacher who does not disappear but fully accomplishes his or her educational role.

The intention of the projects pedagogy is not to get rid of the students so that teachers do not have to take care of them, as it has been so often the case in schools where the message of Pragmatism has not been properly grasped. Projects do not cancel the pedagogic role of teachers, but enhance it. The active participation of the student and the active pedagogic role of the teacher are not contradictory but complementary. It is through the awakening of the capacities of the student that the real teacher will fully and deeply accomplish his educational responsibility –through an adequate and mature supervision–.

In this kind of active pedagogy from the side of the student, Pragmatism prefers group projects rather than individual ones, cooperation and team spirit with its inherent sharing of responsibilities. Certainly, this group approach has a pedagogic potential, but not necessarily to the detriment of individual effort. Individual and group projects should be again complementary in a wise and harmonious perspective.

When it is a matter of learning the foundations of thinking, nothing can replace individual effort. In good education, we cannot get rid of individual dissertations or essays. All the great treatises in the history of philosophy have been produced by a single person, not by a team. The famous triple Criticism of Immanuel Kant is not a group project. No group could replace Kant’s effort of thinking by himself. Sometimes, the needed personal effort is lost in the easier group therapy, and instead of sharing of responsibilities, it becomes the vanishing of responsibilities. Anyone who has observed the evolution of Western education in the last decades has witnessed the abuse of the group pedagogy. Group projects should be harmoniously combined with personal projects and personal works –composition, commentary, dissertation, etc–.

Another interesting contribution of Pragmatism has consisted of conceiving the school on a social basis in terms of community, and not only as a set of class-rooms and buildings. In this communitarian perspective, Pragmatism would give a certain amount of freedom to the child; but this freedom should not be mistaken for licence to do anything, as it has happened too often in the West. Here, Pragmatism would present the teacher as a guide, promoting first of all self-discipline.

In general terms, the main figures of Pragmatism or other schools like Naturalism have not encouraged the excess that many progressive pedagogies have produced in the last decades in the West. The excess of bookish scholarly knowledge given by traditional pedagogies has produced a reaction that has often gone into the other extreme, with an abuse of playing methods, activities, self discovery, group projects, issues and problems, etc, leading to the dismissal of the role of the teacher, the decay of cultural and intellectual standards, and confusion and ignorance in terms of academic knowledge. Mankind too often shifts from one extreme to another one. And very often, the extreme
positions were not promoted by the original authors, but have been produced by the latter followers.

In integral education we should try to avoid all sorts of extremes, striving for a middle path and a balanced, harmonious pedagogy, where the different contributions of the major schools of educational philosophy are integrated in a wise way for the benefit of the child, for the sake of his or her education and realization as a human being in freedom, and also under the necessary loving guidance of the adult or educator.

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**Integral education should try to implement this middle path** by developing the harmony between academic standards and a child-centred holistic pedagogy.

Ultimately, we should be able to enrich the fundamental pedagogy grounded in Idealistic philosophy through the dialogue with the other major schools of educational philosophy, convinced that reality is so vast and complex that we cannot reduce it through any concept or system of thought. Rather, we should be capable of being open to any valuable contribution, to any intelligent discourse that can teach us something new.

Even if our foundation lies in Idealism as developed by the great traditions of spiritual philosophy, we may find meaningful inputs in the other philosophical schools. Our pedagogy will be supported by an enriching dialogue with the finest insights of the various pedagogic schools for the benefit of the children, far from any dogmatism and far from closing ourselves in any rigid system of thought.

Life cannot be trapped in any intellectual jail. We can be inspired by a grand cultural heritage, like Idealism and mystical philosophy in different civilizations –East and West-. But we may see the history of thought as a house with many windows, all of them opening to a reality that is so vast and beautiful, that it cannot be reduced to any fixed pattern or dogma.

In fact, this free spirit of inquiry open to dialogue has been the very essence of the teachings of the great masters of Idealism, both in the West and the East. It is the state of mind of any intelligent and open-minded person.

This should be the spirit of integral education: free inquiry and dialogue, beyond any system, pattern or ideology.230

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230 In “The Philosophical Child”, 2015, J. Mohr Lone defends that we must bring philosophical inquiry into the schools and educate the children within this spirit of inquiry, something that the prestigious International Baccalaureate tries to implement through its curriculum and we totally endorse here.
As Immanuel Kant pointed out in his “Reflections on Education”, the educator himself must be educated, and the history of mankind offers a huge treasure of accumulated experience from which we can certainly learn a lot.

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Some academic courses, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, present a different classification of schools of educational philosophy. Quite often, five schools are also mentioned, but the categories would change in comparison with our inventory.

- **Humanistic pedagogy**, linked to holistic education –as we defend in this book-.
- **Liberal pedagogy**, stressing intellectual development with lesson plans and courses designed to foster rational and critical thinking.
- **Behavioural pedagogy**, instilling “survival skills” in students that will allow them to navigate any situation.
- **Progressive pedagogy**, putting forward an educational agenda in accordance to progressive thought, and hence, promoting socio-cultural development and change.
- **Radical pedagogy**, similar to the previous school, although more radical, associated with the avant-garde trends of political thought and the left wing.

In the matter of classification, we can find as many formulas as we wish. The classical enumeration that we have offered above implies a more historical and philosophical perspective, while other taxonomies like the one shown here are centred in the modern world and even more precisely in contemporary debates.

Humanistic pedagogy would be obviously connected with Idealism and integral education, while liberal pedagogy would be related to the philosophical school of Realism. Behavioural pedagogy constitutes a recent trend in fashion in Anglo-Saxon countries. Progressive and radical pedagogies, very close to each other, would be historical developments from Naturalism and Pragmatism with more political connotations derived from non-conformism and the left wing.
Another categorization would differentiate the following five schools of contemporary educational philosophy:

- **Perennialism**, ensuring that students acquire understanding about the great ideas of Western civilization, since these ideas have the potential for solving problems at any time. Schools must teach concepts that are everlasting, and must provide enduring truths that are constant.
- **Essentialism**, defending that there is a common core of essential knowledge to be transmitted to the next generations. This would often be a conservative position, defending a certain set of intellectual and moral standards.
- **Existentialism**, putting forward existence before essence, and postulating the fundamental matter of individual freedom.
- **Progressivism**, focusing on the whole child rather than the school system.
- **Reconstructionism** and **critical theory**, wishing to rebuild society through education.

In general terms, any school of educational philosophy will answer to some fundamental questions, such as:

- What is the purpose of education?
- What methods should be used?
- What should be the standards and contents of the syllabus?
- What is the role of the teacher/educator?
- How do we understand the child/youth?
- What is the relationship between teacher and student?
- How should the progress of the student be evaluated?

Through sound educational philosophy and comprehensive pedagogy integral education should be able to thoroughly answer to this kind of questions.

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The contemporary debates on education can be easily traced back through history.\textsuperscript{231}

Let us take, for instance, one of the most fascinating and fruitful periods in the history of mankind, European Renaissance.

In the schools of the XVth and XVIth centuries, the two opposite tendencies of the Middle Ages and the Modern world co-existed. While medieval institutions still survived, there was a sharp questioning of the past pointing at a new world. The century of Leonardo da Vinci witnessed the reaction of Humanism in front of Scholasticism.

The French writer, Rabelais, already criticizes the scholastic ways of teaching in his ridiculous portrait of Gargantua. The eminent sage of French Renaissance, Montaigne, also condemns the ossification of the scholastic method and its intrinsic authoritarian spirit.

Some great men of Renaissance, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam, still attach a great importance to books and the art of writing and speaking. But other prominent figures of the period such as Rabelais himself emphasize the new study of experimental sciences and the direct experience of life. In England, Bacon equally stresses the importance of teaching sciences in front of the medieval weight of the humanities.

The authoritarian legacy of the Middle Ages would be radically questioned by one of the greatest philosophers of France, Descartes, who started his philosophical inquiry by examining and denouncing the limitations of the Jesuit education that he had received in his own boyhood.

The Jesuit schools had initially brought a healthy renewal of European education, but later they would be seen as excessively narrow, too literary and traditional, without taking enough into account the fast advance in the new sciences, and with too much submission of the child to the adult concepts, something that would never be favourable to the blossoming of the child from within.

In this historical period of rapid mutations and profound questioning, Descartes warns us not to accept anything as true unless we recognize it as such by ourselves. This modern spirit of free thinking in front of any inherited system of thought would not differ so much from the teachings of the great spiritual masters of India, such as Buddha, who guided his pupils towards their own experience and self-inquiry.

\textsuperscript{231} For the major debates in philosophy of education, cf Noddings N., 2006.
The grand quest for human freedom and realization throughout history presents deep similarities everywhere, in spite of the contextual and more apparent differences. Descartes opposes the internal criterion to the external authority, one crucial point on which Buddha would totally agree.

Certainly, the Cartesian “cogito ergo sum” –“In think, therefore I am”- is still a mere intellectual experience of the second eye of knowledge –the mind-. It does not enter the realm of the third eye. It does not deal with the inquiry of Ramana Maharshi about “Who am I?” The Cartesian “cogito ergo sum” is still far from the Vedantic “So Ham” – “I am God”-.

Integral education should try to bring together the Cartesian “cogito ergo sum” and the Vedantic “So Ham”; that is, the best intellectual and academic education from Europe and the West, directed towards intelligence and thinking, and the most profound spiritual education and self-inquiry from India, pointing at self-realization.

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The great debate on education in the XXIst century: Liberation (or freedom) versus protection and education.

The French scholar Alain Renaut expresses in “La liberation des enfants” (“The Liberation of Children”) some of the major concerns on education today: parents’ lack of authority, children’s rebellious behaviour, the proliferation of “professionals” of education replacing parents and even schools, the ban on physical punishment –even the slightest slap-, the crisis of traditional values and hierarchy, etc.

By tracing back the social/cultural representations of childhood through history, the French philosopher approaches the modern concept of childhood in a democratic society that sees the child as an “alter ego” or an equal in spite of obvious differences and the objective facts of immaturity and dependence –more or less according to age-.

In his celebrated essay, Renaut puts forward a crucial issue for the XXIst century: if the modern world establishes the universality of principles like democracy and equality, is it a logical consequence that the child becomes an equal to the adult? (While the traditional pedagogic relationship would be founded on intrinsic differences and some sort of hierarchy.) The matter of children’s rights, recognized at an international level by United Nations, unravels the principle of the child-citizen. However, other perspectives -more traditional- will strongly oppose children’s liberation with the argument of the protection of children.

No doubt, the controversy unfurled by Alain Renaut will become a central challenge for humanity in the next decades, and sensible arguments will have to combine -like in Renaut’s essay- anthropological, historical and philosophical considerations. As already suggested earlier in this book, the middle path should guide mankind in this delicate and fundamental matter.

- To deny the liberation of children would be reactionary.
- To blindly embrace a liberation that overlooks undeniable differences and discards essential pedagogic duties would be demagogic.
- To forget the necessary protection implies irresponsibility.
- To negate some basic freedom is authoritarian.
- And to dismiss the pedagogic process is just foolishness.

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233 G.F., Kneller, for instance, already considered educational philosophy as part of a larger field of social and political philosophy; Cf Kneller G.F., 1971.

234 For a contemporary discussion of these fundamental issues of educational philosophy, cf also Curren R., ed., 2003.
Only a sensible middle path with anthropological, historical and philosophical grounds can offer some valuable guidance in order to harmoniously combine liberation – from oppression-, protection –against abuse- and education –which makes us human-. In this matter, the growth and evolution of the child through different stages should naturally suggest a diversity of treatments: from birth to 2, 2 to 5, 5 to 7/8, 7/8 to 10/11, 10/11 to 14/15, and 14/15 to 18 or 21, the situation cannot be the same, remembering also the key stages in the olden cultures of initiation around 7/8 and 10/11.

In the horizon of this middle path, we do believe that the extraordinary tradition of philosophical Idealism –both Western and Eastern-, together with the sublime schools of mystical philosophy and wisdom, can provide precious insights to humanity –in dialogue, as we have defended here, with the other schools of educational philosophy that also have something to bring-. Here, the spirit of Enlightenment, always at the background of Alain Renaut’s reflections, is of paramount importance for the future, knowing that humanism is not different from mysticism, and that both are the culmination of Enlightenment.

Philosophical Idealism has outlined through centuries a middle path with qualified or regulated freedom avoiding all extremes. Moreover, Idealism has shown the path of love and the depth of love. Amidst contemporary polemics, Westerners have something to learn from the pure love binding master and disciple in the Indian Gurukula; here we have a shining torch to cast light on the middle path.

But this intercultural sensiveness implies that modernity drops its arrogance and accepts to look to the past or to other cultures; Western scholars must remember that the West is not the only civilization in the world, and European philosophy is not the only philosophy in human thought. Then, the Western world can discover the treasures of Indian philosophy –among other traditions-, and from the beauty and depth of Vedas, Upanishads and Vedanta, Western educationists can catch a glimpse of the amazing pedagogy of the Indian tradition, capable of giving sensible answers to the crucial contemporary debates.

The message of the great spiritual master of India, Sathya Sai Baba, can also bring essential inputs to the major pedagogic discussions, provided that Westerners acknowledge that there is such a spiritual master in India, and assume that human culture and pedagogy is not confined to the well-known evolution from Plato to John Dewey.

Immature or childish spirituality would not easily recognize the importance of Enlightenment or Kant. Narrow-minded Orientalism would not apprehend the contribution of modern philosophy. But many Western scholars still fall into the inertia of cultural imperialism instead of striving for intercultural dialogue; hence, they neglect the illuminating message of the Indian Gurukula and philosophy, or the astounding mission of one of the greatest spiritual masters of contemporary India, Sathya Sai Baba.

As quantum/ new physics have grasped, interdependence lies at the core of reality. Dialogue is essential to the survival of mankind. The middle path naturally unveils dialogue, which is the very nature of humanity and the Cosmos.
Conclusion. From Socratic dialogue to quantum physics.
An education for consciousness, an education for the whole human being.

Through this section we have examined the different schools of educational philosophy as mirrors of a global philosophical vision. We have certainly focused on Philosophical Idealism which provides the soundest theoretical frame for integral education beyond the mere cognitive or intellectual terms of realism and pragmatism and hence the mainstream school system behind them. We have insisted that the various schools of educational philosophy are ultimately complementary instead of contradictory, each stressing some particular aspects of the educational process, the human condition and reality. Needless to say, Philosophical Idealism is the school that puts forward the most comprehensive view on education because its world view is integral or holistic in front of the reductionism operated by modern materialism and its pedagogic translation into mainstream schooling.

A lot has been written and discussed about quantum physics, new science and the new emerging paradigm in the last decades. However, many have overlooked the deepest insights of the major figures of quantum physics such as Heisenberg, Planck, Schroedinger, Bohm, Goswami, etc. Quantum physicists have turned their attention to Philosophical Idealism and have understood it and praised it in front of the prejudice and clichés prevailing in a materialistic culture like ours. Quantum physicists have discovered that matter is but an illusion since it constitutes in fact a “slowed down” form of energy, which means that everything is energy. This was clearly postulated by Philosophical Idealism in India thousands of years back. Still more enthralling, quantum physicists have also concluded that what we call consciousness and is still a mystery to science represents the very key to the understanding of reality. The foundational role of consciousness was precisely asserted by all the traditions of Philosophical Idealism in the East and the West. Quantum physicists became deeply aware of this historical convergence and even delved into major texts of Philosophical Idealism, especially in India, such as Vedas or Upanishads. In the words of the renowned Cambridge scientist, P. Russell:

“I believe that when we delve as fully into the nature of mind as we have into the nature of space, time and matter, we will find consciousness to be the long-awaited bridge between science and spirit.”

Turning from India to the West, the major figure of Philosophical Idealism would be Socrates, the teacher of Plato. Everybody will know the famous motto from the Temple of Delphos reappraised by Socrates: “Know yourself and you will know the gods and the cosmos entire”. Quantum physicists have grasped all the depth of this millenary statement. Know yourself implies the foundational role of consciousness; only from here will human knowledge unveil all the secrets of the cosmos.

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Can we draw the consequences for the educational process? Reducing education to a merely cognitive/intellectual process as in mainstream schooling is but an illusion in the eyes of quantum physics and Socrates. Both Philosophical Idealism and quantum physics coincide in a broader and deeper vision of reality and therefore education, which becomes an education of the whole human being, an education for consciousness far beyond the mere bookish knowledge of mainstream schooling easily forgotten after exams are over, leaving an empty mind stupefied by tons of information and an obsession for tests that has discarded the deepest meaning of education and its uttermost purpose: to put it in words dear to Kant, the emancipation of the human being.
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Section XI.

As a Philosophical Conclusion.
“Science sans conscience n’est que ruine de l’ame.”
“Science without conscience is but the ruin of the soul.”

Michel de Montaigne – one of the fathers of Renaissance humanism.

Can the school system ignore the message of wisdom and humanism given by the greatest sages and philosophers? Hence, can the educational process teach so many secondary details or instrumental tools and ignore the most important – conscience?

One of the forerunners of modern economics, Adam Smith, warned that the famous invisible hand in society can only operate through moral beings, and that economy must be sustained upon a concept of sympathy and regard to our fellow beings.

Can the school ignore this sympathy in the classrooms and teach mere techniques? Can education refuse to form moral beings and provide information only? A valueless society may be at the root of the contemporary economic and social crisis. Science without conscience may be at the root of the most serious problems of mankind.

“Information is not knowledge.
Imagination is more important than knowledge.
It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.”

Who expressed this vision of education? An artist? No. A philosopher? No. Albert Einstein did – one of the physicists who fostered the scientific revolution of the XXTh century-.
And what did he say about the present educational system?

“It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.”
Any mind shaped by modern materialism, unaware of the scientific revolution produced by quantum physics, epigenetics, sophrology or the mind’s new science, could ask:

**Why incorporating this integral nature of education into the school system, instead of leaving it to adults on a free basis -for those who wish to try it-?**

There are three points to appropriately answer to this question:

- First. Many things taught in school are secondary or instrumental, while the matter of consciousness, the knowledge of oneself, values or ethics, are undoubtedly primary. Hence, is it coherent that the school system gets stuffed with details while it ignores the most fundamental things?

- Second, if the most important things should become optional at the adult stage, why not doing the same with all the secondary details taught in the classroom? Why not leaving for the adult stage on an optional basis the academic subjects too? If academic subjects are compulsory, it is because the idea of education is considered as capital for the sake of the growing human being. But what should be the content of this compulsory educational process? Only purely academic lessons, information and technical tools? What Albert Einstein suggested to be the most crucial dimension in education –imagination, intuition, ethics, conscience- should be out of the school system?

- Third, postponing values, ethics and conscience, and hence, the Socratic knowledge of oneself in relation and dialogue, to the adult stage on a free/optional basis implies making it more difficult for human beings, and creating more problems to mankind–while it is obvious that a lesser number of people will get to know about it-. If we start in childhood/adolescence within the school system and for all—in adequate ways to the age-groups—, the personal process of transformation that every human being should undergo will become easier, more guided, and more democratic, since it will be for all. Human society will get the benefit on a larger scale and sooner. Humanity urgently needs a radical paradigm shift inseparable from a shift in consciousness within each and everyone; but this will never happen until it becomes the very foundation of the educational process on Earth. Those who do not want this shift in education do not want the paradigm shift.

The solution of human problems is not technical; it lies at the level of consciousness. To ban the fundamental matter of conscience and the knowledge of oneself from the educational process produces the evils that Albert Einstein clearly identified:

“A perfection of means and confusion of aims seems to be our main problem.”
The metaphor of the body and food.  
The need for an education of conscience.

- It is commonly agreed that the health of our body is a direct translation of the kind of food we ingest. If our diet consumes many unhealthy ingredients, our health will certainly deteriorate, while balanced hygienic food will obviously tend to enhance health.

- In the metaphor we propose, the mind is like the body, and cultural inputs like food. Hence, if the mind consumes low culture full of violence and abject instincts, behaviour will easily tend towards all sorts of alienation and anti-social patterns.

We need not resort to philosophical foundations or scientific evidence; basic common sense should be enough to realize such a fundamental fact of human life – unfortunately, common sense has been lost in the last decades of post-modern evolution.

Still, we can recall here the astounding conclusions put forward by different branches of new science, such as quantum physics, sophrology, epigenetics or the mind’s new science, according to which there is no separation between mind and matter – or energy-, which means that consciousness is the key. Therefore, our patterns of thought certainly determine the course of our lives and the environment around us.

If the predominant mass culture today, filled with violence, vulgarity, low instincts and negative thoughts, is fostering all sorts of alienation and anti-social behaviour that we later deplore;

Is it possible THROUGH EDUCATION to promote higher forms of culture and more positive thoughts in order to help the growing human being to transform himself or herself towards a better human being?

Objectivity has been a major fallacy of the age of mechanism. Through the Observer Effect, quantum physics has demonstrated that there is no separation between the subject and the object of observation. Neutrality is another fallacy of the liberal age; nothing is neutral in human life, we must make a conscious decision about the content we morally want or socially need.

Then, educators cannot escape from their moral responsibility and pedagogic function when facing the contents to be provided to children THROUGH EDUCATION.

Here lies the Kantian concept of emancipation of the human being and its historical majority. Here lies the Enlightened project of human dignity and the highest ideals of Humanism.
From technocracy to humanism: Human values and self-inquiry.

The present syllabi are still stuffed with an overwhelming excess of information that is not digested by students, only vomited in the exam hall and very easily forgotten when the exams are over, while the capacity of thinking in a free and creative way and expressing oneself is largely underdeveloped.

This general scenario reaches the most dramatic extreme in Asian countries like India, where around 80% of the children are forced to memorize without understanding from dull boring text books full of mistakes in a pedagogic aberration that has been called “the robotic system”.

In the horizon of a paradigm shift, this Project puts forward a holistic and humanistic pedagogy fostering the deepest facets of the human being, largely neglected by modernity, like sensitiveness and tenderness, creativity and imagination, beauty and love.

Education can only be holistic since Man is also holistic like the Cosmos itself –as quantum/new physics have demonstrated-. Hence, a holistic pedagogy cannot ignore anymore the deepest spiritual dimension of the human being.

However, this is not the realm of religion –as an organized system of beliefs with social hierarchies- but rather the depth of the inner being, a free interior spirituality that has been historically overlooked and even persecuted by orthodox religions. As Jesus Christ said, the Realm of Heaven lies within each one of us.

This new dimension can only evolve through free self-inquiry towards self-knowledge, following the immortal saying engraved on the Temple of Delphos and taken up by Socrates: -Know yourself. This implies the crucial role of Consciousness, as the philosophy of Vedanta in India has always stressed.
On the threshold of the terror of extermination camps, where the wardens were torturing and assassinating with academic degrees and even Ph.Ds, a group of friends – Jewish and Catholic, three women and one man- would meet to hear the stirring voice of that Mystika/ Mysterion coming from the depth within.

And from that Heaven inside us –as Lord Jesus would say-, from that Brahman at the core of our Atman –as Sri Shankaracharya would say-, the message of Mystika/ Mysterion would stay for generations to come to open the doors of a new world that lies inside each one of us:

- “Be born, my child,
   It is already possible.
   There is a thread linking
   the old existence to the new one.
   Cut it, infant, free yourself.
   Here, you are One with Him,
   Here, you are Yourself.
   What is empty, will be filled.
   He who he seeks, will find.

   The stone has been raised
   towards the sky,
   And Life has been trodden.
   It is not what He has taught.
   The stone will be thrown down,
   And Life will be raised.
   Every Cathedral becomes a grave
   If we only announce the Word.
   After the message of Joy,
   Reality must come.

   Rejoice, you are men!
   You will become MAN.
   Your task is to accomplish
   this degree of being.

   In the depth of the heart,
   The dawn is raising.
   Inside, we can already see it.
   Outside, you only see the suffering
   of the Earth.
   There is only one suffering:
   To be outside.
   There is darkness only outside.
   There is death only outside.
   It is inside that there is Life.
   Our task is the New World.
You must know
what is your destiny.
To recognize your task
Is to see
In its purity your individuality.
You do what you must do:
You transform yourself.
If you transform yourself,
Matter also
Has to transform itself.

Joy is the sign.
Joy is the air of the new world.
What is peace?
It is not the pause
between two wars.
Peace has never existed,
but it will be.
It does not look like anything old.
Peace is the new vibration.
Joy is infinite.

What is Nirvana?
There where two become One.
There where the parallels join.”

Quotations from one of the most beautiful, profound and inspirational books in the history of mankind: “Die Antwort der Engel”, in the special German version presented by Gitta Mallasz and published by Daimon Verlag in Einsiedeln, Switzerland.

It has been translated into French as “Dialogues avec l’Ange” by Aubier, into Spanish as “La respuesta del Angel” by Sirio, and into English as “Talking with Angels” by Daimon Verlag. The original Hungarian text was also published by Daimon Verlag.
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“The highest form of human intelligence
Is to observe yourself without judgement.”

“To transform the world, we must begin with ourselves.”

J. Krishnamurti.