

FRIEDRICH'S
NEWSLETTER 2017



Cover: Seebergsee, between Arnensee and Col du Pillon, near Gstaad, Switzerland

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This year’s Newsletter has been edited by Javier Gómez Rodríguez

Dear Friends,

It is a joy for me to be once again sending you a collection of news, comments and quotations from the past year related to the Krishnamurti schools, Foundations and study centres. And I hope that you, too, will find something of interest within these pages.

Venkatesh Onkar, of Centre for Learning (CFL) in Bangalore, sent an appreciative note about the Calendar and the Newsletter. In particular his comment regarding the Newsletter expresses the simple intention of this publication:

I received the calendars and newsletter a few days ago. They are, as usual, beautifully produced and full of fascinating material. It is very interesting to know about people, ideas and events in the wider K world; reading your newsletter certainly gave me a feel of that.

The first Newsletter I wrote was in 1989. It was written by hand in German at my place in Switzerland. The first English Newsletter was produced in 1990, also in Switzerland. From 1991 the Newsletter was issued from Rishi Valley, Ojai and Brockwood Park.

The first Newsletter with photographs – *The Delights of India: Dec 1991 to Jan 1992* – shows a picture with Pupul Jayakar and myself at her apartment in Bombay (Mumbai), taken by Derek Hook, whose first time it was in India. He has been going to India every year since then. Derek became famous among the students of the different schools as a brilliant storyteller.

From 1997 to 2004, the Newsletter was included in The Link. From 2005, it was again printed separately. It will continue to be printed until the end of my life and perhaps beyond.

This year all the previous issues of The Link and the Newsletter were bound in book form and sent to the libraries of the various Krishnamurti places that wanted copies. The outgoing principal of Oak Grove School, Willem Zwart,

wrote a very touching comment, which is a reward to us for all the work it took to produce these documents:

Today I received the three bound volumes of the Link and your newsletters. I am so very grateful as, in my view, these are great records of inquiry and connection over many years and a wonderful resource for anyone doing research or simply wanting to get a sense of how people connect to the teachings. Finally, they represent also a historical period, a chapter in the life of a non-movement movement.

Many thanks for going through the trouble of putting these together. They will from here on live in the Head of School's office, where they will be made available to anyone interested.

Last year's Newsletter ended in summer. Normally, in September we go to Brockwood Park, in October to Haus Sonne in the Black Forest and after that we spend the winter in Rougemont. But this time it was a bit different. We stayed on in Rougemont in September. I had an eye operation for glaucoma and an ear operation after otitis blocked my hearing almost completely. I couldn't hear my alarm clock anymore.

But this is now over. The hearing is as bad as before but at least not worse. I don't want any hearing aid. I tried four different types and they all broke down. I didn't hear people's voices better but all the other noises were more audible.

As most of these problems were resolved in September, we went, as usual, to Haus Sonne. It's a silent place in an amazing landscape with three small streams, two coming down on either side of the property and one running in front of it. One steps out of the house and is directly in nature, where one can take wonderful walks through beautiful Autumn forests and grassy slopes where the cattle graze. There is one special flat stretch of dirt road on the hill-top for doing my running and walking exercises. I run seventy meters, walk for another hundred and repeat the cycle ten times. I do this same exercise almost daily when in Brockwood and Rougemont.



Eucalyptus at Pepper Tree Retreat in Ojai, California

This time we went to Brockwood in November. I was a bit worried about the English weather but it turned out to be very pleasant. I took many pictures of the wonderful Autumn colours.

Especially interesting was the weekend at the end of the semester when the parents came to get their children. It is then they hold the school concert, which is an opportunity for all these gifted young people to display their musical and acting talents.

Music and theatre have become a very important component of the education at Brockwood. The drama workshop has thrived in great part due to **G rard Bayle**'s masterful and creative input. G rard is a very self-effacing person with an impressive curriculum. Here is what his friend Gopal, who's something of a theatrical person himself, wrote about him:

G rard was living in Algeria, moved to Paris in 1956 and joined Le Cours Simon, a well-known drama school. His studies and work there were interrupted by military service from 1962 to 1963. He has worked with the famous company of Jean-Louis Barrault and also studied with Robert Wilson in the US.

Since 1983 G rard has been performing the main character in Eugene Ionesco's *La Le on (The Lesson)* at the Theatre de la Huchette. This theatre was founded in 1948 and began staging Ionesco's plays. February 16, 1957 is the historic date on which Ionesco's first two plays, *La Cantatrice Chauve (The Bald Soprano)* and *La Le on*, were permanently combined in the repertoire. This was the only theatre with the rights to produce Ionesco's plays in Paris and people from all over the world came to see them. With 57 years of uninterrupted performances, the Ionesco Show holds the world record for a show running nonstop in the same theatre.

G rard worked at Brockwood from 1985–1991, and again from 1997–2002, teaching French and Drama as well as working in the kitchen. He continues to visit Brockwood to conduct theatre workshops. G rard has also directed and performed the play *Copenhagen* with Gopal at various places in India

and the UK. Gérard visited the K schools in India for the 1st time in 1987. Since then he has been back several times to conduct theatre workshops. Since 2001 he has visited almost every year.

Gérard's visits to the schools in India are greatly appreciated, as reflected in the following note in last year's issue of the CFL Newsletter:

We were also honoured to have Gérard Bayle working again this year on theatre with various age groups: on the serious play *Uncle Vanya*, by Anton Chekhov, with the seniors, and a Pirate Play with the younger ones. The touch of both lightness and rigour he brings to all activities is unique, and the children have begun to look forward to Februaries with Gérard!

We were in Rougemont from December to March. I had never seen such a sunny winter up there before, though we also got some snow. It's always amazing how much light and silence it brings. But in general it was too warm and the snow in the valley melted away quickly. There were only a few days when I couldn't do the running exercises.

My winter and summer programmes are quite different. The times I go for walks and have my meals change, but one thing is constant throughout: that I get up between four and five a.m. and the first thing I do is dictations.

I always try to be in England when spring is there. This year we enjoyed our stay enormously, with lots of contact with Brockwood. The whole place is full of new energy, with all the lovely students and nice mature students, and with young new teachers, among them former students Gregor and Thomas.

Antonio is now co-principal, along with Gopal, and Sunsong is doing a lot. Professional people from outside are in charge of the garden, maintenance and cooking. The food at Brockwood was always good but now it is excellent. The woman in charge of the kitchen was once the head of a restaurant which had a Michelin star. She even has an interest in K, as does the maintenance man; the gardener, I am not sure. Mina was an accountant and is now overseeing the

accounts department. Nasser, her husband, was a lawyer and is now overseeing the administration; he's also the Director of the Foundation. They are in their late 30's or early 40's. Everything is in order now, just as the government requires.

One fantastic development has been the completion in June of the **K Video Collection**. This comprises 575 full-length recordings that are now offered free to the world on the foundations' YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/kfoundation). This channel has some 40 to 50,000 subscribers. A similar Complete Audio project is being contemplated.

I spoke with a 14-year-old student from Israel. I told her I was sure she couldn't imagine what it is like being as old as I am. And she replied that she could not even imagine what it is like being 16, 17 or 18!

Although our imaginations have their limits, one thing is for sure, namely that there is a constant and inevitable generational change. Autumn comes, the leaves fall and new leaves crown the new canopy of the trees. But there is something enduring and vital about the teachings that stands for a youthful self-renewal and keeps some of us going to the last, as **Dr. Krishna** conveyed rather eloquently in a recent **letter to me from Rajghat**:

Dear Friedrich,

Thank you for your warm and affectionate letter. I will be 80 in January 2018 and Minoo 81. We are in reasonable health for our age and still living in the same house by the Ganga which K gave us for our stay. It is becoming harder to travel and the body protests. Jet lag takes nearly three weeks to go completely! I am thinking that one should not put the body through so much strain, but it gives me a lot of satisfaction to be doing what K asked me to do, namely go round the world once a year and speak about the teachings.

In Rajghat I have helped the foundation find a new Director, new Principals for the college and school and a new Secretary. I work only as in-charge of

the Study Centre, mainly discussing K's teachings with visitors. In this I am assisted by two young men who are developing nicely and can take over from me. I feel that the best administrator is one who makes himself redundant, and that is what I have been doing. I plan to move into a flat next to my eldest daughter and son-in-law, near the university, some time after September 2018. I bought that flat a few years ago and it is rented out right now. I have informed the foundation of my intention. I do not want Rajghat to bear the burden of looking after us in our old age.

KFA wants to invite me to their study centre for a year starting Sept. 2018. I would like to help them, but problems of visa and medical insurance are intimidating. I am glad your book about K is being translated into other languages. Mine has been printed now in Italian and Spanish and will be out also in French by the end of the year. Would be nice if someone could translate it also into German. I have not been to Scandinavia now for nearly 5 years. Contacts there have grown too old and cannot organize things. Travel is decreasing gradually, which is good.

One by one, our old associates are leaving. Satish and Rajesh went a few years ago and now I hear that some other close friends may not be very long with us. All this is inevitable, I suppose, but it still feels sad. We must also be prepared to go any day now. The world will carry on!

With best wishes,
Affectionately,
Krishna

This year spring was very early all over Europe. By March in Rougemont the snowdrops were almost gone, crocuses were blooming and the small wild yellow mountain daffodils were already out. The English weather tends to be rather unpredictable, a shifting kaleidoscope of sun, wind and rain, and the temperatures can fluctuate quite a lot. Some days it got so cold I had to light the stove, as the central heating was not working properly. Luckily I had already collected some pinecones at Brockwood to start a fire.

At that time of year the Grove is in bloom and I went to take the first pictures of the daffodils. I also ran in the rose garden, along the gravel path between boxwood hedges. Down here it is easier to run than at the higher altitude. There is so much oxygen that I hardly need to breathe!

K: Yoga means skill in action

Yoga means skill in action, not merely the practice of certain exercises which are necessary to keep the body healthy, strong, sensitive – which includes eating the right food, not stuffing it with a lot of meat and so on. (We won't go into all that, you are all probably meat eaters.) Skill in action demands great sensitivity of the body, a lightness of the body, eating the right food, not what your tongue dictates, or what you are used to.”

The Flight of the Eagle, pg. 44

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As usual, I had lunch at the school, where I met up with our old friends Ray and Bill. Ray seemed to be in a good mood, even though he would be leaving soon for his retirement back in his native Canada. Raman and Bill said they would visit him in Toronto. Following lunch, I went for tea and dessert at the Centre, where I met very interesting guests, to whom I gave copies of *The Beauty of the Mountain*. They like receiving it as a present and value it especially for its more intimate portrait of K. Lyn Lesch, a K-inspired educator from Chicago who is doing research and writing a book about the impact of digital technology on the human brain, wrote expressing his appreciation:

I just finished reading your wonderful *The Beauty of the Mountain*, which was given to me by my brother, who recently returned from Ojai. The book was extremely interesting to me since I used to travel to Ojai in the late 1970's and mid 1980's to hear Krishnamurti speak. I actually attended the



Rhododendrons in the Grove at Brockwood Park, England

last talk he gave there in 1985. So being introduced to Krishnamurti on a more personal level was more than a little interesting. Luckily, I was able to have the same experience this summer when I went to Ojai and was able to spend time talking with Michael Krohnen in his office in Pine Cottage ... Thank you once again for *The Beauty of the Mountain*. I read it in a single day and enjoyed it immensely.

This humorous comment by Javier seems to be a good description of how I am functioning. The 'guardian angel' is a reference to K calling me, in French, 'l'ange gardien':

You are actually a kind of catalyst. You bring people together, put them in touch with each other, let the chemistry work and then disappear from the scene. We used to have an expression to that effect, something like 'doing an FG'. I suppose that's also the function of real guardian angels. They intervene when necessary and otherwise keep their distance, for they are continuously tuning in to the music of the spheres and for that they require great solitude.

Michael actually helped me edit the first edition of my memoir, which was originally written in German. His own memoir, *The Kitchen Chronicles: One Thousand and One Lunches with J. Krishnamurti*, is a loving tribute to K at his most informal and personable. Michael has become an important referent for all the visitors to the KFA centre in Ojai and he delights us with his updates of the goings on there. Here is the **report from Ojai** he sent us this past March:

It's been a very busy time. So many things, so many people! I don't quite know where to start to tell you about recent happenings here. Okay, most importantly, Stephen and Wendy arrived and are staying upstairs in the Banyan Room, where you, the Bohms, and myself stayed. They are both in good shape and it's great to see them again. This evening we are going to have a "welcome back" party for them at Karen & Jeff's in the Matilija Canyon, where now the streams are running abundantly after the recent rains. It's a get-together primarily for 'old-timers' like myself, Rex, Anat, Didde and Wayne, Darcy & Carol, etc.

I think I already told you about the Chinese group of ten visiting KEC (that's now the new designation for the whole east-end operation, including PTR, Library, KFA offices and archives, and resident student program) to whom I gave a presentation on K, expertly translated by Jing Lin. By the way, she'll be leaving Ojai next week and after some time in Utah will return to China.

This weekend we are having a fairly large group of twenty ladies for a yoga workshop, taking place mostly in the Pavilion. Yesterday afternoon was an exception in that I gave them a presentation on K, his life and work, in the large room at Pine Cottage. It lasted one and a half hours and was quite enjoyable. And I think most of them also enjoyed it, especially when I recounted a number of K's jokes. Some of the group are staying at the PTR, and the workshop will go on until tomorrow afternoon.

It is lovely to see how active the Ojai centre is and to get news from our old friends there. It is also a great relief to hear that the streams in the canyons are flowing abundantly after the recent rains. Ojai, like Rishi Valley, tends to suffer a good deal from drought. The surrounding landscape goes dry as tinder and the hills blaze up with brush fires, a situation made all the more extreme by climate change. Michael, who has lived in the valley for decades now, sent us the outline of the presentation he intended to give at the KFA May Gathering, titled ***"J. Krishnamurti – An Environmental Philosopher and Lover of Nature"***:

It's always been difficult to categorize J. Krishnamurti according to conventional standards: was he a philosopher; was he a psychologist, an educator, a religious or spiritual teacher, a guru? Personally he disliked and avoided all labels, and categorically denied that he was a guru or religious teacher. Even so, he did give public talks, interviews, had dialogues, and was passionately interested in education.

And so his "teachings" dealt very directly with what sometimes is referred to as "perennial questions": birth & death, freedom, fear, God and the Ultimate, meditation, relationship, the sense of ego, conflict, division, violence, and in a general sense, the many aspects and problems of human existence on earth, in their everyday manifestations.

And when one listens to any of his recorded talks, or reads any of his books, especially those written by himself, like the various diaries, one invariably comes upon poetical descriptions of nature – an appreciation of the beauty of the earth and the universe. He presents the human being as part of nature, asserts that if we lose contact with nature we lose contact with ourselves and the rest of humanity, and that unless this fact is clearly seen and realized in one's daily life, confusion, conflict and misery will prevail individually and collectively.

In his own day-to-day life, Krishnamurti loved nature, cared for flowers and trees, cherished animals, and in the true sense of the word, was an environmentalist, a lover of nature, not theoretically, but in a quite direct and immediate manner.

So when we realize this simple fact, the question arises: am I aware of the beauty of nature? Does this perception have a direct impact on how I live, how I act, how I conduct my life? Do I truly care for the earth? Do I understand my place in the large, cosmic scheme of life?

K: Establishing a deep relationship with nature

It is odd that we have so little relationship with nature, with the insects and the leaping frog and the owl that hoots among the hills calling for its mate. We never seem to have a feeling for all living things on the earth. If we would establish a deep abiding relationship with nature we would never kill an animal for our appetite, we would never harm, vivisect, a monkey, a dog, a guinea pig for our benefit. We would find other ways to heal our wounds, heal our bodies. But the healing of the mind is something totally different. That healing gradually takes place if you are with nature, with that orange on the tree, and the blade of grass that pushes through the cement, and the hills covered, hidden, by the clouds.

Krishnamurti to Himself, pg. 10
© 1987 Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Ltd

K's love of nature and environmental concern are not only reflected in his life and writings but are integral to his educational approach. Two of Brockwood's former students, Suprabha Seshan and Duncan McKenzie, have answered Michael's questions by dedicating their lives to doing amazing conservation and agricultural work at the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary in Kerala and at an organic farm in Pondicherry. They also run educational programmes for children and adults, helping them to appreciate nature more deeply and to earn livelihoods in harmony with nature. Duncan is also a talented musician and Suprabha writes environmental articles – the most recent, titled *Turn Off the Lights*, for the Indian Quarterly, an extract from which appeared in my last Newsletter.

Another former Brockwood student, Sebastian Runde, does similar work in Italy. He began a design career in Zurich but gave it all up to move to an old farmhouse. Here is the **report from Umbria** he sent us at the end of last year, in the middle of a very cold winter:

It has been a challenging year; the earthquakes are rather trying. Here we had some substantial structural damages to the old house, but it is still standing, so I count myself lucky. Others were not so fortunate. As I am also volunteering as a paramedic and ambulance driver, I've been working in the areas where frightful damage occurred. Now with the snow and extremely cold weather the people are in desperate need of help. The devastation I have seen there is beyond words and, strangely, it has a very particular smell. I believe it is the same smell one would notice in a war zone, the unmistakable smell of destruction and death. We have been working in the area since August and it has been a rather difficult task to accomplish.

All through the summer I did workshops with children here on the farm; they got to know the animals and we went out into the woods to learn about plants and wildlife – a most wonderful experience, I must say. In the beginning, the thought of having groups of up to 40 children aged between 5 and 9 on the farm was rather frightening, but it turned out to be ever so delightful. Children are so curious, so open to everything. Seeing their joy as they learned about plants, ate flowers, rode donkeys and prepared meals with

the wild vegetables we foraged in the woods, was blissful. The connection to nature is paramount for everybody and unfortunately it seems to dwindle away for many. We are constantly connected to the Internet thanks to our smart phones and we seem to miss out on a big chunk of reality.

Work is in progress at the moment on a vegan cookbook, something I basically have been pushed into. I've been a vegetarian all my life and for quite a number of years now I do not eat any animal products. I never use any industrially processed foods or soy products. And I love to eat food that is pleasing to look at. When one lives alone there is a danger of becoming too 'rustic', eating something quickly in the kitchen, etc. Well, I always lay the table nicely and prepare a beautiful plate, even just for myself, so as not to fall into that trap. Friends who own a restaurant asked me to give a talk and an introduction to vegan cuisine for their guests and thus the vegan nights were born. Now I cook and talk at the restaurant on Thursdays. These evenings are always booked weeks in advance and people start coming from all over Italy. That's funny, as I never considered myself a chef, just someone who finds good food so incredibly inspiring.

And talking of inspiration, it has been 30 years since I first went to Brockwood. Time passes so incredibly quickly. K basically repeated, in a very simple way, the same thing for 60 years and yet it is always new. It is so close to the very ground of life, new like every day. The teachings, Brockwood and the contacts we keep with each other, have a tremendous influence on the way we live. I believe I wrote you already a few years ago that I would not lead this kind of life without the teachings. It was K's voice asking, nay, commanding "Find out what you really want to do", that made me leave everything behind, made me realise how wonderful and important it is to inspire – well, to truly live, truly be present for others and do as little harm as possible to the planet.

All my best,
Sebastian



Fishing boat on Adyar Beach, Chennai, India

K: The light of a thousand winters

It had been a cool day and the sky had been open and there was the light of a thousand winters; it was short, penetrating and expansive; it went with you everywhere, it wouldn't leave you. Like perfume, it was in the most unexpected places; it seemed to have entered into the most secret corners of one's being. It was a light that left no shadow and every shadow lost its depth; because of it, all substance lost its density; it was as though you looked through everything, through the trees on the other side of the wall, through your own self. Your self was as opaque as the sky and as open. It was intense and to be with it was to be passionate, not the passion of feeling or desire, but a passion that would never wither or die. It was a strange light, it exposed everything and made vulnerable, and what had no protection was love. You couldn't be what you were, you were burnt out, without leaving any ashes and unexpectedly there was not a thing but that light.

Krishnamurti's Notebook, pg. 315
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K: The right kind of education

The right kind of education is concerned with individual freedom, which alone can bring true cooperation with the whole, with the many; but this freedom is not achieved through the pursuit of one's own aggrandizement and success. Freedom comes with self-knowledge, when the mind goes above and beyond the hindrances it has created for itself through craving its own security.

It is the function of education to help each individual to discover all these psychological hindrances, and not merely impose upon him new patterns of conduct, new modes of thought. Such impositions will never awaken intelligence, creative understanding, but will only further condition the individual. Surely, this is what is happening throughout the world, and that is why our problems continue and multiply.

It is only when we begin to understand the deep significance of human life that there can be true education; but to understand, the mind must intelligently free itself from the desire for reward which breeds fear and conformity. If we regard our children as personal property, if to us they are the continuance of our petty selves and the fulfilment of our ambitions, then we shall build an environment, a social structure in which there is no love, but only the pursuit of self-centred advantages.

Education and the Significance of Life, pp. 83–84
© 1953 Krishnamurti Foundation of America

The question of authority is central to K's approach to education. For K there is functional authority but there is no authority psychologically. In the process of learning there is no fundamental difference between the staff and students.

These differences in terms of status and function require some sensitive discussion. With the title *'In Relation to the Crisis in the World, What Should our Schools be Doing?'* Mary-Ann Ridgway, Head of Inwoods, has made a brave attempt to tackle this educational issue and its broader implications for the state of the world. This article was published in the current issue of the *Brockwood Observer* and I distributed it to over seventy educators on my mailing list. This is a slightly edited version.

Conflict, wars, monopolies and environmental destruction are so prevalent because humans are infused with an atmosphere of authority and control in both obvious and subtle ways, and are therefore heavily conditioned. In response, our tendency is to follow or rebel, to fight or flee, to become the dominator or the one being dominated. And as children grow they fall increasingly into one camp or another, hopping between them as incidents present themselves. As they grow, they continue to have relationships that evolve in this limited way. The emphasis is then rarely on connection and solutions to the bigger picture of working together towards a harmonious planet, because we are getting too lost in the daily details of winning and losing one's personal battles, and thus teaching our young to do the same.

The school environment is more often than not infested with hierarchical structures, the pedestal of knowledge, and the accepted power of the adult. And because of a system in which large numbers of children are grouped and shuffled from one set of tasks to another, while the adults are managed to fit in and produce the expected results, there is little scope for creating a mind that approaches life very differently. In fact, these environments greatly contribute to a violent world in the way that they coerce through punishments and manipulative rewards, and instil the belief that people must be managed.

To function differently as a school, firstly we need to remove the hierarchical labels such as director, head, superior, leader, manager, etc. or clearly redefine them as 'keepers' of a functional role that also aims to support the spirit of working and learning together. Objects, timetables, hazards and routines can be managed, but not people. People need an atmosphere of care and affection, free of fear, to be able to observe themselves and learn together non-judgmentally.

Authority is so powerful that it can convince people to kill or hurt another human being, or passively allow this to happen. Authority permits us to destroy the planet's resources, and intimidates and divides us from one another within our own organisations, no matter how small. To raise the young to be free of these destructive effects of authority we need to raise them to be highly sensitive and aware of their own psychological movements and intentions. We need to provide a unique culture and safe atmosphere that allows them to question other people's motives while equally exploring their own. They need to be given the space to think things through independently, logically, compassionately, and be attentive to the tendency to comply or resist. They need the chance to observe themselves in the here-and-now so that insights can arise from that inner work, resulting in right action rather than reaction, compassion rather than corruption.

Our role in these schools is to bring about a mind that is a light to itself.

K: Being a light to oneself

One has to be a light to oneself; this light is the law. There is no other law. All other laws are made by thought and so fragmentary and contradictory. To be a light to oneself is not to follow the light of another, however reasonable, logical, historical, and however convincing. You cannot be a light to yourself if you are in the dark shadows of authority, of dogma, of conclusion. Morality is not put together by thought; it is not the outcome of environmental pressure, it is not of yesterday, of tradition. Morality is the child of love and love is not desire and pleasure.

Krishnamurti's Journal, pg. 35

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Recently Gopal and Sunsong took several Brockwood students to attend a talk on "What Can Neuroscience Offer Alternative Education?" hosted by the British Educational Research Association. The other attendees were professors and

doctoral students, and they were very taken with Brockwood students' accounts of their studies. The new Brockwood curriculum is more established now, although it continues to develop. On hearing about the new curriculum, our friend Booth Harris, from Ventura, California, expressed his satisfaction that it is partly informed by the work of Eleanor Duckworth:

You mentioned Eleanor Duckworth in the previous issue of your Newsletter. Her research, writing and educational work (which is grounded in Piaget, whom she worked with) were super personal inspirations when teaching science at the Oak Grove School. Ironically, this more activity-centered, individualized approach, with its reduced emphasis on the authority and learning of the teacher and the accompanying intent to impose a rote body of knowledge into the minds of children, was at that time unfortunately suspect to a vocal, highly educated few of the parents in the school which, sadly, generated controversy. In any event, she is a humane and thoughtful pioneer and it's pleasing to see her associated with the education at Brockwood.

Brockwood has also begun to strengthen its connections with those colleges and universities in the US and the UK that have programmes more in tune with its approach to education. These connections are important, as such places are more likely to appreciate and accept Brockwood students.

Below is an informal email written by one of last year's Brockwood students to her teachers, along with an excerpt from her college application. This is interesting, as it shows that some universities, in this case Bennington, will accept students who don't go through the usual and sometimes cruel exam system. We hope it is useful for others to explore and support **alternative approaches to academic study** and access to higher education.

While at Brockwood, the student writing below decided not to do exams and to focus instead on her portfolios and projects related to education and art. During her time at Brockwood she had to contend with the conservative anxieties of others, both peers and adults, as well as her own insecurities. While there was no guarantee of university admission, she was supported



At Brockwood Park, England

throughout this process by her teachers, her parents and the courage of her conviction in doing the right thing, a strong portfolio and personal statement with text and photos, and strong recommendation letters from her teachers.

I think this was possible because Brockwood has an energetic and dedicated staff bringing new life to the school. They share a common ground in their interest in the teachings and their understanding of the school, and this provides a good foundation for working together and meeting challenges in a spirit of learning.

To my Wonderful Brockwood teachers,

I hope you guys are doing well, and that the new adventures are truly adventurous!

I am writing to tell you guys that I got admission at a Liberal Arts College in the US and received a four-year scholarship ... They were truly impressed by my education!

Thank you guys for the wonderful time at Brockwood, and for being such inspirations, for being teachers, friends, and family ... What we are doing at Brockwood is truly special and I am so happy that I got to be a part of it. It made me who I am today and it makes me happy to learn that there are colleges that do the same, that look at who the person is and not their letter grades ... So, yes, people can get into college without grades and certificates, and that is wonderful news, especially at a time like this when it seems like the world is moving backwards!!

I am attaching my application if you guys would like to take a look ... I applied through the Dimensional Application where you profile yourself ... Words are not enough for me to describe the wonderful time that I had at Brockwood and I don't want to. I just want to give you all a BIG Brockwood hug, and thank you for all that you are doing!

Please come visit India (and now, America) anytime and I would be so happy to have you guys with us

Lots of love to you all,

A.

In her portfolio, A says:

As part of my education I have had to take very challenging decisions about ordinary situations which are followed thoughtlessly – like taking exams. I decided not to take any standardized tests about a year ago, because I felt that a letter grade or number does not do justice to who I am; I am much more. I decided to take full responsibility for my own learning and education, by exploring my interests, wherever they might lead me.

This decision has lead me through the most beautiful explorations, engagements, understandings, creations, and relationships, but also through times of fear, worry, confusion, exasperation and uncertainty. Although not taking the conventional route was a hard decision and, actually, a more challenging one, I feel so much more alive and inspired. There is a well-known quote which says ‘Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass it’s about learning to dance in the rain’. I could have avoided the storm, but I am glad that I didn’t. Dancing in the rain is one of the most wonderful things that I am learning.

We received an interesting **response from Jodi Grass**, Oak Grove’s new Head of School, about the above Brockwood student who was accepted on full scholarship to an American university without having taken her A-Level exams.

Jodi has a strong background in educational and non-profit leadership and worked at Oak Grove since 2005 as Director of Development and in other capacities. Her children practically grew up at Oak Grove. She is also very familiar with the other K schools and foundations. She has visited several of the Indian schools and has worked directly with Brockwood on fundraising. She was Assistant Head of Oak Grove until this past July she became the new Head. She and Willem Zwart, her predecessor, worked closely together to ensure a smooth transition.

It is exciting that so many US universities are now “test optional” or “test neutral,” which allows students the opportunity to highlight more nuanced aspects of themselves within the college admissions process. At Oak Grove we encourage the students to explore these colleges, which is one of the reasons we do not require our students to take the SAT or ACT exams, but rather support the students to take the tests outside of school, if they choose to do so. Four of our current seniors have committed to test-optional schools this coming fall.

I continue to be curious about how a university might best measure an applicant’s knowledge. Perhaps, more importantly, how does a university measure a student’s aptitude for deep learning, or better yet, a student’s approach toward learning, which is very often the best predictor of academic success? Narrative essays, for instance, can reflect a student’s attitude toward learning as well as aspects of their specific educational aspirations. The essay, however, might also simply reflect a student’s ability to write what the university wants them to say and therefore the student merely plays the role of the type of student the university seeks. This is unfortunate for both the student and the school. Academic measures like placement exams, standardized tests, letter grades and essays are all, each in their own way, insufficient. How does a university identify the “right” student for admission?

As we prepare our students for life after Oak Grove, the question we ask ourselves is how do we provide a rich and dynamic academic environment that challenges the student to ask progressively deeper questions while maintaining and/or igniting an intrinsic desire to learn? How can we expose a student to knowledge she might not pursue on her own? Recently, I have been thinking a lot about how we are or are not providing our students with vocational training. Is this something deserving of more thought? Academic pursuits are essential, but what of the student who has an aptitude for mechanics or carpentry or printing?

I shared Jodi’s letter with other educators, inviting them to join in the discussion. This elicited in a couple of interesting responses. The first is from

Lorenzo. Lorenzo Castellari has taught at Brockwood on and off over many years and has been deeply involved with Suprabha's conservation work at the Botanical Sanctuary in Kerala. He is passionate about the whole ecological problem as well as education and freedom. Here is his **reply to Jodi**:

One point you raise is about the need to invite youngsters to explore and learn in new areas they may not be initially interested in. The same words could mean sharing with someone a passion of ours for something which has importance also for their lives, or driving a student to bear with a politically correct dull curriculum within our comfort zone, as required by an institutionalised education industry. I think of the many hours and days I was required to spend sitting restlessly in some classes, which left me with nothing and robbed me of precious life time, as a crime against humanity. We ask students to follow us into exploring our interests. What about the teacher following up and nurturing their students' interest, curiosity and genius, wherever it goes? And what if there are twenty of them at a time in my class?

Another point I appreciate is about vocational training opportunities. I have been in rural schools where not a single student was even considering university as a possibility, and in middleclass schools where virtually every student was thinking of getting into university as the only viable option. In terms of capacities, they were all much the same; those life "choices" were entirely conditioned by their families and schools. So where do we stand and what learning environment and resources will allow kids to find and grow in their unique way?

You also ask how best a university can filter its candidate students. Having seen how potentially amazing the learning drive and caring capacity is in young kids, I've shared the sadness of witnessing dullness and resistance to schooling set in as they move from kindergarten to high school. As they reach the threshold of university, we wonder who is still standing at the entrance. At the exit we find all kinds of people, including monsters ready to sell their capacities to design cluster bombs. So a more pressing question for me is how to equip youngsters not to need universities or not to be damaged by them.

Alastair Herron has been deeply involved with K's teachings and approach to education for many years. He has been teaching at university in Northern Ireland, where he lives, and has sent both his children to Brockwood. He is currently a trustee of KFT. Here is his contribution to this exchange:

You ask about university measurements and admission identifiers. If it's any use, in Europe the **Bologna Agreement** broadly seems to utilize what has become known as the **Dublin Descriptors**. These are basically defined as generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities. This framework seems to arise from formal organizational attempts at a kind of pedagogical uniformity across member countries within the current European Union. The descriptors are phrased in terms of competence levels, not learning outcomes. They are supposed to enable differentiation in a broad manner between various government perceptions of different cycles or levels of learning.

Level descriptors include the following kinds of operational components: knowledge and understanding; applying knowledge and understanding; creating appraisal (making judgment); communication and lifelong learning skills. They present a general fixed nomenclature, with the challenges inherent in such circumscribing. Whether or not all of this may in any way "provide a rich and dynamic environment that challenges the student to ask progressively deeper questions while maintaining and/or igniting an intrinsic desire to learn" remains open to discussion.

Your additional insightful question as to "How can we expose a student to knowledge she might not pursue on her own?" can perhaps suggest a requirement of careful qualities of, hopefully, well facilitated enablement that may not be fixed. Given the history of much European and North American education, arising out of 19th century economic imperatives necessitating a skilled work force, and our present 21st century global cultural shift from society to economy, it could be useful to see what's absent from current educational understanding, not only in such terminology as learning to learn but as radical enquiry underpinned by the vital questioning that Krishnamurti raises.



On the daily walk between Rougemont and Saanen, Switzerland

In relation to this general questioning of the scope and purpose of education, one fundamental aspect that K often addressed concerned the **discovery of one's talents**, of one's deepest interest and what one loves to do. So it is always a great delight to hear from students, in this case from Saskia Griffith-Moore, for whom such a vocational discovery was facilitated and enhanced by their education at a K school:

Yes indeed, music is my life now, and my love too. Finding and pursuing my vocation has meant much more to me than just being happy with my time. It is a constant source of energy and discovery, and it has touched every aspect of my life. I am again thankful for the emphasis given to finding a vocation that was in the atmosphere at Brockwood. Although I didn't understand its significance at the time, somehow being given the freedom to

explore my interests at that age has led me to where I am today – which I absolutely would not be, if it weren't for the school. Thinking of you and Brockwood.

Warm wishes,
Saskia

The communication of the schools with the parents is an important aspect of their overall educational responsibility. It is essential that the parents share as much as possible in the vision and approach of the school so that the students are not torn between the school and family values. This is the main body of a **letter to the school parents** written in October last year by Siddhartha Menon, the current principal of Rishi Valley. **Rishi Valley has been officially recognized as the best boarding school in India.** The letter concerns the responsible and compassionate use of wealth and social privilege and what it means to be rich inwardly:

Dear Parents,

By now your children must be safely home with you and it is nice to think that they have several weeks of vacation ahead. The term has ended with a succession of beautifully moonlit nights, with just a hint of winter's chill in the air. After remaining defiantly green for most of the term, thanks to last November's rain and some good showers in July, in the last month the valley has been turning brown, leaves are fading, and little water remains in the percolation tank. Bore wells that had recharged are showing signs of running dry, and if the coming Northeast Monsoon doesn't bring us rain we are in for a hard time next year. We will perhaps have a clearer idea of this by the time the children return to school at the end of November.

The school has survived many droughts over its 85 years in the valley, as have our neighbours in the villages and hamlets nearby. But when we come away from the valley, we find that concerns about water are ubiquitous in towns and cities all around the country. It is possible that our children do

not experience the pinch, because both in Rishi Valley and in their homes the means are available to have water transported to fill up sumps and overhead tanks. The same might be said of electricity, food, news and entertainment: they are all so readily available that they are liable to be taken for granted. We are happy that our children are not deprived in any way, but one of the challenges we face as educators is to help them not to take the privileges they are born into for granted.

Over the years material comforts on campus have been enhanced. Compared to even twenty years ago, the hostels have more space and better amenities, the food has more variety; communication systems are more robust and many children have access to computers; in basketball and badminton we now have synthetic courts, and we see many more vehicles on campus, including privately owned two-wheelers and cars ... The school, like India's vast middle class, is upwardly mobile in material terms. It is hardly surprising that our children aspire, by the time they leave the school, to be upwardly mobile as well, perhaps not in a crassly materialistic way but certainly with the insouciance that, given the privilege they are born into and that in some sense the school augments, the world is theirs to do what they want in.

One question we face is: what will they do with all this that is theirs? Will they use the opportunities and the riches that come to them sensibly and will they be interested to find ways to share some of these, not only with others like them but with those who have much less? Perhaps they will only be in a position to do so later in their lives, but the question for us as educators is how to nurture their sensibilities so that they learn how to look at the world attentively and compassionately. If they can learn to do this (and it can begin in small ways) it is more likely that their actions will be guided by a fuller sense of what a situation demands, and not merely by expediency or self-interest.

And can that quality of compassionate attention be directed inwards as well? Here is an extract from a text that we discussed recently in small groups along with students of classes 11 and 12:

“Now, what is it to be rich inwardly? ... to be rich means to be very simple inwardly ... To be very simple inwardly is to see things as they are, to see life as it is – good, [bad], ugly, beautiful – [to see] the extraordinary quietness and beauty of life. To see things as they are: to see jealousy as it is, to see anger as it is, to see fear as it is [and] then, out of that seeing things as they are, you have an extraordinarily simple mind. And it is only the simple mind that can go extraordinarily far – not the man who has a great deal of money.” [*Sixteen Student Talks, Rishi Valley, J. Krishnamurti, pp. 33–34*]

The school does not decry outer riches: its existence depends on them. But we feel that the more compelling task is to understand what it is “to be rich inwardly” and to share this exploration with the children in our care and with anybody else who might be interested in it.

K: If parents cared for their children

If parents really cared for their children there would be no wars. They would say, “Live, don’t kill, live.” There would be no army – see what would happen. So what is generally called home is not a home at all. Therefore this must be your home; you spend eight or nine months of the year here and it’s your responsibility – we know what that means – to make it your home, to tell me, or Mrs. Simmons or whoever, “This is not my home because you’re not doing certain things” – you follow? Then you share in this. Are you just listening, or are you taking part? Apply yourself, create, don’t let everybody else do all the work and say, “Yes, I am very comfortable here, this is my home.” Then it’s not your home, because you haven’t built it.

You see, from an early age I have been living in other people’s houses and I have never had a place of which I could say, “This is my home.” But there is the feeling that you are at home wherever you are because you are responsible, you are affectionate. Home is not a creation of sentimentality,

it is a creation of fact – the fact that I feel at home. That is, I am free, I am responsible, I am affectionate. Total responsibility is the feeling of being at home.

Beginnings of Learning, pg. 29
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Mary-Ann also wrote a lovely report of the educational trip to India by a group of Inwoods staff. They visited a number of K and other alternative schools and participated in educational meetings. This journey proved to be, as the title of the piece suggests, a veritable education for the educators. Mary-Ann distilled the essence of this educational encounter with a different culture in ten beautiful ‘lessons’:

Educating the Educator: Inwoods in India

On 5th December 2016 four Inwoods staff left together for India in a buzz of excitement and apprehension, and with the help of that splurge of ‘holiday’ energy to embrace something different together. What questions would arise outside our usual context and environment? What lessons were we about to learn, or unlearn?

The first stop was Bangalore, to a delightful welcome by the Shibumi staff, who made life far too easy for us with transport arrangements, homely boarding facilities, delicious food and, most strikingly, our absolute inclusion in all aspects of their school life. We attended staff meetings, parent dialogues, classes, walks, hikes, presentations and solo moments. The last day was a celebration that included us, the staff, and a whole host of people connected with the school in some shape or form, past and present. This aspect of inclusion and openness was our *first lesson*. We saw that it aids a non-divisive atmosphere, invites the verbal as well as the non-verbal, and touches the heart.

A core intention at Shibumi, that is currently much alive in dialogues and discussions, is how to bring awareness to all aspects of the day, and as a result, the atmosphere is generally calm, the pace slow, the interactions meaningful and non-confrontational, and the classes feel both leisurely and alive with interest. Many adults seem to be involved in this process but it doesn't feel crowded with overzealous guidance. Awareness is the healthy natural functioning of the brain which is quite independent of thought and has its own movement and intelligence. *Lesson number two*: once this is seen, it then informs every activity with the child, every conversation. Any forced learning of awareness is not awareness.

The days clocked by far too quickly, but we couldn't miss the opportunity for a weekend trip to Rishi Valley, where bird-watching, dialogue, rocky walks and surprise encounters with current and former friends occupied most of our time. Rishi Valley School is large but beautiful, and with an ancient reverent quality that seems to attract people back there time and time again. We also managed a glimpse of the primary school and its fabulous facilities for art and crafts, and stole some photo shots of their inspiring wall displays.

Back in Bangalore, we were escorted on a whistle-stop tour of the Valley School and its equally magnificent Art Village, where we witnessed wax casts being made over a simple open fire, and a traditional handloom working intricate patterns and colourful threads. The craftsmen invited us to touch or have a hand in these age-old processes. Students were sewing, sculpting, painting, weaving, and woodworking as we toured. In England my two nieces attend a primary school in which art and craft do not exist in the curriculum except for 5 days once in the year. At Inwoods we bring this interest on a smaller scale freely to the children's day, despite the anxieties that it may be taking time away from 'academic' studies. *Third lesson*: education is not about fitting our children into the commercial world of money, pleasure and status. Can we awaken the unambitious, unrewarding love of learning in all its forms of creativity, beauty and expression?

It was time to leave the city and head further afield to the rural location of Tiruvannamalai, where Marudam Farm School nestled among small vil-



Benjamin Stern, son of Andre Stern and grandson of Arno Stern, reading last year's brochure

lages, with the ancient, impressive Arunachala Hill in view from all angles of the grounds. Here we had to take a moment to catch our breath, not from the travel, but to register that we had invited ourselves into an educational environment that was much more than classes, classrooms and campus activities. The rocky hill, that appears so grand and indestructible, was in fact a very dry and barren sight not so many years ago, with non-decomposable litter strewn around the paths all the way up to the top. Thanks to the Marudam team of adults and children, their reforestation efforts over the years are now evident in the healthy young trees populating the hillside, and the clearing of litter is now a regular cooperative task, especially following

rubbish-heavy festivals that the hill has to tolerate. *Lesson number four:* community efforts beyond the boundaries of the school environment can be a vital and joyful part of education.

There are about 100 children at Marudam, only 17% of whom pay the full fees, the rest are sponsored for all the years that they attend the school. This means that most children come from the local hard-working families of the surrounding villages and towns. English isn't given prominence over their mother tongue, though there is a high turnout of volunteers from international backgrounds. Unlike the many pretentious English-medium schools in India, Marudam has a lovely harmonious blend of the local and the international, equally valuing the positive traits of both. We were all so incredibly welcomed into the life of the school and the family of resident staff, who get together each evening to cook, eat, laugh, argue, and sometimes sing. Staff Arun and Poomina and their two children found themselves alone together in their 'family' home only one day in a whole year! *Lesson five:* be open and unashamed of facing life transparently with others; it dissolves inhibitions and dares the capacity to reach out and drop those prejudices.

Moving on from Tiruvannamalai, and now with just two remaining staff, we headed for Solitude Farm in Auroville, where Duncan McKenzie, former Brockwood student, now known as Krishna, has created the most admirable permaculture farm. Also a musician and entrepreneur, Duncan and his wife Deepa host many concerts and events, and run a café providing organic farm-fresh food. It is a lush and inviting place to learn the essence of growing food and the significance of our relationship with the land. *Sixth lesson:* go home and grow some food in your garden or, if you haven't got one, and in that spirit of cooperation, in your neighbour's. Touch the soil, work with the hands, learn about plants, and strengthen the heart connection with mother earth. Our future will need these valuable skills.

At Auroville I said goodbye to the last of the team and headed into an unscheduled solo adventure, while my companion colleagues returned to start the new term at Inwoods. My task was to continue to explore the

educational terrain of south India alone in a leisurely and more personal mode. Ten days were spent at the Retreat Centre at the Valley School, where an enriching seminar on awareness in education took place. Representatives from various K schools circled the beautiful, glass-walled room



of the dialogue space, where we navigated like one mind into the depths of some of the most important educational questions. Inwoods has many of the essential features to host a unique learning environment: beautiful natural surroundings, small numbers of children, simple spaces equipped with good learning resources, lots of contact with nature, opportunities for silence and reflection, no pressures of tests and comparisons, no rewards or punishments, no competitive spirit, no one method that the child has to fit into ... however ... *Lesson number seven*: the right conditions may be present in a school, but more importantly, are we as adults able to interact without leaving a mark, without casting one's shadow on the child?

Back to Marudam. Now almost like family, I was invited to join a school group hike and camp in a piece of wilderness about 25 km away. Concerned about the encroaching town of Tiruvannamalai, a few years back the school purchased 4 acres of land in an area of outstanding beauty, with possibilities for fabulous nature excursions. The group I found myself with consisted of 7 mixed-age children and 4 adults. We slept and ate outside on the hard surface of a humongous piece of rock, overlooking a landscape of forest and rocky hills. Below us were deep caves to explore in the late afternoon. During the day, we leapt from one rock to the next, careful not to fall into the gaping crevasses below and found quiet resting spots to observe the plants and wildlife. The children were like dexterous animals in the way they nimbly manoeuvred through this rocky terrain, while the adults trustingly followed them. The children were also fully included in the chores of the camp: chopping vegetables, starting the fire, cooking, washing pots, etc, which they did with ease and enthusiasm. *Lesson number eight*: immersion

in nature in its wildest form and simplicity of interaction is essential in giving back to the young their right to connect deeply with this wondrous planet.

Back to civilisation, and a 5-hour bus trip to the Theosophical Society in Chennai to join The Network Group, a fellowship of around 50 like-minded individuals from the southern states of India who are active in the field of education with an ‘alternative’ approach. It was a remarkably diverse group, engaging with each other in words, song, dance, walks and beach litter clearing. Heart-warming and touching stories of lifelong individual journeys and struggles to bring meaningful education right out to the most rural locations and challenging situations were shared late into the night. Here are some statements to give a flavour of the intentions of these Network folk: society should have wholeness rather than fragmentation; cooperation in place of competition; avoid egocentric individual behaviour; responsibility before rights; feeling of service; urban and rural settlements to be manageably small; protection as well as regeneration of ecosystems; reverence and respect for other living beings; the importance of bringing about social change; freedom to learn; the spirit of a school is that it is forever evolving ... *Lesson number nine*: the importance of bringing people together from a multitude of backgrounds to connect, reconnect and keep alive the most fundamental questions concerning our responsibility to society.

On the 15th of February I head off for my 24-hour journey home. The closure of this valuable trip begins as I enter the plush departure lounge of Bangalore airport and face the excesses of the commercial world again. And so I travel back home, in excessive style across the sky, contemplating the expenses of this journey, and whether they can be justified by a positive impact on our little school in the UK. I arrive as the sun rises and head into the British landscape in anticipation of the quiet and beautiful Hampshire countryside. Crocuses, daisies, snowdrops and a blue sky beckon me outside for an afternoon walk with colleagues. I hear that some inspired changes at Inwoods include an extended quiet, solo, sitting moment in nature that starts the day, and that woodwork has been included in the curriculum as

well as the ITRS (Inwoods Tinkering and Repair Shop) where a clock, a heater, and a globe have so far been mended. Generosity has been introduced as the theme for the term in which children are exploring related topics to this at home and at school, ready to share at our Spring Celebration.

Responding to the day-to-day tasks of a small school, with its numerous layers of responsibility and variety of skills needed, is a challenging task. The limited time can easily be filled in just getting through the days and weeks. *Tenth lesson*: it requires a quality of mind and heart working together to relate meaningfully with life at every moment, whilst also keeping an eye on the bigger picture and ensuring that we include opportunities to reach out with compassion to the wider world.

K: Self-knowledge and psychological revolution

The whole movement of inquiry into knowledge, into oneself, into the possibility of something beyond knowledge, brings about naturally a psychological revolution, and from this comes, inevitably, a totally different order in human relationships, which is society. The intelligent understanding of all this can bring about a profound change in the consciousness of mankind.

*Unconditioning and Education, Vol. I, frontispiece.
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K does not appear to be well known in the wider educational world, although his writings on education are generally appreciated by those who come across them. While he himself questioned whether the educational institutions founded in his name were living up to their holistic purpose, these same K schools have also been feeling somewhat isolated from the mainstream and wondering how that apparent gap might be bridged. This normally takes the form of finding ways of telling the world what is being done in these

schools. Another way is to attempt to disseminate K's educational ideas. This is in part what Javier was entrusted with doing during the presentation of the Dutch edition of *The Whole Movement of Life is Learning: J. Krishnamurti's Letters to the Schools (Een Leven Lang Leren: Brieven aan de Scholen)*.

I found a couple of things in his report particularly interesting. One was that only one young person came to the presentation, and another that it may need some maturity to understand the things K is talking about. I was just over 50 when I came upon him. At Brockwood one doesn't feel the absence of the young because we have all the students and mature students. But it is another question whether K is sufficiently known in the culture to reach the young more broadly. That brings me to the third point of interest, which is the consideration of the causes of the apparent near-total disappearance of K from the socio-cultural stream. Javier expresses the rather challenging view that this is in part due to an ingrained paralysis within the K community regarding collective or outward action.

Yesterday (March 31st) I was entrusted with engaging an audience of some 60 people during the presentation of the Dutch edition of K's *The Whole Movement of Life is Learning* (K's collected letters to his schools) at a cultural centre in Utrecht. It was fun but it seemed obvious that conveying what K meant by education could not be done in the space of an hour. We would have had to meet over a number of weeks for it to become somewhat clear. As usual, the audience was overwhelmingly middle aged and over. There was only one young person in the room. It was somewhat ironic to be talking about education to the old. But then for K learning, the essence of education, was not only in school but for the whole of life, a theme he used to illustrate by referring to Goya's dictum of '*Aún aprendo*', I'm still learning, when the great master was very old.

It may be that one has to have a certain maturity to become interested in these more fundamental questions. Otherwise it's quite difficult to understand the massive absence of the young. Maybe the young are absorbed in the experience of living and reflection is something that can only occur *after* one has lived? As Hegel said: "The owl of Minerva flies at nightfall". Could it be that intelligence is awakened in the twilight of our days? But hasn't

mankind been in the twilight zone for ages? Why don't the young see that they are the heirs to a stagnant and deeply problematic state of consciousness? As such heirs they are the oldest of mankind. But maybe the problem is much simpler, namely that the young don't get to know about K at all, even though he is already on YouTube and other social media.

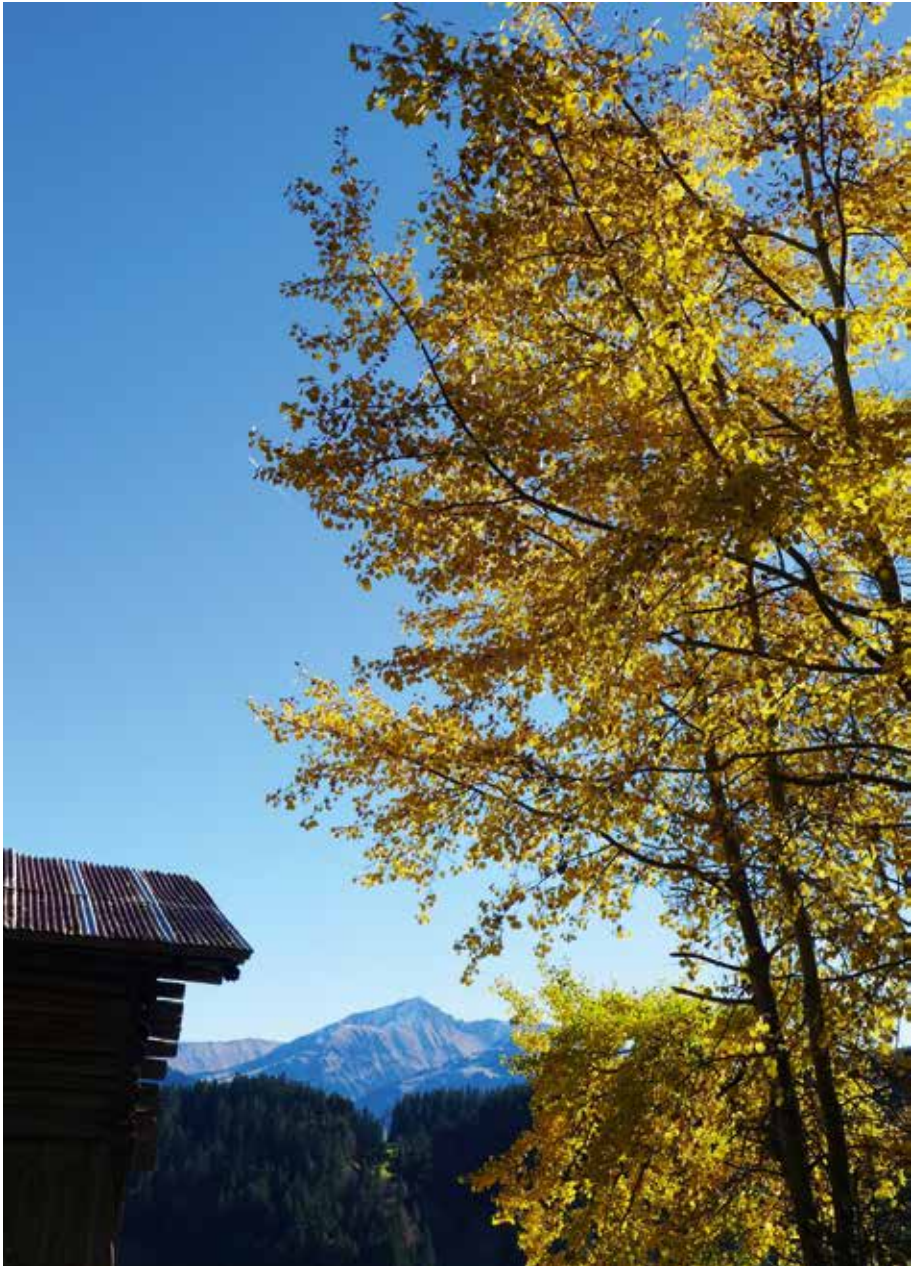
Some of the more awake people in the room were quick to pick up on K's emphasis on self-knowledge, on the inner dimension as the key to individual integrity, social transformation and world peace. That made for a lovely exchange, which could have gone on for quite a while, except we had to keep to a strict programme. Some people in the audience suggested that the SKNL (the Dutch K Committee) might want to put an information packet together to bring to the schools. Apparently all kinds of such extracurricular activities are commonplace in the Dutch educational system. It seems that the SKNL has never done it. They either did not know how to go about it or did not think it feasible. Will it happen after this meeting? I certainly hope so, but it's up to others to decide.

I keep coming across a deeply ingrained inhibition to organize and do things within the K community. When a proposal like this comes along, the objection is immediate. It goes something like this: "You want to achieve something and this is not about achievement. You want to reach out to others, whereas the only action is in your own life. It is not a matter of collective action but of the individual changing himself." That's actually more or less what one K faithful in the room said in response to my welcoming the above dissemination proposal. These objections have their point but they miss something very important, namely that we are all in the same boat and therefore the challenge is shared and plays itself out in our relationships. Such people seem to promote a radical form of individualism, which precludes cooperation, without which we cannot get anything done. This lack of understanding is rather unfortunate because, in my view, it is one of the factors that's bringing about the near-total disappearance of K's teachings from the social and cultural stream. And then everyone is wondering why K is not better known. The answer, as usual, is in the question.

Javier is aware that he faces this same challenge of making K known to the young in his own home. How does one convey one's deep interest in the teach-

ings to one's own children? How does one even explain such an enduring and lifelong involvement? What sense does it make to dedicate one's life to a 'philosophy' of life? It is al-right to have a philosophy but that's a kind of hobby or personal belief, not a practical, useful occupation like being a doctor, an engineer or a businessman. Maybe one could be a teacher in the subject, but what purpose could such a study serve? Here is one possible approach to **bridging the generation gap**:

Amalia and Antonio are now awakening to the fact that they don't know much about their father, what his experience has been and what he stands for. When occasionally I comment that I lived some place and studied or taught at some school or university, worked in some office, lived in some distant country, knew certain people and was responsible for certain projects and organizations, they seem quite surprised to have to reframe their picture of their father from this semi-recluse humanist obsessed with K. (And who is K, papa? Do you know anyone in our generation who has even heard of him? Eh? To which I have to answer: That's why I would like to make sure that the two of you know who he was and what he taught, for he was the Buddha of our time. Do you know who the Buddha was? Eh? No, not really. Ok. Then that's the first thing. For I must tell you, it is a great privilege to be alive at the same time as a living Buddha and an even greater one to have met him. I consider that a great gift and a blessing and as you are my children, I'd like to share that with you – if you don't mind ...). So they themselves have said they'd like to know more about my life, my origins, journeys, interests and experiences. The inquisitiveness is there and I think they might take to K once they realize the wisdom of his questions and the intelligence of his approach to the human condition. And they might do so specially because they know I'm not interested in indoctrination, on imposing anything on them. But when the embodiment of truth in our time has come to one's house and sat at one's table, as it were, will one not naturally want to share that blessing with one's own immediate family as well as with the rest of the world?



Looking towards Giferspitz, between Rougemont and Saanen, Switzerland

The Teachings

K: Understanding the self

When a machine is revolving very fast, as a fan with several blades, the separate parts are not visible but appear as one. So the self, the 'me', seems to be a unified entity, but if its activities can be slowed down, then we shall perceive that it is not a unified entity, but made up of many separate and contending desires and pursuits. These separate wants and hopes, fears and joys make up the self. The self is a term to cover craving in its different forms. To understand the self there must be an awareness of craving in its multiple aspects.

*The Collected Works, Vol. IV, (1945–1948), Ojai,
4th Public Talk, 28 April 1946, pg. 69
© 1992 Krishnamurti Foundation of America*

Over this past academic year Javier gave a seminar under the title '*The Book of Life: An Introduction to Krishnamurti's Life and Teachings*' in The Netherlands. This seminar consisted of eighteen meetings of three hours each on a bi-weekly basis and they offered, after a brief introduction to K's biography, a thematic overview of the teachings as the reading of the book of oneself.

Javier would prepare the lessons by first gathering a number of relevant texts covering the topic under consideration and then make a series of power point slides summarizing their content. He would then forward this material to the seminarians with a cover letter outlining some of the key aspects involved in the given topic or 'lesson', sometimes adding a series of questions for consideration. Here, as an example, is the main text of the cover letter for '**Lesson 5: Order and Disorder in our Lives and in the World**':

K usually began his talks with an overview of the world situation as he saw it. What was happening out there was for him a reflection of our shared

human psychology. War has been a constant of history and its causes are being sustained by generations of human beings down the ages. The question of changing the world is therefore intimately bound with our ability to know and change ourselves individually and collectively.

A quick look over the present world reveals a number of very serious challenges or 'crises': the ecological crisis, climate change, the economic crisis, the refugee crisis, overpopulation, war, class, economic, religious, political, national, ideological, and all manner of divisions that perpetuate a state of general confrontation, insecurity and suffering.

Some countries are engulfed in violence, while others seem to enjoy relative stability and peace. Some nations experience unprecedented affluence while others struggle to survive. Some revert to isolationist, racist and xenophobic policies while others seek to erase their borders and establish a wider international community.

The intent of this chapter is simply to observe for ourselves as best we can the scope of disorder, division and conflict 'out there' in the world and also closer to home. That means the honest consideration of our own experience in life, in our relationships with others as well as inwardly with ourselves. After all, the challenge is not only 'out there' but in our everyday lives, at the office, in the street, at home, in our heads, between our heads and our hearts, between our values and our desires, between the ideal and the fact.

Could we together get a wide appreciation and a deep feeling for this fundamental existential challenge? Has it not been with us ever since we can remember? And is it not still a living, burning issue that affects us personally on a daily basis? And how do we read this chapter, this expression of the universal history of humanity in our lives? That is our homework for this next meeting.

Some twenty people participated in the seminar and at the end the general impression was that it had been an intense and significant journey for the

majority of those who had taken an active part. Due to the fact that there was not enough time to go in depth into each of the topics explored, the participants felt that this first seminar would warrant some kind of a follow-up.

Javier's proposal for this follow-up is that, since the group has already become familiar with the scope of the teachings, they should now explore the various issues directly in relation to their own lives. Considering that dialogue is the best format to do this, he produced a paper, *'Reflecting Consciousness: An Overview of Dialogue'*, to offer this study group something of a basic guideline. When he passed this article around, it was felt that it offered a very good summary of dialogue that might be of general interest. We then decided to print it as a brochure and give it a wider distribution by attaching it to the Newsletter.

One of the basic skills needed to read the book of oneself, which is the universal history of humanity, is what K called the art of listening. Here is an extract from *The Perfume of the Teachings*, which is a series of dialogues that K held in Ojai in 1977 with trustees from all the Foundations. At that time K seemed to be very concerned with what was going to happen to the teachings and the institutions he had founded after he should pass away. Here they are talking about the quality of conscious and unconscious listening:

K: Listening consciously or unconsciously

K: Are you listening to what K is saying consciously or are you listening unconsciously?

DB: I am not entirely clear what you mean, because there are different meanings ...

K: Yes. I know what I mean. I'll tell you. "Consciously" in the sense listening to the words, translating the words for yourself, and putting up barriers, consciously saying, "I can't understand what the devil he's talking about," fighting, arguing, adjusting. All that is activity of the consciousness, intellect. The unconscious, the deeper layer, just listens. Which is it you are doing? I am exploring this, please. I am not saying I am right or wrong. I



Rübli, the peak of La Videmanette, Rougemont, Switzerland

want to go into this. That may be the clue. I feel it is. I'm beginning to see it is.

MZ: The conscious is reacting all the time.

K: Conscious activity is reaction.

DB: Are you saying that there is something beyond consciousness then?

K: No, not beyond consciousness. For the moment I am separating the two. I am not really separating, but for the purpose of explanation I am separating consciousness and that which is deeper, not conscious. Now am I listening to you at a superficial level, that is, the argumentative level, knowledge level, the level of killing the poor whales, and so on? Am I listening at that level or at a deeper level, a subliminal level? I don't want to use that word.

DB: An analogy is the stream of consciousness with the surface wave and something deeper.

K: Yes, yes.

DB: What you call consciousness is a wave.

K: Waves, that's right.

DB: And then the deep current beneath.

K: Yes. You see, when I talk to Mrs Lilliefelt, she immediately stops it by saying something; the argumentative level is going on all the time. Not that she shouldn't argue, not that we shouldn't discuss, not that we shouldn't explore, but you are always at that.

EL: Resistance.

K: Resistance, seeing holes in it, saying, "I don't quite agree with it, it is not quite. ..." You follow? There is struggle going on.

The Perfume of the Teachings, pp. 235–236
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K: Meditation cannot be deliberately pursued

If you set out to meditate it will not be meditation. If you set out to be good, goodness will never flower. If you cultivate humility, it ceases to be. Meditation is like the breeze that comes in when you leave the window

open; but if you deliberately keep it open, deliberately invite it to come, it will never appear. Meditation is not the way of thought, for thought is cunning, with infinite possibilities of self-deception, and so it will miss the way of meditation. Like love, it cannot be pursued.

The Only Revolution, pg. 36
© 1970 Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Ltd

For K the reading of the book of oneself, which is the way of self-knowledge, was essentially the unfolding of an ever-deepening movement of meditation. While meditation can have different meanings even within the context of K's teachings, it clearly occupies a central place in the quality of the religious mind.

Stephen Smith was a teacher at Brockwood Park and he also worked for a time at the KFA in Ojai. He is retired but still very active in the K Schools and Foundations. He stays near Brockwood and goes to India and Ojai every year. The following is an extract from *'The Meaning of Meditation – A Revolutionary New Approach'*, a talk he gave at the annual nationwide gathering of the Stichting Krishnamurti on 24 September 2016 in Groesbeek, The Netherlands:

One of the features of Krishnamurti's meditation is the stress he lays on emptying the mind. "True mediation is this," he says, "the emptying of *consciousness*." And, perhaps at this point we should remind ourselves of what he means by consciousness. He is not using Freudian or Jungian terminology. No, consciousness is everything that thought has generated and that constitutes what we call the psyche. This includes the Freudian *id*, the hidden or so-called unconscious levels, as it does the collective unconscious of Jung. They are all, for him, basically the same stuff; indeed, the very inclusive term *thought* is used to mean not only conscious thought – stray thoughts, associative thinking, reflection – but the whole range of feeling and emotion. It even includes bodily sensations and reflexes, though he actually speaks very little about this and it was left to David Bohm to fill

in the blanks, which he does with considerable skill and penetration in that excellent book *Thought as a System*. There the author makes very clear that thought is not merely what we think – much less what we think about thinking – but comprises the entire psycho-physical structure, including the nerves and reflexes and, in short, everything where brain and motor activity is involved. It is a blanket term, a form of shorthand, and it is amply summarised in the K-Bohm axiom: Thought is a material process. This is essentially a materialist perspective since it makes the point that nothing the body-brain produces has any significance beyond itself. There are no “hidden levers” or “ghosts-in-the-machine” – just action-reaction, stimulus-response. It is, of course, more complex than that since, as we have seen, the ego gets involved and can then begin to direct operations. But, isn't the ego also the product of conditioning and, therefore, not out of the loop at all? It is all one process, however gnarled and knotted.

Some thought activity is to do with memorization and is necessary for our survival; otherwise, we wouldn't be here today. We need food, clothes and shelter; road-, rail- and waterways. But, beyond that, what do we actually need? Most of it far exceeds our real need and, retroactively, distorts and perverts it. We are living in an overfed, undernourished world.

This is down to what K calls “psychological knowledge”, the information we carry about ourselves which tells us who we are, but falsely. Identified as we are with our nation, our family, one other person or a group, we do not know what we are doing; we act blindly from the imprint that we have. It is only when the consequences of our actions become clear – for instance, in the wake of a war – that we take stock, momentarily. Then we fall back again. It is the perennial fate of human beings to be caught in the trap of their own making. This is the thought process as psychological knowledge, and it is this psychological thought process we need to empty from our minds.

The next question, of course, is, how does one do it? Here again, Krishnamurti's response is unique: No *how*! According to him, as soon as one asks *how*, one is back in the realm of the mechanical: if I do this, then I'll get that. Projection – reward, the march to the goal. Truth doesn't work like that, he says. No, it is a “pathless land,” as he said not far from here, at Ommen, on 3 August 1929. There is no path to it, no hidden directive, no

guide or guru, just oneself. If the meditator is the meditation, however, that's all one needs: the book of oneself.

It is nonetheless for many, if not most, not an easy book to read. We are so inured to the notion of time, to life – our life – as a historical process, that we do not realise it is the process itself, and not merely the incidents occurring within it, that we need to question. After all, psychoanalysis is without doubt a time process. We unlock and dismantle a behavioural neurosis by going back in time and uncovering its source. And Freud, let's not forget, never envisaged more than changing unbearable trauma into livable unhappiness. Though what he discovered changed our thinking forever, he was not himself bent on revolution. I doubt he thought it possible.

J. Krishnamurti is entirely different. He is, first and foremost, a revolutionary, one for whom the terms of living, as well as its content, need to change. What we are doing is not good enough – far from it – and is leading the species, and the planet, to destruction. What we need is an insight into ourselves as both the agents and the victims of our own destructive nature; we need to put ourselves “in the middle”, in the middle of the chaos, mayhem and misery, and realise without blinking that this is what we are. As an idea, it is depressing; as an insight, it is not.

We all intuit or are vaguely aware that there is a mystery to life. The childish question we all posed about where we came from is ultimately about the origin of all existence, about the mystery of creation. The manifest world floats effortlessly in the encompassing emptiness of its unknown origin. The religious way has ever been the inward journey to this sacred source, where the manifest finds its meaning.

K: Religion is the understanding of life

Our problem is in relationship, which is life, and religion is the understanding of that life, which brings about a state in which the mind is quiet. Such a mind is capable of receiving the real. That, after all, is religion – not your sacred threads, your pujas, your repetition of words, phrases, and ceremonies. Surely, all that is not religion. Those are divisions, but a mind that is understanding relationship has no division.

*Collected Works, Vol. VI (1949–1950),
Third Talk in Rajamundry, 4 December 1949, pp. 19–20; © 1992 KFA*

K: There is a mystery in all living things

In the silence of deep night and in the quiet still morning when the sun is touching the hills, there is a great mystery. It is there in all living things. If you sit quietly under a tree, you would feel the ancient earth with its incomprehensible mystery. On a still night when the stars are clear and close, you would be aware of expanding space and the mysterious order of all things, of the immeasurable and of nothing, of the movement of the dark hills and the hoot of an owl. In that utter silence of the mind this mystery expands without time and space. There's mystery in those ancient temples built with infinite care, with attention which is love. The slender mosques and the great cathedrals lose this shadowy mystery for there is bigotry, dogma and military pomp. The myth that is concealed in the deeper layers of the mind is not mysterious; it is romantic, traditional and conditioned. In the secret recesses of the mind, truth has been pushed aside by symbols, words, images; in them there is no mystery, they are the churnings of thought. In knowledge and its action there is wonder, appreciation and delight. But mystery is quite another thing. It is not an experience, to be recognized, stored up and remembered. Experience is the death of that incommunicable mystery; to communicate you need a word, a gesture, a look, but to be in communion with that, the mind, the whole of you, must be at the same level, at the same time, with the same intensity as that which is called mysterious. This is love. With this the whole mystery of the universe is open.

K's Journal, pg. 122; © 1982 Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Ltd



In the Grove at Brockwood Park, England

In her lovely book *Inspired by Krishnamurti*, Marina Kuyper, current chairwoman of the Stichting Krishnamurti Nederland, brought together ten fascinating interviews with people who were deeply touched by K. I have found this book a great delight to read, not only for the insights and profound questions the interviewees share from their own direct experience but because most of them are old friends who are revealing their deeper inner dimension, which makes me love them all the more.

One of these interviews is of Bill Taylor, the former co-director of Brockwood Park School and now its Director of Development. Here is his answer to the question of what for him is **the essence of Krishnamurti's teachings**:

What is for you the essence of Krishnamurti's teachings?

I think one of the impulses I had as a young man, that drove me to travel and go abroad, I found most clearly expressed in a conversation between Krishnamurti and David Bohm and it has to do with the question of mystery. Is there anything mysterious in the world or in life? Bohm explained that in more primitive, simple cultures people tend to project mystery as being something 'out there', separate from oneself, in a different part of the world or in space, or at the bottom of the sea; and then there is a movement towards that in some sense. So as human beings the impulse to explore is tied up with the fascination with mystery and the unknown. And it seems to me that this impulse comes from the strong sense that one's experience of reality is not fully developed, is not as true as it could be, that the known is somehow unsatisfactory. Our experience is very limited and our perception of reality is very limited and there is a mystery which is much bigger than we can picture and which may lead us to an expanded sense of life, perhaps to something sacred. And at moments in your life you have a sense of that, a sense of wonder, a sense of something sacred. As a young person, growing up in a country which was quite isolated, I had this feeling that life was something much bigger than this and one had to be very careful not to be caught in small patterns and small ways of thinking and living. Then when I travelled I saw that different cultures expressed these things in different ways, but in essence the same thing was happening. The way we

think and live is just an accident of birth, whether we are born in China, India, or Europe, and that completely shapes us. So then the question came up: Is all truth relative in terms of where I happen to be born or is there something which is beyond conditioning? This question was already in my mind when I first encountered K. This is why I found the teachings so uncanny; it feels as though this man is just expressing what you have begun to see for yourself, but he expresses it so well and, of course, goes much further.

So it seems to me that the teachings in essence have always spoken about a bigger reality, that mystery which is at the heart of life, which is bigger than oneself, and if we touch that, if we come upon that, then surely all of the difficulties we face, the conflicts and problems which we generate as human beings will be resolved. I have felt in my brief contact with Krishnamurti that for him that was a reality. He was not just a man who was very clever with words or ideas; it was more than that. So there has always been a sense that there is something sacred, something religious, something immense, immeasurable.

Why is it that one is still fascinated with all this? You still look at it and see things for the first time. It is still completely striking and clear and true. So it is not about knowledge. I cannot sit here and quote Krishnamurti at length, recite the teachings or go through the body of his work in a logical order. It is about that learning which is not accumulative. He is holding up a mirror to oneself, enabling us to see 'what is'. This is not always a pretty sight.

Inspired by Krishnamurti: 10 Frank Interviews, pp. 21–23
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I would sometimes try to observe K to guess what he was thinking. But I couldn't see anything; he was impenetrable. Perhaps because he wasn't thinking. David Moody writes in his book *The Unconditioned Mind – J. Krishnamurti and the Oak Grove School*, pg. 55:

“The conversation was coming to a close, and I gazed rather deeply into Krishnamurti’s eyes. He met my gaze completely, without any undue sense of modesty or confrontation. As I looked into his eyes, I had the uncanny sense that there was no one present, no structure of identity, on the other side. Whether this was a projection or a valid intuition I cannot say. I felt he was observing me as completely as I was observing him, and yet at the same time it was like looking through a clear window, with only open space on the other side.”

This paragraph describes my own experience. To me it a clear sign that the man was the very embodiment of the mystery he was talking about and that had pursued him all his life.

Publications

Here are **some comments on the second edition of *Knocking at the Open Door: My Years with J. Krishnamurti***, Mark Lee's memoir about his work and relationship with K at Rishi Valley, the Oak Grove School, and within the American Foundation.

In the first edition he had made some statements about K's management capabilities and other practical capacities that I felt were incorrect, and which he has changed for this new edition. But now it seems to me there is another misleading section, about the relationship between K and Prof. David Bohm. They had held many dialogues together over the years and there came a point when K stopped dialoguing with Bohm. What Mark Lee writes about this gives the impression that Bohm had a heart attack and died because of the change in their relationship – when in fact Bohm died some six or seven years after K's death.

On page 229, Mark quotes Theo Lilliefelt:

“Theodore Lilliefelt told me that, years before, an astrologer named Leonardo had cast Krishnamurti's horoscope. Leonardo did not know who Krishnamurti was but said he was a very important man in the world, but in spite of that, his big problem in life was relationships. This was a curious revelation that proved to be true the more we were with Krishnamurti. His relationships were curiously one-sided, and few associated with him were real friends or confidants. Even if they could be called true friends, they were equally susceptible to being dropped or ignored if Krishnamurti heard gossip or criticism from even a few others.”

To say that K's relationships were one-sided is, in my view, a misunderstanding of the man. His relationships may not have been what we are used to know-

continued on pg. 62 →

K: The respect for the sacred

So how am I to have the quality of respect for that sacred thing which I have felt, and help to see that other people have this sense of respect for that which is sacred? I don't know if I am conveying what I feel. That would be my whole concern when K dies. I wouldn't be greatly concerned about myself, my progress, my happiness, because that's in the understanding of those teachings. Naturally I am dissolving all my peculiarities, all my idiosyncrasies and characteristic limitations. But in the very studying, listening I have learnt a great deal because I have listened to that man, K, for a number of years, so I have imbibed a certain sense of that which is great and noble, and so on. So it is part of me, it is inside me, like a germ, like a seed that is growing, flowering. So I would like to meet and discuss and be with other people who have the same movement. It doesn't mean we are going to become a clique, a small group who are merely concerned with that and keep it to themselves like a jewel, which you don't dare to expose because it is so precious. So, if I had the gift of the word, the gift of writing or some other gift, I would express it as much as I could outwardly, without creating all the nonsense about personal worship and authority and that kind of silly stuff.

J. Krishnamurti Speaking with the Committees, pp. 3-4; © 2003 KFT

K: Religious education

Religious education in the true sense is to encourage the child to understand his own relationship to people, to things and to nature. There is no existence without relationship; and without self-knowledge, all relationship, with the one and with the many, brings conflict and sorrow. Of course, to explain this fully to the child is impossible; but if the educator and the parents deeply grasp the full significance of relationship, then by their attitude, conduct and speech they will surely be able to convey to the child, without too many words and explanations, the meaning of a spiritual life.

Education and the Significance of Life, pg. 38; © 1953 KFA



At the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary, Kerala, India

ing as ‘relationship’, but there was an intensity to them that it’s likely one never encountered with others. To a great extent his connection with people was, it seems to me, on another level. Not only that, he was extremely considerate with the people around him.

One example of how differently K’s mind worked: Mary Zimbalist notes in her memoirs that when the two of them were separated by travel, he wrote to her every day, because otherwise he would have forgotten her. Again, this was not because he was one-sided with people, but because his memory simply worked differently.

When K needed to get someone to leave his or her work in the schools and Foundations, he would say something like, “My dear friend, you are not flowering here. And when you are not flowering, the school cannot flower. So, it would be better if you left.” This happened with Balasundaram, a Rishi Valley principal for several years. When I asked K what was wrong with Balasundaram, he told me that he had become tyrannical and everybody was afraid of him. Balasundaram’s good quality was that he loved his students and they loved him. I witnessed that in later years when he travelled all the way to California to visit former students.

Otherwise, it is a pleasure to read Mark Lee’s book. He had many interactions with K, first when he worked in India and later setting up and managing the Oak Grove School in Ojai.

I have been rather excited about **David Moody’s latest book, *An Uncommon Collaboration: David Bohm and J. Krishnamurti*** (Alpha Centauri Press, Ojai, Ca, 2017). I am particularly keen on the four chapters about *The Ending of Time* dialogues, which to me are the most interesting that K ever had. It’s also fascinating to hear more about what David Bohm accomplished in physics. On page 173, in the chapter ‘Physics and Metaphysics’, David writes, “... Bohm uncovers a new way of understanding the whole of physical reality in such a way as to encompass both Quantum Theory and Relativity, in spite of their apparently irreconcilable features.” In Appendix 3, ‘Inward Observation’, David writes: “Socrates declared that the unexamined life is not worth living; we may

add that the unexamined mind is not worth having.” And in the chapter ‘The Mirror of Relationship’, David writes accurately, as it seems to me, about several of the published biographies of K, including some very nice comments about *The Beauty of the Mountain*.

In my enthusiasm, I have been contacting people about it, asking whether they’ve read it and even offering to send copies. This has generated some correspondence reflecting different assessments and points of view.

Stephen Smith was very positive about it, though he had some editorial remarks as well as doubts about the claim that Bohm unified Relativity and Quantum Mechanics:

I purchased a copy of David’s book several months ago. I also heard him speak on the topic at the KFA Annual Gathering in Ojai, subsequent to which he came to London for a Bohm-Prigogine Conference, which Bill & I attended, and spoke again. I also had a short correspondence with him, pointing out that he had got the year of Bohm’s birth wrong (it was 1917, not 1918) and that a person who enters another country with the intention of staying there e-migrates from their native country.

Aside from such quibbles, I enjoyed the book and, like you, found the section on *The Ending of Time* particularly interesting. David is a precise, clear writer and does not avoid the thorny issues: he tries to get to the bottom of them. This is also true of his first book, *The Unconditioned Mind*. There is much more of substance in what he writes than there is in the work of some other people.

The book led me to a juster appraisal and better understanding of Bohm than I had previously had; indeed, it led me to think, and I do still think, that Bohm was what one might call a Sage of the Relative, K being, of course, the Sage of the Absolute. In some way, these polarities need each other. So, somehow, somewhere, the two of them still dance. We are all the beneficiaries of their collaboration. As many people have said, Bohm brought K “nearer”.

My understanding is that there is as yet no theory that reconciles Relativity and the Quantum World. The Implicate Order *covers* it, but it is as much the fruit of Bohm's philosophical thinking as it is of his work as a physicist. Whether the two are mathematically reconcilable remains to be seen, and we are a hundred years on.

Bis zum nächsten Mal – alles Gute
Dein Steve

Since he is something of a scholar, I asked Javier if he would write a review of Moody's book. In general I don't like long texts, so I asked him to make it short. If it were up to him he would have written a ten-page essay. What follows is, therefore, not the whole story, but the most general account he felt comfortable enough with:

A Short Review of David Moody's
An Uncommon Collaboration: David Bohm and J. Krishnamurti

To do justice to this book, or come nearer doing so, I would need a bit more space than I have. As its subject matter is very close to my heart, I am naturally inclined to scrutinize it most minutely, phrase by phrase. But I shall have to content myself with some general observations, perhaps leaving the more detailed review for another time.

First of all, it is very well written. It reads like a breeze. Moody has such a command of the written language that one does not detect the slightest linguistic glitch. That helps to navigate the rather tricky shoals he has chosen to explore, making for smooth sailing over what at times one suspects may be deeper troubled waters. Moody's stated purpose is not to provide any final or definitive characterization of the unique collaboration between these two geniuses but to introduce their work to a larger audience. This invisible and undefined target audience may in turn have something to do with the general tenor of this work.

Moody seems to be at pains, for example, to keep the investigation within the fold of the 'scientific' and away from the 'religious'. His description of K as "a blend of philosopher and psychologist, with a spiritual or metaphysical background" comes a bit short of embracing K's religious dimension. As I see it, he prefers to highlight the psychological philosopher and relegates the spiritual teacher to the background.

This causes him a bit of trouble when it comes to reconciling K's public message to the world and his inner experiences as recorded in the *Notebook*. David does not seem to grasp that K's investigation into the nature of consciousness is the necessary foundation for accessing a deeper dimension and the ineffable encounter with the 'otherness'. He appears not to be able to make heads or tails of this 'other', even though the whole journey of the teachings is pointedly aimed at reaching this creative source of all energy, in contact with which all our problems are resolved and our existence finds its meaning. That's how K used to put it, but he himself acknowledged that the other was a mystery. So there is room for further investigation.

The book touches on so many other fascinating topics, on Bohm's scientific achievements, on what K's teachings cover, the nature of intelligence, and the all-encompassing issue of fragmentation and wholeness. His exploration of the K/Bohm dialogues in *The Ending of Time* is indeed fascinating. And yet I miss an appreciation of the cosmic drama involved in that 'wrong turn' that humanity took ages ago and keeps taking daily. Simply put, the wrong turn of humanity, which is the adoption of psychological time, spells our doom. But maybe that's too much for a world that is already living under its deepening shadow.

Moody's treatment of the relationship between K and Bohm, their collaboration, confrontation and apparent break, is rather balanced but also somewhat uneasy. Having attempted to elucidate the issue for myself, I sympathize fully with David's difficulties. He has a clearly affectionate admiration for both men, with whom he worked very closely. And yet there is no escaping the question as to what actually happened between them. We just don't know enough. His exploration of the record leads Moody to ask whether their relationship was a triumph or a tragedy and he decides that their collaboration was a triumph but that Bohm's final depression and psychological imbalance was tragic. At the same time, he goes along with Bohm

in his critique of K's teachings, namely that since nobody has been transformed there may be something missing in them and what may be missing is greater attention to detail.

Be that as it may, I would have to agree with Moody that the dialogues K and Bohm held together are a real triumph and will stand the test of time. They are a reflection of the deepest aspirations of humanity facing its own ignorance and destruction. The religious quest has ever started from an appreciation of the tragic nature of human existence as we know it and this is the deeper theme of K and Bohm's collaboration. Tragedy was always there, as was the quality of healing light.

Moody's attempt to place K's teachings within the spectrum of scientific revolutions is consistent with his general 'scientific' orientation. Not that K did not intend his teachings to be scientific, i.e. objectively verifiable by anyone willing to undertake the whole journey. In fact he was adamant that such a demonstration was essential if humanity was to change. But comparing K with Copernicus, Newton, Darwin, William James, Freud and Einstein does not seem to me the most appropriate. There is a dialogue, certainly, between K and these other trailblazers, especially with Darwin and the psychologists over the question of evolution and the nature of consciousness, as there is between K and the whole of human history and culture. But this may just be the whole point, namely that K's insight is not confined to any one field of specialization. Maybe that's why he called it a total insight and why he named that unspecialized field religion instead of science, though for him the two must work together.

I had hoped that Moody would have addressed Bohm's dialogue proposal to some extent. He does review *Thought as a System*, which is the 1990 Ojai seminar series, but from the angle of the content rather than the process. As far as I know, Moody was instrumental in setting up the Ojai seminars and lived through the whole experiment, so in principle he would be uniquely qualified to deal with this subject. As I happen to consider that the dialogue proposal was one of Bohm's major contributions to the whole endeavour, I am somewhat puzzled by the absence of such a review of the process of dialogue.

So, if I were to make something of a general assessment of this book, I'd say that it makes for fascinating reading, especially for those who are less



Looking out from the Sulzhutte, St. Antönien, Switzerland

familiar with its subject matter. It is a good survey of the territory, which is always helpful when undertaking further explorations. Any work on any subject is inevitably a reflection of its author and we all labour under our own chosen perspectives, which can help to illumine as well as to obfuscate. Moody adds a good deal of clarity and gives us such precious jewels as Bohm's masterful description of the nature of thought, time and self in Appendix II. This should be studied very carefully, for it opens lots of windows on the soul. However, I keep wanting to urge David to step beyond the safe zone of his scientific outlook and into the wholeness of the unknown. But no sooner do I say that, than I find myself in David's shoes and on the edge of the same precipice. Shall we ...?

Since Javier's review contained some criticisms, I thought it would be unfair to publish it without first letting David Moody take a look at it and have a chance to respond. This was done and this is David's reply to Javier. When I read each of the pieces separately, I think that they are both right. But, evidently, there are some points of disagreement, which I hope will provide the opportunity for a productive dialogue between them.

Reply to Javier Gómez Rodríguez' review of *An Uncommon Collaboration*

If I read his review correctly, Javier feels that Krishnamurti's philosophy fits into a certain mold, a template to which my book does not conform. He highlights the spiritual quality or entity that Krishnamurti referred to as "the other," and he makes the rather extravagant claim that "the whole journey of the teachings is pointedly aimed at reaching this creative source of all energy." Javier is correct to conclude that my book does not subscribe to that perspective. To reduce the whole of the teachings to such a focus represents, in my view, a serious distortion.

Krishnamurti cautioned against any form of interpretation of the teachings. He wanted his work to speak for itself. That is why my book takes pains to describe his philosophy with close reference to his actual words as

expressed in the public talks. No summary statement, superimposed on the teachings and ostensibly encompassing “the whole journey,” can possibly capture the breadth, the richness, and the subtlety of Krishnamurti’s actual philosophy.

Krishnamurti’s stated intention, expressed in 1929 and many times subsequently, was to set human beings free, “unconditionally free.” The consistent evidence of the teachings is that such freedom is the result of insight into the nature of thought and the limitations of conventional consciousness. What the teachings are about is understanding the actuality of one’s own state of mind – not arriving at some hypothetical destination or pre-conceived source of energy.

Javier would do well to recall that in decade after decade of public talks, Krishnamurti made no reference whatsoever to “the other.” His remarks on that subject are confined to a single private diary, the *Notebook*, which was not published until nearly half a century after he broke with the Theosophical Society. And it is not just my book that is “unable to make heads or tails,” as Javier puts it, of “the other.” Krishnamurti himself seems unable to characterize it, other than to say that words cannot possibly capture its nature or its qualities.

Javier objects to comparing the magnitude of Krishnamurti’s insights with those of Copernicus, Darwin, or Einstein. He seems to suggest that those individuals were not of sufficient caliber for this purpose. He leaves us to wonder why he did not offer the names of any more suitable alternatives.

The notion that the teachings describe a journey to some specific, stated goal or destination represents a kind of mechanical blueprint that Krishnamurti warned against. He asked us to see what is, not to get somewhere or achieve anything. If, as Javier suggests, my book helps dispel the journey-to-a-goal narrative of the meaning of the teachings, it will be serving a worthwhile purpose.



Friedrich Grohe in Rougemont at 88

Photo by Bindu

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