

# Review of: "Understanding on Social Utopia: West to East"

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The article entitled "Understanding on Social Utopia: West to East" by Sadiat Mannan is an enjoyable and interesting read. I find it rather sketchy in some sections, such as when it refers to Marx, but above all, it seems to me that it would be worthwhile to delve more deeply into Tagore's own theory of education, for although the article sets out to show the viability of a utopian society through education, I think (humbly) that it falls short of that purpose. Tagore would not be the first to conceive of education as the path to a utopian society; in the West, the clear example is Plato. If Tagore's characteristic focus is on the creativity of free spirits (this term needs to be explored further), two parallels open up. On the one hand, with Nietzsche and his utopian future of the *Übermensch*, also from an evolutionary approach. And on the other hand, a comparison with the pedagogical doctrines of the time, in particular the so-called "active learning". Leaving Nietzsche aside, rather than a comparison with Rousseau or Marx, given that the central motif is education, it would have been more interesting to introduce Tagore in parallel to that large group of pedagogues of the time such as John Dewey, Montessori, Kerschensteiner (*Arbeitschule* or work-school movement), Stanly Hall, Francisco Giner de los Ríos, and the creators of the Free University of Brussels. In all of them, there is a utopian vision with regard to the transformation of society, and also in all of them, the principles they pursue and respect are the freedom of the child, autonomy, learning by acting, etc. A curious fact is that at the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* in Madrid (Spain), Francisco Giner de los Ríos brought Tagore to give talks (1921), and with him and other intellectuals and pedagogues of the time, Tagore exchanged his ideas, mutually influencing each other in what became known as the New School movement. These are ideas that I hope will help you to further discuss the educational method employed by Tagore and to analyse its influences in and from the West. This New School movement, on the other hand, has its roots in thinkers such as Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Krause. Further back, in Comenius (16th century). They all sought to transform society, or rather to prepare the evolution of humanity through education. Perhaps you can put Tagore's advances in perspective with these ideas, at least with respect to the West.