

We are in the midst of a crisis of massive proportions and grave global significance. No, I do not mean the global economic crisis that began in 2008. At least then everyone knew that a crisis was at hand, and many world leaders worked quickly and desperately to find solutions. Indeed, consequences for governments were grave if they did not find solutions, and many were replaced in consequence. No, I mean a crisis that goes largely unnoticed, like a cancer; a crisis that is likely to be, in the long run, far more damaging to the future of democratic self-government: a worldwide crisis in education.

Radical changes are occurring in what democratic societies teach the young, and these changes have not been well thought through. Thirsty for national profit, nations, and their systems of education, are heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive. If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements. The future of the world's democracies hangs in the balance.

What are these radical changes? The humanities and the arts are being cut away, in both primary/secondary and college/university education, in virtually every nation of the world. Seen by policy-makers as (A) at a time when nations must cut away all useless things in order to stay competitive in the global market, they are rapidly losing their place in curricula, and also in the minds and hearts of parents and children. Indeed, what we might call the humanistic aspects of science and social science — the imaginative, creative aspect, and the aspect of rigorous critical thought — are also losing ground as nations prefer to pursue short-term profit by the cultivation of (B) suited to profit-making.

This crisis is facing us, but we have not yet faced it. We go on as if everything were business as usual, when in reality great changes of emphasis are evident all over. We haven't really deliberated about these changes, we have not really chosen them, and yet they increasingly limit our future.

We are pursuing the possessions that protect, please, and comfort us — what Tagore* called our material "covering." But we seem to be forgetting about the soul, about what it is for thought to open out of the soul and connect person to world in a rich, subtle, and complicated manner about what it is to approach another person as a soul, rather than as (C) or an obstacle to one's own plans; about what it is to talk as someone who has a soul to someone else whom one sees as similarly deep and complex.

The word "soul" has religious connotations for many people, and I neither insist on these nor reject them. Each person may hear them or ignore them. What I do insist on, however, is what both Tagore and Alcott* meant by this word: the faculties of thought and imagination that make us human and make our relationships rich human relationships, rather than relationships of (D) and manipulation. When we meet in society, if we have not learned to see both self and other in that way, imagining in one another inner faculties of thought and emotion, democracy is bound to fail, because democracy is built upon respect and concern, and these (in turn) are built upon the ability to see other people as human beings, not simply as objects.

注 Tagore タゴール(1861-1941)。インドの詩人、哲学者。

Alcott オールコット(1799-1888)。米国の教育家、社会改革家。

問1 下線部(1)の意味する内容を35字以内の日本語で説明しなさい。ただし、句読点も1字に数えます。

問2 空所 (A)~(D)に入る最も適切な語句を下から選び、記号で答えなさい。ただし、それぞれの語句は一度しか使えません。

A (7) useless frills

O (9) a mere useful instrument

問3 下線部(3)の意味と最も近い文を下から一つ選び、記号で答えなさい。

(a) We are aware of the critical consequences of the changes in education which we have chosen, and we have already taken actions.

(i) We are fully aware that great changes in education are going on all over the world, so we have carefully thought about them.

(u) We are doing business as usual because the serious changes in business have not yet occurred.

(k) Despite critical changes in education, we have not fully considered their serious consequences.

問4 下線部(2)、(4)を日本語に訳しなさい。

(2) 国の平和を強く望んでいるので、国々とその教育システムは、民主主義が存続するために必要とされる機能をよく考えずに捨てようとしている。

(1) 経済危機の解決策が見つからず、次の政権が交代できる結果となったこと。

(4) なぜなら、民主主義は敬意と気遣いの上に作られ、

これらは、同様に、他人を卑に物と見てはならぬ。人として見る能力の上に作られるからである。