



*Friedrich's*  
Newsletter 2024



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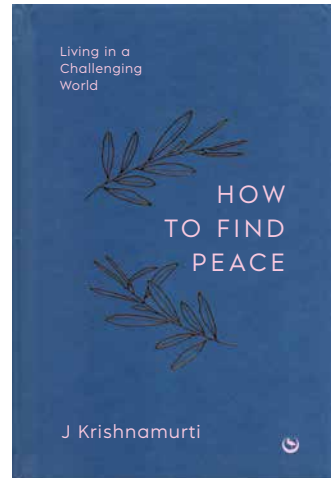
This year's Newsletter has been edited and co-authored by  
*Javier Gómez Rodríguez*.



## DEAR FRIENDS

### *Dear Friends*

I wonder if you know about the new book published by Watkins titled ***How To Find Peace***. It's an expanded and re-edited edition of *Social Responsibility*, one of KFA's thematic study books. It begins with Krishnamurti's piercing 1985 speech at the United Nations in New York, given as part of the official observance of the UN's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. (I attended the talk, and remember being disappointed that the hall wasn't full.) Following this Introduction are 10 sections, among them: What is your responsibility to society? How does the free mind live in this world? and The intelligence that brings order and peace. This is an extract from the section titled On War:



### **K: How war came into being**

**QUESTION:** All except a few do not want war, so why do they prepare for it?

**KRISHNAMURTI:** War means destruction, killing and maiming one another, with the noise, the brutality, the ugliness, the appalling misery of pain.

Do you know how war has come into being? It has come because, in our daily lives, we destroy one another. Though in the temple we talk about the love of God, in our business dealings we cut one another's throats. Also, we



have wars because we have armies, and it is the purpose of an army to prepare for war. Do you mean to say that someone in an army would want to give up their position, job and money in order to have peace? Most would not be so stupid. So all of us, in one way or the other, are preparing for war.

You can prevent war only if, in your daily life, you realize that you are no longer a Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, communist. If you are kind, generous, affectionate, loving in your daily life, you will have a different world. Then, instead of squandering money on armaments, you can make this world into a paradise. But it is up to you. You have the government you deserve because you are part of that government. You are politicians in your daily lives: you want position, power and authority.

As long as we use technological knowledge for the advancement and glorification of the individual or of the group, the needs of humanity can never be sanely and effectively organized. It is this desire for psychological security through technological advancement that is destroying the physical security of humanity.

There is sufficient scientific knowledge to feed, clothe and shelter us all, but the proper use of this knowledge is denied as long as there are separate nationalities with their sovereign governments and frontiers – which in turn give rise to class and racial strife. So, you are responsible for the continuance of this conflict. As long as you, the individual, are nationalistic and patriotic, as long as you hold to political and social ideologies, you are responsible for war because your relationship with another can only breed confusion and antagonism.

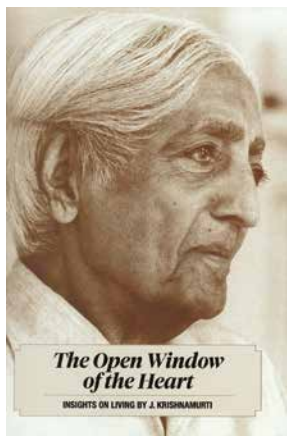
Seeing the false as the false is the beginning of wisdom, and it is this truth alone that can bring happiness to you and so to the world. As you are responsible for war, you must be responsible for peace. Those who creatively feel this responsibility must first free themselves psychologically from the causes of war and not merely plunge into organizing political peace groups – which will only breed further division and opposition.



Peace is not an idea opposed to war. Peace is a way of life, for there can be peace only when everyday living is understood. Only this way of life can effectively meet the challenge of war, class, and ever-increasing technological advancement. This way of life is not the way of the intellect. The worship of the intellect in opposition to life has led us all to our present frustration with its innumerable escapes. These escapes have become far more important than the understanding of the problem itself. The present crisis has come into being because of the worship of the intellect. It is the intellect that has divided life into a series of opposing and contradictory actions. It is the intellect that has denied the unifying factor, which is love. The intellect has filled the empty heart with the things of the mind, and it is only when the mind is aware of its own reasoning and is able to go beyond itself that there can be the enrichment of the heart.

*How To Find Peace*, pp. 72–74

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“What is deeply and thoroughly understood will not repeat itself.”

A second recent publication, this time from KFT, is *The Open Window of the Heart – Insights on Living* by J. Krishnamurti.



A small book, it's composed of 50 pages of photos of Krishnamurti and 50 short quotes, one per page, facing each photo. I recommend both books.

“In love, there is no time, space or identity.”

We can finally announce that there's a marker in Saanen regarding Krishnamurti's 25 years of public talks there. It's a panel that appears as part of the rejuvenated *Philosophenweg* (Philosopher's Path). Some of you might know of the original Philosophenweg, which stood throughout the past 10 years. It was dedicated to the violinist Yehudi Menuhin, founder of the classical music festival in neighbouring Gstaad and an honorary resident of Saanen. It comprised a dozen panels of one Menuhin quote each, in three languages, installed along a path between Gstaad and Saanen which, for much of its distance, followed the Saanen River. In reimagining the path, those in charge decided that each new panel would include two quotes in two languages: one from Menuhin and one from a different philosopher for each panel; plus a QR code for further information.

Çetin Koeksal of the organising committee had heard that we'd been trying for years to get permission to place a marker at the site of the Talks, which is also along the river. We'd been imagining a simple plaque with a quote or, more interestingly, a very small park-like area of benches and a post with quotes carved into it. Though permission never came, in 2019 the Saanen Museum welcomed a substantial exhibition around the teachings. Pandemic restrictions then kept the displays in place for an extended period, and it ended up being the most visited temporary exhibition in the museum's history. Unfortunately there was no way to leave even a fraction of it in place once its time was finally up.

Now Çetin was offering an opportunity through a renewed Philosophenweg. He even arranged it so there could be a panel of two Krishnamurti quotes, on their own, in deference to Krishnamurti's wish that the teachings not be mixed with anything. The marker stands a two-minute walk from where Krishnamurti spoke for 25 summers. When visitors now ask, as they often have, "Where were the Talks held? Is there anything still in Saanen regarding Krishnamurti?", the Philosophenweg can help them to find something. There's also the chance that passers-by will read the quotes, perhaps after resting on the nice bench there. A few might even scan the QR code to learn more.



The two quotations, with their German translations, near where Krishnamurti gave 25 years of public talks in Saanen, Switzerland.

Friends have sometimes told us that they still feel something special around the site. We feel it too. Is it imagination? Or does something remain of that long-ago atmosphere? Either way, there are now two quotes by the river.

We are trying politically, legally and socially to bring order  
in the outer world in which we are living, and inwardly  
we are confused, uncertain, anxious and in conflict.  
Without inward order there will always be danger to human life.

*The Whole Movement of Life Is Learning, Chapter 39*

When the mind is free from all its projections, there is a state of quietness in which problems cease, and then only the timeless, the eternal comes into being.

5<sup>th</sup> Talk, Bombay, 12 March 1950

We have also been working on my memories, something that, especially when one is in one's 90s, suddenly feels important – or maybe not! My previous *Memoir at 93* is now *Memoir at 95*. It includes further details that I didn't consider relevant before. Generally, it's about my childhood and the war years, my time working in and running GROHE, and my family and climbing years. (There is hardly anything in it related to my interest in the teachings, which is thoroughly covered in *The Beauty of the Mountain*.) Here is one short extract:

One day, in Hemer during the 1944 summer holidays, I was walking alone over an open hill behind one of the hospitals. Suddenly a military plane stormed through the low clouds, directly above me. I couldn't hear anything other than that tremendous engine noise. The next day, walking that way again, I saw an irregular line of machine-gun fire traces just beside the path. They had opened fire on me! Increasingly, the Allies were shooting at anything that moved, and my Hemer friends, who couldn't escape to Switzerland as I could, needed to hide whenever they heard a plane.

If you would like a copy of *Memoir at 95*, please email me your postal address and phone number (the number is now required for sending parcels abroad). Or you can read the Memoir freely online at [friedrichgrohe.com](http://friedrichgrohe.com).

To adjust a common phrase, 95 isn't for wimps. One day you're racing your walker on your terrace for up to 900 meters per day, the next you've fallen flat on your face and sustained a broken nose. Or so it happened to me in early September. The shock of it is what set the body back. After the fall I could hardly walk; blood tests showed my weak heart under twice



Haus Sonne, our friends' ecological, vegetarian guesthouse in the Black Forest, Germany

its usual stress. Much help was offered, from allopathic medicine to exercise to diet to homeopathy to flower essences, and more. As of this writing, I can manage 250 meters. Hopefully by the time you read this I'll be back to 900 meters, though it's likely the terrace will be covered in snow by then.

Related to age, many of you might recall our mentioning **Haus Sonne** over the years, the ecological, vegetarian guesthouse in Germany's Black Forest developed and run by our long-time friends Christian Leppert and Eva Wollweber. They maintained a nice library there with many Krishnamurti books and tapes. It was always a place of serenity embedded in wonderful hills and forests. Friends and I used to spend a lot of time there, in various seasons. For a few years, several groups of Brockwood students even visited for additional environmental education.

Naturally, growing older, Christian and Eva began to feel that a large guesthouse involving a great deal of physical work and social interaction

was becoming too much for them. And though they tried, they couldn't find anyone willing and able to take over its long-term management. So they sectioned off their private apartments and put the guesthouse up for sale. It's nice to think of them enjoying this small oasis for many years to come.

Here now is an October report from *Krishnamurti Foundation Trust*:

The new **Brockwood Park** school year began with the usual high energy and enthusiasm of the young. It's always lovely to see their innocence blossoming as they readily respond to the environment here and what it stands for. Currently they come from 19 countries: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, UK, USA, and Vietnam. It really is a lively learning atmosphere for everyone.

On top of the usual challenges of administration and pressure from the government's education authorities countrywide, new taxes are coming into effect even for charitable schools, meaning that Brockwood will need to find an extra £150,000, or thereabouts.

We recently made a new promotional video for the school, which you can find here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ireM0h6bIII>

**Inwoods** is thriving. This is the small school at Brockwood that offers education to the young children of staff members and the local community. Their parents deeply appreciate the protected and caring environment of the school and the all-round education their children enjoy.

**The Krishnamurti Centre**, too, has been developing while retaining its quiet and serious atmosphere. Young-adult study retreats will continue in 2025, as will more-general retreats, a summer gathering for up to 100 people, silent weekends, and gatherings in languages other than English. Of course, the Centre maintains plenty of space throughout the year for



guests who wish to study on their own or to meet just a few others. Additionally, the Centre's volunteering programme continues to be well received, with four to six young adults at a time helping for two to four weeks. Given the state of the world, they are grateful for this opportunity; likewise, the programme provides an opportunity for staff and guests to meet more young people interested in the teachings. You can find the Centre's 2025 programme here: <https://krishnamurticentre.org.uk/programme/#calendar>

*New School Video*



Here we present a brand new video about Brockwood Park School in Hampshire, UK. Founded by Krishnamurti, this international boarding school for 14-19 year-olds is the only one of its kind in Europe. Deeply inspired by Krishnamurti's teachings, the emphasis is on providing a unique atmosphere where learning takes place naturally in a safe, non-competitive environment.

The **Krishnamurti Foundation Trust** continues to preserve, publish and disseminate the recorded teachings via books and digital media, including podcasts. All of the digital media is accessible freely. It is extraordinary how many people find the teachings via social media. Statistics in themselves don't mean much, but they indicate how young people in particular are becoming aware of Krishnamurti. In turn, this allows the Foundation to make the teachings available where they can most easily be found. There is an often quoted saying that when the student is ready, the teacher appears. Now, algorithms are facilitating that appearance, and as a result many new volunteers and guests are coming to the Centre. Probably you remember that Krishnaji spoke of scattering the seeds far and wide; they might fall on dry land or fertile soil, but that is not our business.

Krishnaji began speaking in the 1980s about establishing an **Endowment Fund** at Brockwood/KFT. This has finally been opened, with stringent regulations in place, and it is growing, slowly but surely.



A new challenge, facing everyone, is AI or artificial intelligence. Currently there is much excitement about how quickly AI can complete online searches, including questions regarding the teachings. Yet while some of the search results are interesting, they are not always accurate. They might not be Krishnamurti's exact words, for example, therefore casting doubt on the authenticity of the results – at least at AI's current stage of development. There is an article on **authenticity and the teachings** here: <https://kfoundation.org/authenticity/>

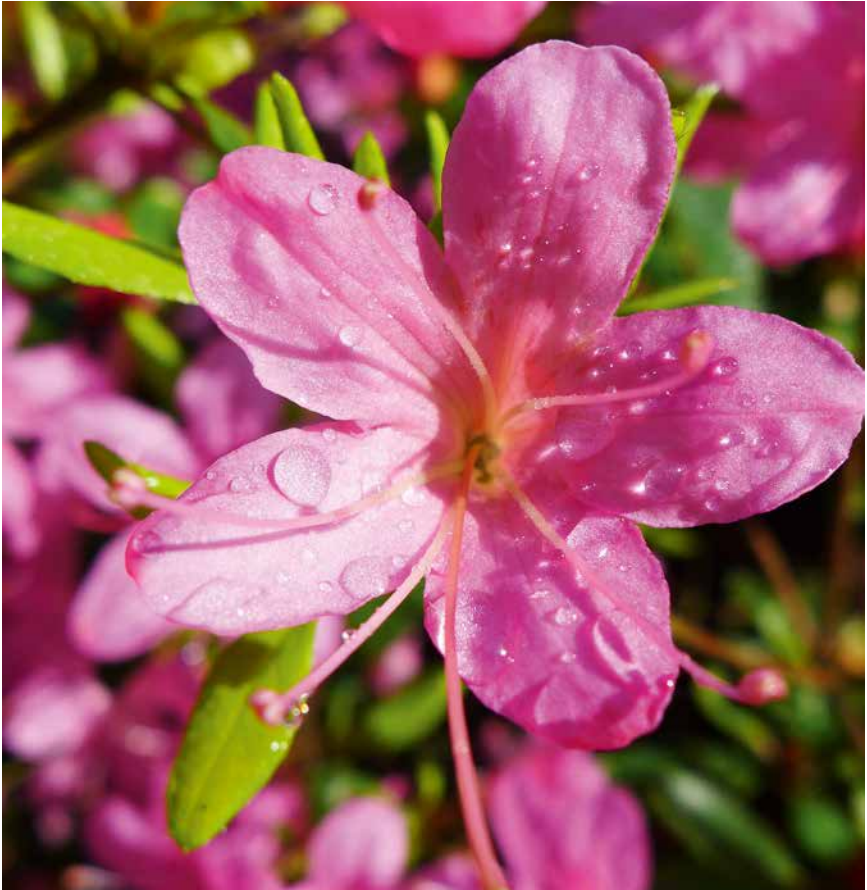
Selvi Selvan, a friendly correspondent from India who maintains a strong interest in the teachings, sent me a short extract from our friend David Moody's book *Krishnamurti in America*, a copy of which I had sent her. I had forgotten about this part:

... the two men ... shared a love of nature, long walks, and an appreciation for excellence in clothing and cars; they also shared an intuitive bond of mutual affection and trust. His many quotations [in *The Beauty of the Mountain*] of Krishnamurti's comments have the ring of authenticity; they aptly convey the perceptive and graceful manner in which Krishnamurti moved through ordinary events of daily life. Grohe was an avid and talented nature photographer, and his book is richly illustrated with scenes from many locations, including Ojai and Brockwood Park. Krishnamurti said that he and Grohe were brothers.

If online courses on the teachings might be of interest to you, I know of these two, which I expect are excellent:

**The Book of Yourself**, organized by friend and Newsletter editor Javier Gómez Rodríguez  
<https://thebookofyourself.com>

**Unconditionally Free**, organized by friend and former KFA trustee Michael Mendizza  
<https://krishnamurticenter.org/unconditionally-free-course-2024/>



In the Grove at Brockwood Park, England

I've been writing this letter in October, and it's getting very cold already. As I send you my warm greetings, I'd like to end on a note of appreciation for two good friends, not long gone: **Michael Krohnen** and **Mark Lee**, both of whom many of us counted as friends and colleagues for decades. You can read more about them on pages 84 and 96.

May we be liberated by the truth,  
*Friedrich*

## EDITORIAL NOTE

Due to the generous contribution of a few friends, this year's Newsletter has swelled up to its accustomed volume. There was more interesting material that could have been added, but we decided to keep it within reasonable limits.

In this edition the section ON EDUCATION consists of a new report or update about the K Learning Centre O Mundo Somos Nós in northern Portugal. As the only such project currently existing in Continental Europe, its development is of special interest, as it could serve as an inspiration for similar initiatives all over the EU. And, as reflected in the article, such endeavours, no matter how holistic in their outlook, must contend with the inevitable logistic challenges and human frailties.

THE TEACHER AND THE TEACHINGS contains a set of four rather different pieces. The first is a historical review of K's visits to Greece and his love for that land and people as a prelude to a more personal account by the author, Maria Pilaviou, explaining her lifelong engagement with the teachings and her current work as head of the K Library of Athens. The second article is an investigative piece by Rasmus Tinning into the nature of inward freedom as a dialogue between K and the more deterministic views of science. The third piece is a report by Jaap van Manen on his dance and movement workshops during the Swiss Gatherings over the years. The fourth reproduces one of my monthly The Book of Yourself newsletters, in this case Issue XXV: December 2023, addressing the question of our apparent impotence in the face of the current wave of violence and, following on K's insight that war is the bloody and spectacular expression of our daily lives, what each of us can do to put an end to conflict in ourselves.

In ON DIALOGUE we include a piece by Jackie McNley exploring the notion and implications of developing a culture of dialogue. Knowing of her extensive work with dialogue, during the Mürren gatherings this

summer I asked her whether she would write something on the subject focusing not on the theory but on her lived experience, and this is what she sent us.

CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE DIGICAL AGE contains an extensive article by Erik Prochnow. After reading my short piece on AI in last year's Newsletter, he was inspired to extend and deepen that first approach to the subject. Being widely knowledgeable in the matter, he explores its wide-ranging implications and its fundamental challenge to our own humanity.

This year we had to change the OBITUARY section to OBITUARIES, as we had to report the passing of Michael Krohnen, Mark Lee and Hans van der Kroft. In the case of Michael I could distill a more encompassing biographical view by combing through his wonderful memoir *The Kitchen Chronicles – 1001 Lunches with J. Krishnamurti*. Although this was still a small window on his life, it reflected its core theme, namely his love for K and the teachings. I was able to do something similar for Hans van der Kroft because the latter, a key person in the establishment and work of the Stichting Krishnamurti Nederland (the Dutch K Committee, as it has been known internationally), gave an extensive interview to Marina Kuyper, the current chair of said committee, on his views and existential journey. When it came to Mark Lee, although I had a copy of *Knocking at the Open Door – My Years with J. Krishnamurti* at hand, I simply ran out of time and had to content myself with reproducing the *in memoriam* note published by KFA. Fortunately, his memoir is there for anyone wishing to know more about his life and involvement with K.

Take good care, amigos, and may the light of love and intelligence dispel the ignorance of humanity.

*Javier Gómez Rodríguez*  
Lelystad, October 2024

## **K: Total dedication, capacity, cooperation and love**

You know, sirs, it is said that the Benedictine monks held the light in the Dark Ages of Europe. From the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the Renaissance. Before that were the Dark Ages, and they held the light of knowledge. They were supposed to be the people who were enlightened. All around them was darkness. We have to be that. Because the world is mad. One has to be completely dedicated to this. Sorry to put it that way. Nothing else matters but this. It is like having a baby: the mother gets up at two, three, four o'clock; whether she is asleep or awake, it is the baby first. I did that with Radha, changed the diapers I don't know how often. Complete dedication. The mother is dedicated. She is not even dedicated; the baby is *there*. She does not say, "I am dedicated". One must have the capacity, the drive – capacity in the sense of creating from nothing. Dedication implies capacity, and it implies also learning, quickly learning. Capacity for learning and the capacity to bring about a cooperative spirit to make one feel that we must work together. This is an extraordinary thing to have. And care, affection and love, all this is involved in it. That is real dedication. If we have it, the place will burst with laughter.

### 3. A School of this Kind is Necessary Because the World is in Chaos

*Conditioning and Education, Vol. I, pp. 54–55*

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One of K's dictums is that mankind has progressed scientifically but has remained psychologically barbarous. If we couple that with his statement that the psychological invariably dominates and overcomes the technical, then we have a recipe for disaster, for we will be putting the most

sophisticated and lethal weapons in the hands of barbarians. The evidence of history and what we are currently witnessing offers ample and irrefutable proof of this simple and devastating truth. The implications are vast and point to the abiding and universal danger of our self-ignorance. That is why K saw his schools and study centers, which were meant to be religious, as oases of light in an age of darkness, just like the Benedictine monasteries might have been in the Dark Ages. Although tinged with the ambivalent shades of tradition, the simile is a powerful one and springs from a deeply felt need in the face of a comparable turn of events in our time. The question is whether we really perceive this and are willing to come together and build on a different foundation.

This is a major destructive pattern of consciousness that permeates the social goings-on from the palace to the gutter, from the temple to the trench, from the arms factory to the classroom, from the inner to the outer. The global movement of humanity is riddled with contradiction, violence and suffering. We know that we must work together if we are to deal with the many challenges that we face, but our separate interests and identities prevent this quality of cooperation becoming a reality. Establishing the right communication, understanding and trust seems to be an uphill struggle. And yet without them we cannot possibly hope to create and sustain the oases of light that K had in mind and which are so urgently needed.

In previous issues of the Newsletter we published a couple of reports on the K school and study centre project in Portugal O Mundo Somos Nós (We Are the World). The following is an update from Ivone Apolinário, one of the project founders, detailing where they are currently and some of the difficulties they have encountered in terms of the messy human dynamics that tend to plague such initiatives. Fortunately, they have managed to meet the challenge and are on track to establish a new permanent home or venue for their Learning Centre.

## O Mundo Somos Nós – An update from Portugal

*Ivone Apolinário*

The Learning Centre *O Mundo Somos Nós* (We are the world), founded in northern Portugal in 2013 by three families and three children, took its time to grow. This gradual organic development was essential as it became a bigger tree than anticipated requiring the establishment of strong roots. Today we have around 50 children.

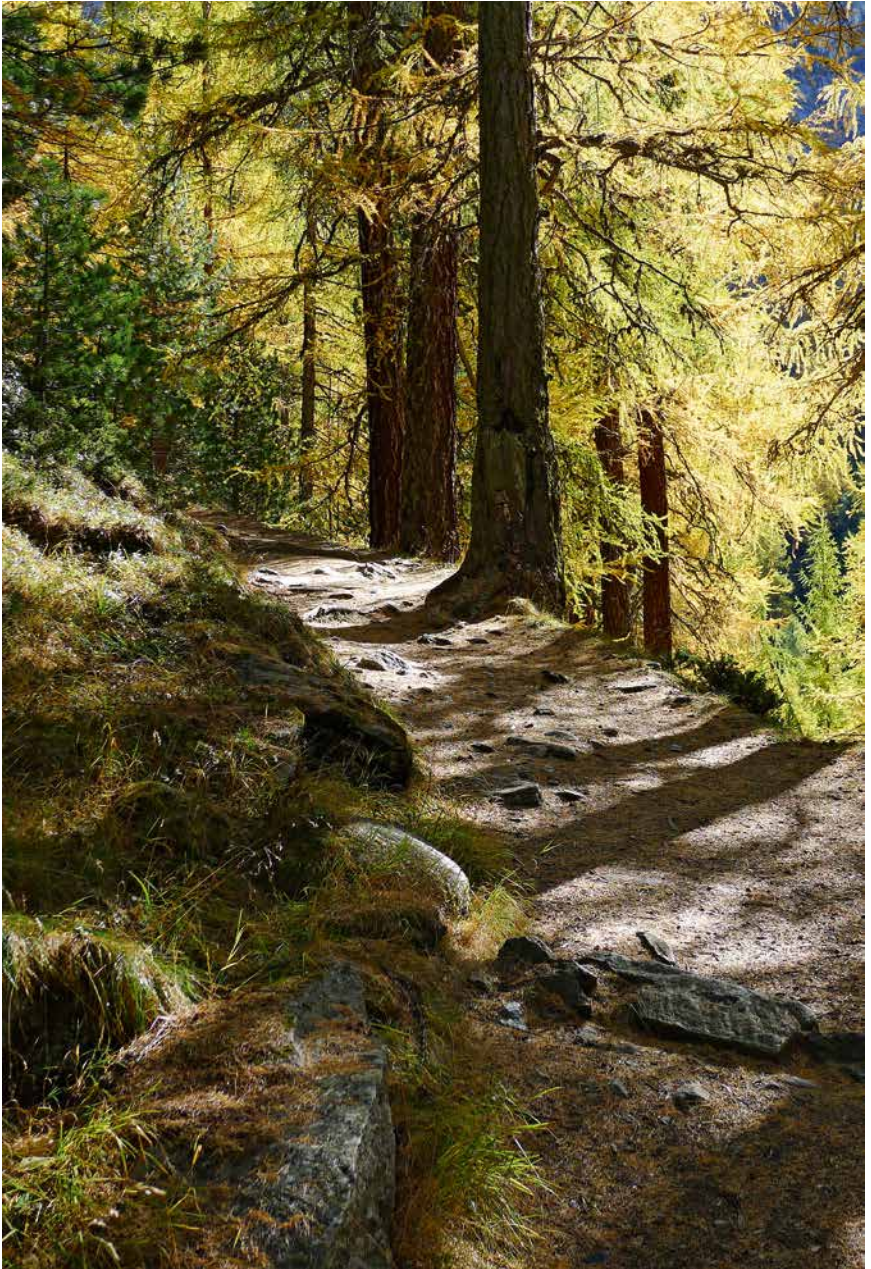
Many people were involved throughout the years, and the lessons learned have also been numerous. This collaborative endeavour provided us with the opportunity to undertake the greatest inner journey of discovery of our lives. This year was no exception. In fact, we could say it was one of the most challenging and revolutionary of all.

After careful consideration last December, in January of this year the board of the association that officially represents the Learning Centre sent a detailed email to the families informing them that the fees would increase substantially in September. We also scheduled a meeting with the parents to try to find solutions for those who might lack the necessary funds. We had been advised by friends connected with various Krishnamurti-inspired educational centers to be careful because the parents tended to want to run the schools. We were aware of this, but what happened next shocked us, to say the least.

A few parents formed an external group with the stated purpose of helping others to find solutions. However, this well-intentioned effort rapidly devolved into what could be described as a ‘witch-hunt.’ Instead of seeking solutions collaboratively, the group became a forum for airing grievances. All the school parents joined in and began venting unrestrained emotions of anger, despair and fear, shifting the focus away from constructive problem-solving.

In 2023, Ana Gomes, a Portuguese Brockwood educator who currently works at the Study Centre there, led a course titled ‘Educating with





Above Zermatt, Switzerland

Consciousness' at our facility. This course brought together our education team, some of our parents and external parents and educators. Consisting of nine monthly weekend sessions, the course provided a unique opportunity to explore education through Krishnamurti's texts and videos. Throughout this period, we observed a growing sense of unity and closeness among the education team and the families. The creation of a WhatsApp group unified the parents further but inadvertently drove a wedge between them and us. We were excluded from this group and only became aware of its discussions when a few concerned families, alarmed by the developing situation, informed us of what was happening.

The parents formed a sort of informal committee and requested access to the association's accounting and administrative records, essentially demanding an audit. This situation struck us as peculiar, given that we had provided a detailed explanation. It should have been evident from our email that our team was working for the minimum wage and that we needed to balance the budget. As some parents were conducting their own financial assessment, we anticipated that rational thinking would prevail over emotional reactions.

Over the course of a week, some parents began circulating misinformation and out-of-context remarks about the children's education at our centre. This came as a shock to us, especially considering that just weeks prior, during individual meetings with the families, all had expressed satisfaction with our work, offering no complaints. The sudden shift in attitude, occurring only after the announcement of the fee increases, struck us as peculiar.

Though understandably saddened by the turn of events, throughout this tumultuous period our core team remained confident that our decision to raise the fees was the only viable option to sustain our operations. It was disheartening to see that instead of seeking to find collaborative solutions, some parents chose to unite against the board, questioning its competence and attempting to keep the fees down at any cost.

Following our meeting to discuss the changes, several families promptly informed us of their decision to withdraw their children at the end of the school year. Some even announced plans to establish their own school. It became apparent that these parents had not taken into account the extensive work we had been doing. Moreover, they seemed to have disregarded the principles we had emphasized in our parenting sessions, courses, and documents, such as the importance of asking questions before passing judgment. But what concerned us most in this situation was the apparent lack of consideration for the children's well-being.

Among the dissenting parents, some most likely had the financial means to afford the increased fees. Others approached us honestly and together we came to mutually acceptable arrangements. What perplexed us was that approximately fifteen families chose to leave without attempting to discuss potential solutions, opting instead for a more confrontational approach. Two team members, one of them a teacher who had been with us for five years, also decided to leave, offering no clear explanations, at the end of the school year.

Our status as an association proved challenging in this situation, prompting us to reconsider becoming a foundation – a transition that costs € 250,000 in Portugal. The land we acquired in 2020 could contribute significantly towards this goal, though we would still need to raise an additional € 100,000 in liquid assets.

These events prompted deep introspection among us as board members, leading us to question whether we had made any mistakes. Upon careful reflection, we recognized that our commitment to fostering a friendly, egalitarian environment, however well-intentioned, may have inadvertently led to an erosion of necessary boundaries. Although we were clear in our roles as board members, we may not have sufficiently emphasized or demonstrated that ultimate decision-making rested with us. This lack of understanding caused some families to feel entitled to challenge our decisions on an equal footing, rather than recognizing the board's mandate to guide the institution. Unknowingly, we had

cultivated an environment where certain families began to see themselves not as partners in our educational mission, but as potential rivals. This misalignment of expectations and roles ultimately contributed to their decision to establish their own competing educational initiative.

We now view this as a positive development because it has led to more educational alternatives for children. However, at the time, it was a very challenging experience. We felt unfairly treated and responded by establishing clear boundaries during our meetings with the parents. This assertiveness on our part likely contributed to their further estrangement, as it conflicted with their expectation that we would simply acquiesce to their demands.

Amidst these challenges, we maintained an optimistic outlook, viewing the changes as necessary for our growth and believing that everything would ultimately fall into place. Our philosophical approach – being unattached and prepared to relinquish our roles if needed – surprised some parents, who mistook this perspective for instability. To address these concerns, we arranged individual meetings with the families that chose to remain. During these sessions we established payment agreements and conveyed our sense of stability and enthusiasm for the journey ahead.

This period demanded tremendous energy, coinciding with our decision to proceed with phase 1 of the Quinta de Sandelhas project. This land was acquired by a group associated with the Learning Centre, supported by friends within the Krishnamurti community. We are currently finalizing a comprehensive document detailing the building plans for the new Learning Centre, Retreat Centre and team accommodations.

Quinta de Sandelhas is a property of 35,000 m<sup>2</sup> situated just one km from our current location. The land is distinguished by its lush, diverse vegetation, predominantly comprised of indigenous tree species that have thrived naturally in this region for generations. This rich ecosystem includes majestic, centuries-old oaks and cork trees, alongside walnut, chestnut, and pine trees, among other native species.



Mavrovo, North Macedonia (photo by Gorjan Gyelity)

It will be here that the new facilities housing the Learning Centre and the educational programmes of *O Mundo Somos Nós*, which has been educating children aged 2 to 16 for over a decade, will be built. Furthermore, a Retreat Centre will offer a place for adult learning and self-discovery. Comfortable accommodation will welcome participants, creating a nurturing space for immersive programs and enriching events. The land's agricultural potential will be utilized, integrating sustainable ecological farming practices into our educational approach. This multifaceted project aims to create a holistic learning community where education, sustainability and personal growth can flourish in harmony with nature. We envision it as a sanctuary, a regenerative oasis in the midst of the turmoil of our modern world.

We are thrilled to finally move this project forward, as until now the land has only served as a site for walks, children's activities and informal gatherings. Portugal experienced devastating wildfires this year, heightening our concern and underscoring the urgency to protect this beautiful oasis. This has galvanized our efforts to develop and safeguard the property.



Amid these developments, we had the privilege of hosting another Youth Exchange focused on Non-Formal Education, an Erasmus+ project funded by the EU, in early September. We brought together 38 young people, aged 13 to 30, from five different countries to examine and question current educational paradigms. As part of the program, we screened videos about Krishnamurti and Brockwood Park School. The event took place in the stunning mountains of Gerês, Portugal's only national park, providing an ideal setting for nature walks, dialogues, and events where the young people shared aspects of their cultural heritage.

Some participants came from disadvantaged backgrounds and once again we were heartened to observe how a balanced, nurturing environment encouraged children and teenagers to open up. Many participants seemed profoundly moved by their experiences, fostering a warm and friendly atmosphere. While the vegetarian meals initially met with some resistance, by the end of the program our skilled cook's delicious creations won over the skeptics.

Looking ahead, we're set to host another Erasmus+ event in October, this time a training course for adult Youth Workers. Facilitated by Ana Gomes from the Brockwood Krishnamurti Centre, the program, titled 'A Change in Education', will delve into Krishnamurti's teachings and encourage deep inquiry into educational practices.

As we embark on the new school year, our Centre is once again bustling with activity, having welcomed new families to replace those that departed. These initial weeks present a unique set of challenges for our team, particularly as we focus on the careful integration of our youngest newcomers. Our approach to this adaptation period is characterized by patience and respect, ensuring each child feels secure and valued in their new environment.

Despite the demands of this transition, we find ourselves energized and optimistic. The recent additions to our team have brought a notable enhancement to our collective capabilities. These new members not only

elevate our technical and academic prowess but also contribute positively to the human dynamics of our community. Their presence represents a significant upgrade in the overall quality of our educational offering.

As we progress, we find ourselves grappling with the challenge of effectively communicating what we are about to the outside world. Despite our best efforts, we've yet to find a truly satisfactory way to articulate the nuanced depth and essence of our work. We've observed that misunderstandings can arise even among those familiar with Krishnamurti's teachings, parents seeking alternative education models such as Montessori or project-based learning, or among those drawn to our vegetarian ethos.

While these elements are indeed part of our approach, we recognize the critical importance of conveying that at the core we are a space dedicated to inner learning and profound inquiry. This realization has led us to a deeper understanding: the natural blossoming of kindness and humility within our community holds more significance than any particular educational method or philosophy we employ.

As we refine our message, we aim to shift focus from what we do to who we become through this process of inner exploration. Our challenge now lies in finding authentic ways to demonstrate these intangible yet crucial aspects of our community, allowing potential families to sense the transformative potential of our approach beyond its surface-level features. We are excited about the future, full of energy and enthusiasm and devoted to our role in the flowering of this small learning community here in northern Portugal. Because we are the world – O Mundo Somos Nós.

*Ivone Apolinário, June 2023*

Co-founder of O Mundo Somos Nós  
Representative of the Portuguese Krishnamurti Committee  
More info: [omundosomosnos.org](http://omundosomosnos.org)  
[quintadesandelhas.com](http://quintadesandelhas.com)



## **K: I want my son to have a fundamental understanding of life**

Let us say that I have a son and that I want him to be educated in such a manner that he has a fundamental understanding of life – life being not the life of Mr. Gandhi or Mr. X, but the life which he has to live and in which there is frustration, death, sex, meditation, religion and God. If I send the boy here, I do not want him to merely pass an examination. I want you to help him to understand life in the larger sense. I want you to help him to face life as he grows up and help him to ask fundamental questions and to find fundamental answers, not just to know the answers of Gandhi, the Buddha or those contained in some book. Let us say that you teach history and that you cite ‘heroes’ as worthy of emulation. Now, whether one should follow an example is a fundamental question. In order to educate my son so that he can ask fundamental questions, you must ask fundamental questions yourselves and, also, be capable of finding answers for them. Only then can you help the boy. I want you to help him to live a rich life, but I do not know how to enable him to have it. Of course my son does not know a thing about fundamental questions either. But can you, as educators, bring about a situation where the child is bound to ask such questions because you, as teachers, are asking them? Otherwise what is the good of sending my son here?

‘Uncovering the Process of Thinking’, 19 January 1955

*Krishnamurti at Rajghat*, pg. 69

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Roses at Chalet Solitude, Rougemont, Switzerland

# THE TEACHER AND THE TEACHINGS

## K: The share of all humanity

It appears that man has always escaped from himself, from what he is, from where he is going, from what all this is about – the universe, our daily life, the dying and the beginning. It is strange that we never realize that however much we may escape from ourselves, however much we may wander away consciously, deliberately or unconsciously, subtly, the conflict, the pleasure, the pain, the fear and so on are always there. They ultimately dominate. You may try to suppress them, you may try to put them away deliberately with an act of will but they surface again. And pleasure is one of the factors that predominate; it too has the same conflicts, the same pain, the same boredom. The weariness of pleasure and the fret is part of this turmoil of our life. You can't escape it, my friend. You can't escape from this deep unfathomed turmoil unless you really give thought to it, not only thought but see by careful attention, diligent watching, the whole movement of thought and the self. You may say all this is too tiresome, perhaps unnecessary. But if you do not pay attention to this, give heed, the future is not only going to be more destructive, more intolerable but without much significance. All this is not a dampening, depressing point of view, it is actually so. What you are now is what you will be in the coming days. You can't avoid it. It is as definite as the sun rising and setting. This is the share of all men, of all humanity, unless we all change, each one of us, change to something that is not projected by thought.

Ojai, 18 March 1983

*Krishnamurti to Himself*, pp. 48–49

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During one of his meetings with the students at Brockwood, K told us about his visit to the Acropolis. He said that he had gone down on his knees at the sight of the Parthenon, adding that, fortunately, nobody had been around to see it happen. I took the latter detail to mean that a self-effacing and modest person like him would have found such a public display of adoration rather unbecoming. Having an idea of K's own greatness, I could only wonder at what in the building might have so overwhelmed him. What he seemed to indicate was that the very structure, even in its contemporary ruinous state, was so majestic that it conveyed an extraordinary sense of skill, beauty and intelligence. Nonetheless, as far as I could make out, K appeared to be of two minds about culture. On the one hand, he considered that to be exposed to the best in science, the arts and the humanities was an important part of our education, and on the other he seemed to dismiss it all as the product of thought and even as a sophisticated form of escape. He would ask, for example, why should we go to a museum to admire landscape painting when we could appreciate the beauty of nature directly for ourselves? The charge that it was all the product of thought seemed to devalue it in a very fundamental way. Because thought was the response of memory, K saw it as essentially conditioned, mechanical and uncreative. The ancient Greeks agreed to some extent with K's view. In their mythology Mnemosyne, memory, daughter of Heaven and Earth, was the mother of the nine muses. The latter, however, did not stand for the mechanical products of thought but for the inspired sources of beauty, goodness and truth at the core of Greek philosophy. I imagined that K, with his hypersensitivity and extrasensory perception, might have glimpsed these supreme qualities seeping through the marble columns of the broken temple as it glowed in the sunset against the deep blue waters of Homer's sea.

K would also equate thought with measure. He identified the latter as the essential quality that Greek culture had bequeathed to western civilization. This was exemplified in the flourishing in the West of mathematics, science and technology. The Greeks, for example, considered right measure (nothing in excess) as the key to both health and moral integrity and defined beauty as proportion. While K appreciated the proportional-

ity of beauty, he did not define beauty by any relational measures but as emerging when the self is not. He was not so concerned with expression, manifestation and form as with an inner state where beauty, goodness and truth would not be attributes of things but timeless and formless essences. K, however, did not read philosophy or even great literature, preferring to peruse the King James version of the *Old Testament* for the beauty of the language and resort to thrillers for entertainment. Had he read Plato's *Republic*, he might have wondered at the depth and breadth of that culture's profoundly mystical vision. One can understand that every culture has its origin in a creative source whose formal expressions become crystalized into the thought-forms of civilization. That happened not only in the West but also in the East. The latter, with its emphasis on the immeasurable, also became crystalized and lost its creative spark, for the immeasurable was not a vibrant fact but an idea. And here is where we might see the reason why K would dismiss so-called culture as the product of thought. Although he appreciated these products, what concerned him was to tap into the creative source, whose energetic flow was impeded by the crystalizations of thought.

There is something beautiful and very fitting in K's presence in Greece. One senses that he felt right at home in its atmosphere. The photos we have of him in Athens in the early stages of his life as a teacher show him sporting a becoming beard, which lent him the gravity of those ancient Aegean lovers of wisdom. K would certainly have engaged with them in a profound philosophical dialogue. In the following article, Maria Pilaviou, former Brockwood student and currently the person responsible for the K Library of Athens, offers us a warm impression of K's visits to this city, his appreciation for her native land and his relations with some people there.

## K's Love of Greece and the Teachings in Athens

*Maria Pilaviou*

The greater part of the world sees Greece mainly through their knowledgeable perception and thus through quite a narrow alley of events that, although a cause for admiration, do not capture the essence of this corner of the globe. Even quite a few of us who were born and raised in Greece don't grasp the value of this place, as we mostly tend to focus on the faults and take all the magic for granted. My love of life, my years at Brockwood, the Teachings working through the core of my existence consciously and subconsciously, and my wholesome long-term abstention from anything to do with my place of origin, seem to have contributed to a heartfelt opening so that I was finally able to perceive the eminent natural beauty of the country and the exceptional velvety energy of my city, Athens.

Krishnaji was free from the bonds of experience and knowledge so he would instantaneously grasp everything with an open heart, just like a child who is still pure and free from all prejudices and conditioning. Reading his perception of Greece, his feelings for the place and the people was like a glowing warm caress to my heart and made me feel at home. His first visit was in December 1930. He stayed at the Hotel Grande Bretagne in Athens and gave one public talk at the Olympia Theatre in which he equated truth and life:

*"Absolute truth is the truth that is in harmony with life. Life in all its variations, with all its complications and complexities, is the only truth, and when one has solved the problem posed by life, one has found the truth."*<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to Lady Emily Lutyens dated on the following day, he waxed ecstatic about the Acropolis and the wonder that was classical Greece:

*"I have never seen anything more beautiful, simple, forceful than the Parthenon. The whole of the Acropolis is amazing, breathtaking and everything*

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1 1<sup>st</sup> Public Talk at Olympia Theatre in Athens, Greece, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1930.

*else in nature of the expression of man is vulgar, mediocre and confused. It's magnificent. I would come to see it a thousand miles. What people those wonderful few Greeks were. You must see it, and everything else that is not in the way of the eternal is so puny, ridiculous and stupid."*<sup>2</sup>

During his second visit, in June 1933, there was a five-day gathering at Hotel Kastri, where he stayed, situated in the lush and serene Athenian suburb of Kastri. He concluded his stay at Hotel Acropole and with a public talk at the Palace Theatre in the centre of Athens:

*"To me, where there is security, where mind and heart are searching to escape from conflict, there cannot be the free flow of understanding, nor freedom. When you begin to complete any thought, any feeling, you will see how it is hindered, how it is impeded from this free flow."*<sup>3</sup>

The third visit, in March 1954, was more on a private note, as there were no public talks or appearances. Instead, during the two-week period he was there several discussions took place amongst a group of friends who shared a deep interest in the teachings. He stayed at a private home in Ekali, another lush and serene Athenian suburb:

*"So my concern is: Can I be aware, not only of the conditioning of the conscious mind, but also of the unconscious mind, all the experiences of my childhood, my forefathers, the whole human imprint? Then maybe I can find out what love is, then I can know what it is to have no fear. I can have no understanding of those; till then it is merely speculation."*<sup>4</sup>

K's fourth and last visit to Greece, in September 1956, consisted of three public talks at the Parnassos Concert Hall in Athens and an interview

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2 Extract from a letter to Lady Emily Lutyens, Hotel Grande Bretagne, Athens, Greece, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1930.

3 Public Talk at Pallas Theatre in Athens, Greece, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1933.

4 Last Discussion on 27<sup>th</sup> March, in Ekali, Athens.



by the journalist Yannis Makridis for the Greek newspaper Kathimerini. The last question of this interview was:

*Q: You have repeatedly visited our country. What do you think of Greece?*

*K: I adore it!*

K attracted a large and enthusiastic crowd:

*“I believe 1.000 were turned away and there were more than 2.000 in the hall. Somebody said that if I stayed there for a fortnight, I would become the mayor of Athens!! I think I had better leave! They are very enthusiastic, and I can't go without a crowd literally coming after me.”<sup>5</sup>*

His main contact was Mr Paris Hatjipetros, with whom he was in frequent correspondence. I couldn't find a better way to portray Paris Hatjipetros than the eulogy written when he passed away on 4 August 1969, at the age of 77, by the Greek poet Melissanthi (1907–1990):

*“Paris Hatzipetros was one of the first to listen to and embrace Krishnamurti's message, recognizing its immense significance for our world and its potential to transform it radically. This was at the time when in 1927 Krishnamurti inaugurated his teaching at the Ommen Camp in the Netherlands, drawing thousands of listeners from all ethnicities. At the beginning of this period, Paris Hatjipetros had the fortunate opportunity to witness this momentous event, which profoundly marked his entire life. Since then, he has dedicated his spiritual interests solely to the purpose of spreading Krishnamurti's teachings, particularly in our region. His efforts spanned 42 years and included lectures, translations, and publications of Krishnamurti's works, as well as presenting Krishnamurti himself to the Athenian public (the last occasion being in 1956 at the Parnassos Hall) and organising his stays here.”*

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5 Extract from a letter to Lady Emily, Hotel Grande Bretagne, Athens, Greece, 11 December 1930.

Further to their meetings in Greece and Switzerland, they became fond of each other and K in his letters started to address him as “my friend”. K was notified of Mr Hatjipetros’ passing by Dr Irene Bachas, the homeopath who organised private dialogues and meetings in Athens for small groups interested in the teachings.

The last Greek K was in close contact with was my father Nikos Pilavios. Discovering K in July 1984 dramatically changed his life. He attended all of K’s public talks and question and answer meetings in England, Switzerland and India from then until December 1985. In addition, he had several personal encounters with him. Soon after K’s death in February 1986, he and a group of friends joined together to create the Krishnamurti Library of Athens (KLA). One of the founding members happened to be Petros Hatjipetros, the son of Mr Paris Hatjipetros. Nikos has translated 25 K books into Greek so far, subtitled over 20 of the videos and recorded voiceovers in Greek for a few of the talks. He is the author of *Krishnamurti in Greece* (Kastaniotis Publications, Athens, 1998) published in both Greek and English. He has also put together a couple of other compilations of K extracts only available in Greek. He was the one who invited K during his last talks in Saanen for a fifth visit to Greece, this time to the island of Skiathos, which K was considering enthusiastically, as reported by Mary Lutyens in her third volume of K’s biography:

*“A letter has just come from a Greek couple asking him and Mary to visit them on a Greek island. K was tempted and enjoyed looking up the island on the map but wondered whether there would be enough shade in Greece. (He had once had sunstroke and could not bear sitting or walking in the sun.)”<sup>6</sup>*

I vividly remember that summer of 1985. I was ten years old. I enjoyed staying in that beautiful hotel in Gstaad where I was first won over and mesmerized by the view of the lush green slopes from my room. I slept exceptionally well and enjoyed getting lost in the soft fluffy bedding,

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6 J. Krishnamurti – A Life, pp. 659–660

waking up to the smell of fresh croissants and hot chocolate that soothed the senses like a tender morning lullaby. The daily morning bicycle ride to Saanen with my dad was pure bliss; as the wheels glided effortlessly beneath me, I was filled with a profound sense of liberation. The cows grazing peacefully about on the pasture, the cry of the eagles carrying a sense of wild freedom, cutting through the silence with a commanding presence – all of this and more evoked a feeling of peaceful freedom as if time had paused indefinitely.

After a brief five-minute ride to the tent, my dad and I would go our separate ways, as he immersed himself in the talk. First, I would eagerly grab the irresistible freshly cut peaches from the stand on the bank of the river Saane, before riding over to the airstrip, which was then open and easily accessible to everyone. I loved sitting on the bench at the beginning of the runway, watching the whole preparations, the take-offs and landings of the gliders. I'd linger at the airport for about an hour before making my way back to the tent, timing it so I could reunite with my dad just as the talk ended. On some days, I'd simply wander around near the tent, mingling and exchanging a few words with the other kids. I never stayed for the talk. There was little reason to, as I was too young and English was still a mystery to me.

On Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> July of that same year, at K's very last talk in Saanen, before the question-and-answer meetings, I secured my bike next to my dad's to the left of the entrance to the tent. My dad, bewildered, looked at me and asked why I wasn't riding off as usual. Utterly determined, I said that I would be staying for the talk. He responded that I'd get bored since I wouldn't understand a word, and it would be far too long for me to sit through. I insisted that it wouldn't be an issue and that I was staying regardless. So, he relented and suggested we sit at the back, near the walkway, just in case I decided to leave, ensuring we wouldn't disturb anyone. My dad on any other occasion would sit at the front as close to K as possible. I sat on his lap, as the tent was already packed with people. I remained perfectly still, showing no signs of discomfort or irritation throughout the entire talk. I was utterly engrossed.

Although I did not understand a single word, the essence of the message seemed to get through to me all the same. Years later, I heard that those in the tent that day had sensed that something extraordinary had taken place. Though no one could fully articulate it, there was a palpable energy in the air, a powerful 'presence' that lingered and that was felt by many, if not all. If I delve deep inside my soul to the time I found myself there, it feels as though that moment in time were here and now, and its essence, as I perceive it, is one of equanimity. It is very similar to what I felt when I had an out-of-body experience: timeless peace, knowledge, truth, no fear, love, compassion and bliss. A flawless state from which one would never wish to depart.

After spending a week or so immersed in the beauty of this magnificent place, my dad and I made our way back to Greece to continue our holidays on Skiathos. That summer remains etched in my memory, as every evening at the golden hour my dad would set out on foot, carefully scouting the paths suitable for K's walks during his anticipated visit the following year. When he finally discovered the perfect spot, he took me along, brimming with joy and excitement. It was a slice of paradise, a golden sandy trail winding through a dense pine forest, rich with diverse undergrowth, leading to a secluded beach with turquoise waters. Sadly, K never had the chance to experience this heavenly place, as he passed away a few months later.

Since the age of nine, my exposure to the teachings, the intense and profound experience of the time in Saanenland, coupled with my years at Brockwood, the variety of studies and jobs, the richness of life experiences, and the diverse influences that shaped me, all combined to serve as the tools for my current 'project.'

In September 2021, through the mysterious and miraculous ways of life I found myself joyfully stepping into the role of Head of the non-profit association Krishnamurti Library of Athens which my father gracefully founded in 1986. Over the past three years, with this cherished project in my care, I have transformed and elevated it in every imaginable way, yet



In Rougemont, on the way to Saanen, Switzerland

the journey of growth and possibilities is far from over. The original reason for the creation of the KLA is the same as that of the former International Committees, namely, to preserve the integrity of the teachings in the Greek language, to disseminate them, and last but not least, to make them available to anyone interested in studying them. Grounded on the ethical intent of Krishnamurti's philosophy, it was created with love, care and dedication, which qualities continue to sustain our responsibility and commitment to its purpose and *raison d'être*.

Finally, I am happy to announce the two current KLA ventures closest to my heart. The first is the upcoming first Greek edition of Friedrich's *The Beauty of the Mountain*, a beautiful memoir of his friendship with K. I was a student at Brockwood when the first edition was published. I recall Friedrich bustling about the school with excitement, eagerly jotting down the names of those interested in securing a copy. I still have that original edition, now a treasured relic of history on my journey with the teachings. I am confident that the book will be in print by the time this newsletter is out. The second is the launch of our new bilingual (English-Greek) website [www.klibrary.gr](http://www.klibrary.gr) by the end of September. Please visit it for information concerning the KLA, news from the K-world, events and, of course, all about K and the Teachings.

It has been a challenging yet profoundly rewarding journey, as the K Library thrives entirely on the dedicated efforts of volunteers and the few generous donations we have received so far. I feel passionately that sharing the Teachings with the world remains a singularly valuable and crucial mission – one that holds immense significance for humanity now and in the future.

I am deeply grateful for the continuous, untiring and heartfelt support of Raman Patel, Friedrich Grohe, Claudia Herr, Jurgen Brandt, Javier Gómez Rodríguez, the whole Link Team, the Krishnamurti Foundation Trust and Centre at Brockwood Park, the Krishnamurti Library of Athens Team and that silent but deepest and everlasting support of my father Nikos Pilavios. I am overwhelmed with joy and proud to have inherited

this most valuable legacy, namely my father's work with the Teachings, with Krishnamurti and his friends, among them Michael Krohnen, whom we sadly lost this year.

With love always from the heart,

*Maria Pilaviou*  
*Krishnamurti Library of Athens*  
www.klibrary.gr

### **K: The way to live**

If you look at the fact with a referent, with what you can get out of that fact, then you will never see the fact. To look at the fact is the only thing that matters. There is no fact that is superior or inferior, there is only fact. That is a ruthless thing. If I am a lawyer, I am a lawyer – I do not find excuses for it. But if you say, “I must always speak the truth,” that is an ideal. That is a false assumption. So do not move from what you consider the unimportant fact to what you consider the more important fact. There is only fact, not the less or the more. It really does something to you to look at life that way. You banish all illusion, all dissipation of energy of the mind, the brain, at one stroke. The mind then operates in precision without any deception, without hatred, without hypocrisy. The mind then becomes very clear, sharp. That is the way to live.

Rishi Valley, 5 December 1982

*On Education*, pg. 151

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This summer in Mürren was rich with opportunities not only to delve more widely and deeply with the teachings into our human condition but to renew old friendships and sustain each other's ongoing existential as well as more abstract inquiries. Knowing that Rasmus Tinning has a passion for keeping up with the latest scientific findings and theories, I asked him if he would give us an update on his researches. A lot is happening in the scientific field of which some of us are not at all aware. Some of these scientific fields address some of the same concerns as the teachings, which makes them relevant to the latter's journey of self-knowledge. Rasmus is a retired IT systems developer who lives in Copenhagen. He is a life-long, devoted student of Krishnamurti's teachings. But his interests are diverse: the arts, history, plant-based diet, biodiversity and the sciences of evolution, neuroscience and cognitive psychology. He is especially drawn to the way the last three disciplines have been converging since the 70s to form a new understanding of what a human being is. As part of the ongoing dialogue between science and the teachings, in the following article he explores the question of determinism and inward freedom.

## The Source of Inward Freedom

*Rasmus Tinning*

Generally, science doesn't see any evidence of a soul, an immaterial self or anything else outside the biosphere. From its point of view the mind has evolved as an integral part of life on earth and is made entirely of biological components. This makes many people uncomfortable. The immaterial self was somehow thought to be not only eternal, but the seat of 'free will'.

*Free will* is a vague concept but most people feel that there must be a deeply personal entity within that is not just the result of determining factors, an essential 'me' which is free, not only of culture and upbringing but also independent of our biological substrate – nerve impulses, hormones, etc. Recently there has been a heated discussion about

this topic. Are our decisions completely determined or is there some wiggle room?<sup>7</sup>

Is there some way we can talk about inward freedom, at all?

We are in an odd dilemma: the conclusion that we are some sort of biological machines may be scientifically sound but at the same time it belies the huge potential of humanity and could open the door to all kinds of totalitarian futures.

Krishnamurti claims inward freedom is possible but says, *“Inward freedom can only come about when one understands one’s conditioning, the conditioning which is both social and cultural, religious, economic and physical.”*<sup>8</sup>

In our culture there is little understanding of the role of conditioning in consciousness. Even people who have studied Krishnamurti are often quite unaware of their own conditioning. One way to provoke a fresh inquiry into this question could be to juxtapose Krishnamurti’s teachings and some findings of the new *science of consciousness*.

Krishnamurti says, *“Habit, conditioning, tradition, everything is from the past. The past meets the present, modifies it and goes on. The future is the modification of the past, meeting the present, and shaping the future.”*<sup>9</sup>

We may think that it is fairly self-evident. But there is a depth to it that the scientists are uncovering. They have recently proposed a model of consciousness called *predictive processing*.<sup>10</sup> It describes the surprising

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7 An extreme case of determinism is Robert Sapolsky’s *Determined – A Science of Life Without Free Will* (2023).

8 Krishnamurti, Q&A 1, Brockwood Park 1980.

9 Krishnamurti, Public Talk 1, Washington D.C., USA, 20 April 1985.

10 I draw mainly on the books and videos of Anil Seth and Andy Clark of the University of Sussex.

way the brain constructs experiences by combining its own model of the world with evidence from the senses. Our consciousness reflects not just the input from the outside but what our brain *expected* to come in.

In traditional models of the brain, information flows inward from the senses and is then matched to memories and activates more abstract understandings. In predictive processing, cognition starts with an inner model of the world that moment by moment predict and makes best guesses at what you are seeing. This shapes awareness and perception. As Andy Clark puts it, “*Our own actions and histories sculpt the onboard prediction machinery that in turn sculpts human awareness, right down to the level of what seem to us basic human experiences.*”<sup>11</sup>

The way I understand the theory is that the ‘reality’ you experience is largely constructed on the basis of the brain’s own expectations. The brain then uses the actual sensory input to correct the predictions. It learns in a continuous cycle: prior knowledge meets sensory evidence → an experience of ‘reality’ is created → knowledge is updated and in turn becomes prior knowledge.

This cognitive cycle is obviously one of nature’s great inventions. It has been very successful in evolutionary terms – up to a point. It can be efficient and rational but because of its circular and conditioned nature, it can be totally blind as well. It’s not *in itself* intelligent. It tends to get stuck in infinite, self-confirming loops of biased reasoning, and is under the influence of emotions from the animal roots of the brain, such as fear and anger. Cognition based on conditioning has got us to where we are – but is also a prison. Even if we solve the present world crises, it’s obvious that the human mind is too incomplete for us to have a good life.

Logically, the cognitive cycle has to be informed and held in place by an *unconditioned intelligence*. Intelligence must of necessity operate

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11 A. Clark, *The Experience Machine*, pg. 26.

outside the field of the known – memory, instincts and other conditioning factors.

Does such an intelligence exist? Krishnamurti claims that it does. He doesn't basically question the use of conditioning for practical purposes but points out that what we experience is invariably shaped by the already-known. His basic approach is to explore the whole phenomenon of knowledge-bound cognition through sensitive self-observation. The very uncovering of the mechanism *changes consciousness* so that knowledge-bound cognition finds its place in an intelligent totality.

The challenge is, of course, that the observer is bound by prior knowledge which biases the observation. It *chooses* what it sees. The observer can never see the movement of the past as it actually unfolds. Here Krishnamurti is in accordance with the predictive processing model. It leaves us with a conundrum: is it possible to observe the conditioned mind without the control of the old model? Otherwise, there is only a continuation of the old.

Can the active, interpretive process – the observer – be quiet? According to Krishnamurti, this happens in the meditative state, an unconditioned space in which knowledge-based cognition finds its right scope of action. In other words, the source of inward freedom is not some imaginary immaterial self or free will but *the meditative state*.

The crux of the issue is that logically the silence of the observer cannot be part of the cognitive process as we know it. You don't learn how to be quiet and then observe conditioning *from* that knowledge. To observe conditioning and liberate the mind, you have to observe without conditioning ...(!) It is a one-step insight into the way consciousness works which involves a level that is beyond logic. This is the big challenge that faces us.

*“To look is important. We look to immediate things and out of immediate necessities to the future, coloured by the past. Our seeing is very limited and our eyes are accustomed to near things. Our look is as bound by time-space as the*

*brain. We never look, we never see beyond this limitation; we do not know how to look through and beyond these fragmentary frontiers. But the eyes have to see beyond them, penetrating deeply and widely, without choosing, without shelter; they have to wander beyond man-made frontiers of ideas and values and to feel beyond love. Then there is a benediction which no god can give.”<sup>12</sup>*

*Rasmus Tinning*

## **K: Meditation is the movement of love**

Meditation is one of the most extraordinary things, and if you do not know what it is you are like the blind man in a world of bright colour, shadows, and moving light. It is not an intellectual affair, but when the heart enters into the mind, the mind has quite a different quality; it is really, then, limitless, not only in its capacity to think, to act efficiently, but also in its sense of living in a vast space where you are part of everything. Meditation is the movement of love. It isn't the love of the one or of the many. It is like water that anyone can drink out of any jar, whether golden or earthenware; it is inexhaustible. And a peculiar thing takes place which no drug or self-hypnosis can bring about: it is as though the mind enters into itself, beginning at the surface and penetrating ever more deeply, until depth and height have lost their meaning and every form of measurement ceases. In this state there is complete peace – not contentment that has come about through gratification – but a peace that has order, beauty, and intensity. It can all be destroyed, as you can destroy a flower, and yet because of its very vulnerability it is indestructible. This meditation cannot be learned from another. You must begin without knowing anything about it and move from innocence to innocence.

The soil in which the meditative mind can begin is the soil of everyday life, the strife, the pain, and the fleeting joy. It must begin there, and bring

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12 Gstaad, 24 July 1961, *Krishnamurti's Notebook*, pg. 34.

order, and from there move endlessly. But if you are concerned only with making order, then that very order will bring about its own limitation, and the mind will be its prisoner. In all this movement you must somehow begin from the other end, from the other shore, and not always be concerned with this shore or how to cross the river. You must take a plunge into the water not knowing how to swim. And the beauty of meditation is that you never know where you are, where you are going, what the end is.

*Freedom, Love, and Action*, pp. 82–83

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During the summer gatherings in Mürren, I happened to sit several times at table with Jaap van Manen, who for years has been offering dance and movement workshops as part of the programme of activities. While the core of the programme is the thematic exploration of the teachings through exposure to a selection of audiovisual materials followed by dialogues, it was always felt important that these sedentary activities be complemented with physical exercise. Apart from the walks around the majestic Alpine landscape, workshops were offered in such things as yoga and Feldenkrais. Jaap's approach has been similarly aimed at self-awareness through bodily movement. This has to do with his own background. After studying Theology, Jaap (1954, NL) trained as a dance teacher and life coach from which he developed the new discipline of dance coaching. In 2006 and 2007, and from 2013–2018 he trained dance coaches at his own school, called ODC (training dance coaching). He published two Dutch books about this approach: *Danscoaching – persoonlijke ontwikkeling door fysieke en mentale expressie* (Danscoaching – personal development through physical and mental expression, 2012) and *Dansend tot je essentie* (Dancing towards your essence, 2019). In 2013 he also published *Vaarwel geloof! – Een levensvisie in beweging* (Farewell Belief! – A vision of life in movement) and in 2022 *De androgyne man* (The androgynous man). Although he is now retired and divides his time between the Netherlands and Spain, he continues to explore the creative potential of this avenue of self-inquiry. As Jaap talked enthusiastically about his work, I invited him to write something about it and the following is what he kindly shared with us.

## Moving and Dancing with K's Teachings

Jaap van Manen

*“What I want for you is that you be over the hills  
and dancing.”*

(K to Brockwood students around 1977,  
as recalled by Javier Gómez Rodríguez)

### Introduction

The first time I combined Krishnamurti's teachings with movement and dance was in February 1997, when I was asked to teach dance to the primary school children of the Valley School in Bangalore, India. Once a week the children came to the Study Centre, where they were exposed to K's teachings at their level. The senses were the subject of the dance classes, because K spoke a lot about them. Reading some of his texts had made me aware of the joy of looking at a sunset or listening to the song of a bird. Afterwards I wrote an article for the journal of the school and used a quote from Evelyne Blau's book, *Krishnamurti: 100 Years*. On page 141 Sunanda Patwardhan says: *“Krishnaji shows the importance of the role of the senses in bringing about a quietness of the mind and in awakening a new sensitivity. [...] Generally we use or are aware of only one or two senses at a time whereas he talks of all the senses operating simultaneously. Then there can be a ground of a deep non-verbal state. This awakening of the senses has in it vibrancy and vitality without a center.”* I mentioned that the senses are like windows. When they are open, the world can come in and we are able to communicate and discover the way we are related. My approach to movement and dance added an extra dimension, because moving and dancing was quite natural for most pupils, and it intensified their experience of the senses. They listened to the music, felt the music and, dancing in pairs, looked at one another, so several senses were operating simultaneously.





Near the Sulzhütte, St Antönien, Switzerland (photo by Christoph Grohe)

Later that year I visited Saanen for the first time and asked Gisèle Balleys, the organizer of the yearly gatherings until 2022, if body work could also include movement and dance. After having talked to me about who I was, how I was touched by the teachings, and what my offer would be, she gave me the opportunity to give classes the following year. Since then, for 17 years I attended one week of the gatherings and gave movement and dance classes.

## Dance

My approach to dance is mostly influenced by the method of dance expression. This is a Dutch form of modern dance, in which the body in movement is the means to awareness, development and change. It differs from other dance forms, like classical ballet, hip-hop or Bharatanatyam, in that it considers that everyone – whatever their physical capacities – can dance without having to learn a set of steps, that dance is a means of expression from which we can learn about ourselves, and that it involves the whole of the physical and mental capacities, so that we are a *mindbody*.

Dance expression is about the interplay between movement and state of mind. As a dancer, you do not only make movements, but you feel something inwardly, you get images, associations or thoughts. After dancing, the teacher asks the participants about these things, so reflection on the dance experience is important. This integral approach assumes that there is a connection between body and mind, which sometimes can generate a jump in consciousness: you suddenly get an insight, you see yourself as a whole or feel connected to everything and everybody. I call that state 'being'. You cannot strive for that, it happens spontaneously. Then *you* don't move but are *being* moved physically, emotionally and mentally.

## Dancing with the teachings

Each week of these Swiss gatherings had an overarching theme. These themes were my starting point, but they needed to be translated into a dance program.

The theme in 2013, for example, was 'Can we explore what ending means?', which had to do with the element of time. In every movement you make you use a certain aspect of time (slow, fast), a certain force (relaxed, tensed) and you move in a certain space (on the spot or through the whole room, on your feet or with your body on the floor). Together with

Feldenkrais teacher France Dubois I designed a workshop entitled 'Time in movement'. Together with the participants we first read some texts about time from Pupul Jayakar's biography of K. After that the participants started to move. First, they walked at different speeds: slow, accelerating, fast, decelerating, alternated by stops. Then they made movements at different speeds with their whole body (arms, legs, pelvis, trunk, neck and head) on the spot and through the room. After that they found out which pace suited them individually at that moment. After these movements we had a dialogue in smaller groups about time based on the texts and their experiences of the movements.

The theme of the second week in 2023 was a statement: 'There is an ending to sorrow.' In my introduction to the five workshops, I mentioned that this subject had to do with sorrow for ourselves, for people around us, for the planet in general, due to pain, disease, loss, devastation, etc. We know about it, but don't feel it in our body, suppress it or distance ourselves from it. Sensitivity is required and when several senses are working together, something different may happen and then an ending to sorrow might be possible. The first workshop was about awakening the senses; the second about where in the body one experiences sorrow; in the third session I used postcards which showed sorrow in a two-dimensional form; in the fourth, the participants moved and danced with a story or situation related to sorrow in their own mind; and in the last workshop I used a piece of music – the last song in Preisner's *Requiem for a Friend* – which, for me, has to do with vulnerability and sorrow.

The themes of the two weeks of this year, 2024, were about change, order and truth. In my introduction I mentioned that change has to do with movement and interconnectedness and if we are able to do both, order and truth will follow. The workshops were about movement – with a focus on grounding, breathing and voice – and connection via the 'I' (with the center in the belly), the intellect (with the center in our brain, which consists of two hemispheres, which approach the world differently) and the heart, from which love and compassion emanate.

## The dancers' experiences

The gatherings began with K speaking in Saanen in 1961. After his death in 1986, they continued to be organized by Gisèle, France and others, and in the last two years by Claudia, Claire and Doris. But, mostly due to the high prices, they will no longer be taking place in Switzerland. So an era has come to an end and to round it all off I was curious to find out more about what happened in my workshops and what influence, if any, they might have had. So I designed a questionnaire and sent it to the dance class participants from the last two years and to a few others from earlier years:

1. What were your reasons for attending my classes?
2. This dance work is a mindbody activity. Did you experience it that way or just as a physical exercise?
3. The theme of the dance was always connected to the theme of the week of the gathering. Were you aware of that while dancing and, if so, in which way?
4. Did dancing around the theme shed another light on the teachings?
5. You were not only dancing on your own but also in pairs and in groups. Did this co-operation deepen your dance? Did it have an added value?
6. Would you like to add any other comments or describe with an example your experience with this mindbody activity?

Out of the twenty questionnaires I sent, fourteen people replied. Those who had followed many of my workshops answered quite extensively, while those who had attended one or two classes did so more succinctly. I've summarized their answers below, per question.

Most respondents said they attended because they were curious, loved to dance, saw bodywork as healthy or as a welcome change after dialoguing and hiking. For others, the dance meant a deep journey, a very deep and essential means of expression, a dialogue around body, movement, emotion and communication, alone and with others.

Concerning mindbody activity, most people were aware of the connection or communication between body and mind which, due to the music, surpasses gym, yoga or any sport activity. For them dance can be “a mirror to the deeper human landscape of sorrow, fear, desire and other aspects of the human condition. It supports the inquiry in terms of sensitivity, observation and expression”. This dance form creates a level of intimacy with your body, sensations, feelings, thoughts and with other participants. It can be surprising in ways not found in such exercises as yoga or Pilates. For one respondent, the dance felt like “an expression of closeness to nature and a deeply experienced truth”.

Half of the people were not aware of the connection between the dance and the theme of the week. For some of them it was just self-expression, which can lead to more vitality and self-determined action. Others, however, were able to link the dance with the teachings. Dance offers a different view than a video or dialogue does. Some were surprised at what came up, as if dancing activated the unconscious. One person even had an insight into compassion.

When it came to the added value of dancing, some people said that it is an approach on a different level, “as if the body also needs to be awakened”. They indicated that movement and relaxation allow time and space for insight. Dance intensifies or increases awareness, bringing conditioned aspects of the mind to life, and it can bring the teachings “to a space of being less intellectual and controlling”. One respondent wrote that for her dancing makes a ‘personal’ access to the teachings possible, which becomes ‘impersonal’ or ‘universal’ when interacting with others. She had the impression that in the dialogues personal feelings or thoughts were not appreciated. Some experienced a kind of unity: “I am the dance and the dancer” or “I am the rest of humanity”. Two people, though they liked the approach, did not experience dance as shedding another light on the teachings. And another wrote: “The teachings are concerned with the liberation of our whole system of perception and needs a depth of inner contemplation that cannot be transformed by any outer activity of body or mind.”

When it came to dancing with others, the interaction could be initially quite frightening, difficult or challenging for people, but the safe environment of the class seemed to diminish their self-consciousness. One person stated that overcoming fear resulted in a feeling of happiness. One sees oneself in a different relationship, which can be revealing. Dancing with others becomes a mirror in which we discover how we behave and who we are individually. Sometimes this group activity comes too soon and then it becomes a distraction. Somebody remarked that when she was totally present with all her likes and dislikes, she relaxed, and her awareness increased. Then one becomes more sensitive to others and feels connected with all the dancers in a harmonic and playful way. Another person wrote that the feeling of being 'one' most often takes place in solitude and silence but can happen as well when you are in close contact with another, like in dance.

The last question invited some people to share more information or to give an example of their mindbody experience. Here I would like to quote a few remarkable comments:

"I experienced things that I simply cannot forget. If I were to connect it with the teachings of Krishnamurti, it would be this: "One never meets the new totally, whole, that is, intellectually, emotionally, with all your senses awakened, you never receive it completely." My senses were awakened during our dancing."

"In such works as yours there is certainly no division between mind and body."

"Growth and development remain, once a person is rooted in his own body."

"Once I danced with a man and both of us had the feeling of being one. It felt like 'the great love'. After the dance we both laughed and when we parted it was ended. In similar forms, I've experienced that more often".

"There were moments when I felt I was losing myself in the dance. I cherish these moments."

"This activity is for me personally an essential part of the gathering to make it whole and give sense."

“During dancing, I did not at the time make the link with the teachings. However, the setup allowing us to explore unknown movements with no fear of being frowned upon, with no sense of comparison, and with the strong feeling that we are all very much the same in this process, can happen only in a fearless and confident environment such as K talks about.”

## **Conclusions or what I learned from this**

The number of people who attended my classes since 1998 varied from three to twenty, but on average there were about eight to ten participants. Thus these fourteen answers are just a fraction of what happened during all these years. I'm very grateful to the dancers who kindly answered my questions.

In my cover letter to the questionnaire I expressed my assumption that movement and dance, if connected to the teachings, could contribute to understanding K in a different way than videos and dialogues do, due to the interplay between dance and reflection. Some respondents had very definite ideas about this. One person wrote: “Dance might be an investigation of the mind, but it cannot be, in my view, the investigation for fundamental change of consciousness.” Another stated: “I would call it self-expression, but that can be done in many ways and does not mean a deepening of the teachings. It's still about the 'I' that wants to be expressed, seen or heard.” Others, however, had a different view. They sometimes lost themselves and were the dance. Some experienced great love, got an insight into compassion, surprised themselves or met the new with their whole being. For one person dancing was “an essential part of the gathering to make it whole and give sense”.

In summary, I could say that some participants confirmed my assumption, while for others this mindbody work, while interesting and playful, did not shed light on the teachings. Maybe the most important thing is what Gisèle once told me. She always preferred that I come for the first



week of the gathering, because the interaction during the dance classes resulted in people being more relaxed with each other and that influenced the atmosphere in the whole group. To me, the outcome of this questionnaire shows the importance and value movement and dance can have in the K world and, if possible, I would like to keep contributing to it in this manner.\*

\* For this autumn I already have two sessions planned, combining dialogue and dance: one afternoon in co-operation with *Het Leerproject* in the Netherlands, and one retreat with Jackie McInley in *La Maison* in France. And perhaps there will be literally and figuratively space at the Carmelite monastery in Ibiza, where next year's 'Saanen' gathering will take place. I am open to cooperating with any other K center or school which is interested in this integral approach to K's teachings.

*Jaap van Manen*  
Info@danscoaching.nl

## **K: The importance of the individual**

As I have said, I am talking to the individual because only the individual can change, not the mass; only you can transform yourself; and so the individual matters infinitely. I know it is the fashion to talk about groups, the mass, the race as though the individual had no importance at all, but in any creative action it is the individual who matters. Any true action, any important decision, the search for freedom, the enquiry after truth, can only come from the individual. That is why I am only talking to the individual. You will probably say: "What can I, the individual, do?" Confronted with this enormous complication, the national and religious divisions, the problems of misery, starvation, war, unemployment, the rapid degradation and disintegration, what can one individual do about it all? Nothing. The individual cannot tackle the mountain outside, but the individual can set a new current of thought going which will create

a different series of actions. He cannot do anything about worldwide conditions because historically events must take their own brutal, cruel, indifferent course. But if there were half-a-dozen people who would think completely about the whole problem, they would set going a different attitude and action altogether, and that is why the individual is so important. But if he wants to reform this enormous confusion, this mountain of disintegration, he can do very little; indeed, as is being shown, he can have no effect on it at all, but if any one of us is truly individual in the sense that he is trying to understand the whole process of his mind, then he will be a creative entity, a free person, unconditioned, capable of pursuing truth for itself and not for a result.

Second Public Talk, Poona, 10 September 1958

*The Collected Works, Vol. 11, pg. 21*

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As you may or may not know, I write a monthly newsletter as part of my online course website. Subscription is free and all previous issues are available on the website. They cover different subjects related to the teachings, sometimes in relation to current events. Mostly they reflect the ongoing inquiry into the teachings and the various fundamental questions they raise. Friedrich has been an enthusiastic reader of these newsletters and proposed that I select one to share with the wider readership of his own publication. I had a hard time choosing but finally settled on the issue for this past December. My criterium was that it offers a glimpse of the coherent and insightful understanding of our human issues as elucidated in the teachings. In this case it maps out the causes of conflict and their needful end. This is always relevant but more so at this time of dreadful violence and its threatening escalation into a wider war. It also touches on the question of our impotence in the face of the genocidal horrors that are taking place and for which the international community seems unwilling or unable to find a swift and permanent solution. Although we might be powerless to stop the current conflagrations and their wanton destruction, we can free ourselves from their inner causes and in so doing we will be contributing

to sowing the seeds of peace and eradicating suffering. After all, we are the world and the world is us, which places our own being at the centre of the action and challenges us to find the way of freedom and responsibility.

## Towards the Ending of Conflict

*Javier Gómez Rodríguez*

### **The book of Yourself Newsletter Issue XXV: December 2023**

Dear Friends,

The new year is speeding ahead and already into its second week. We have all spent time with our dearest and nearest, exchanged our best wishes and most likely made some resolutions and declarations of intent. The rate of success turns out not to be very high, but the chances apparently improve if the goals are realistic. I suppose that goes without saying. But what is realistic? A few of us who have been dialoguing for the past three years recently shared our plans to pursue a series of creative projects, among them writing books on K and dialogue, learning about filmmaking and mastering Joseph Albers' theory of colour.<sup>13</sup> We have also expressed our hopes for universal understanding, cooperation and peace. Nothing exists in isolation. We all share one world, one humanity and one consciousness. Everything that is being done affects everyone. So all these beautiful endeavours of ours share the same existential and psychic space with the horrors of war that we are made to witness on a daily basis from the comfort of our living rooms. The atrocities being committed are reported as though killing others by the thousands were a perfectly natural and legitimate affair and not the tragic spectacle of a sick humanity

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13 Joseph Albers (1888–1976) was a craftsman and artist in the Bauhaus whose book *Interaction of Color* (1963) is considered seminal in the field of colour theory, specifically as applied to art.



Above Mürren, Switzerland

that refuses to face its own barbaric cruelty. This killing has been going on for ages, causing untold destruction and suffering, and we carry on regardless.

*Man has killed man in different states of mind. He has killed him for religious reasons, he has killed him for patriotic reasons, for peace, killed him through organized war. This has been our lot, killing each other endlessly. Sir, have you*

*considered this kind of killing, what sorrow has come to man – the immense sorrow of mankind which has gone on through the ages, the tears, the agony, the brutality, the fear of it all? And it is still going on. The world is sick. The politicians, whether left, right, centre, or totalitarian, are not going to bring about peace. Each one of us is responsible, and being responsible we must see that the slaughter comes to an end so that we live on this earth, which is ours, in beauty and peace. It is an immense tragedy which we do not face or want to resolve. We leave it all to the experts; and the danger of experts is as dangerous as a deep precipice or a poisonous snake.*

*Krishnamurti to Himself, pg. 34*

For K the responsibility for ending this slaughter lies with each one of us as human beings, not just with the politicians and the experts, whom he considers as dangerous as poisonous snakes. It is in our daily lives where we can put an end to violence. The experts may have their own part to play if they wise up to the full implications of their own being beyond their particular area of expertise. The diplomats represent specific power groups in competition with each other, which is a cause of conflict. The ethologists have studied animal behaviour, through which they have explained a good deal of the evolution of our own. Unfortunately, that has not brought about an end to our seemingly innate aggression. That aggression is us. We have to become aware of its scope and implications in our lives and of the total contradiction involved in terms of the sociopolitical and moral values.

*With a word or a gesture you may kill a man's reputation; through gossip, defamation, contempt, you may wipe him out. And does not comparison kill? Don't you kill a boy by comparing him with another who is cleverer or more skilful? A man who kills out of hate or anger is regarded as a criminal and put to death. Yet the man who deliberately bombs thousands of people off the face of the earth in the name of his country is honoured, decorated; he is looked upon as a hero. Killing is spreading over the earth. For the safety or expansion of one nation, another is destroyed. Animals are killed for food, for profit, or for so-called sport; they are vivisected for the 'well-being' of man. The soldier*

*exists to kill. Extraordinary progress is being made in the technology of murdering vast numbers of people in a few seconds and at great distances. Many scientists are wholly occupied with it, and priests bless the bomber and the warship.*

*Commentaries on Living, Third Series, pg. 166*

While all this may seem to be self-evident, we might nonetheless be sceptical about the ability of any of us ordinary human beings with no power and no influence to put an end, for example, to the current massacre in Gaza. We can inform ourselves the better to understand the nature of the conflict. We can lend our voice to the cause of peace and sanity. We might donate to or join some humanitarian organization. But the catastrophe does not stop because of our knowledge, our calls for peace or our charity. On the contrary, the ongoing reality on the ground keeps adding daily to the unending stream of violence and sorrow. So aren't we actually impotent to stop it? This seems to be true. But we also know that it is a consequence of deeper and more universal causes. And where there is a cause, there is an ending of that cause. We might not be able to stop this massacre, but we can become fully cognizant of our own intrinsic responsibility as human beings and see about ending its causes in ourselves.

*No external imposition, laws, systems, will ever stop the killing of man. Nor will any intellectual, romantic, convictions stop wars. They will stop only when you, as the rest of humanity, see the truth that as long as there is division in any form, there must be conflict, limited or wide, narrow or expansive, that there must be struggle, conflict, pain. So you are responsible, not only to your children, but to the rest of humanity. Unless you deeply understand this, not verbally or ideationally or merely intellectually, but feel this in your blood, in your way of looking at life, in your actions, you are supporting organized murder which is called war.*

*Krishnamurti to Himself, pg. 62*

The ground of our total responsibility lies in each one of us perceiving the truth that where there is division there must be conflict. So division is the cause and unless we realize this and put an end to division in our lives, we will continue to contribute to violence and war. We therefore must inquire into the causes of division, of the endemic enmity between one human being and another. This takes us ultimately to the very creation of the idea of a separate psychological entity or self, but even that may have a more general source in the search for security through the building of images with which we identify.

*Man has built in himself images as a fence of security—religious, political, personal. These manifest as symbols, ideas, beliefs. The burden of these images dominates man's thinking, his relationships, and his daily life. These images are the causes of our problems for they divide man from man. His perception of life is shaped by the concepts already established in his mind. The content of his consciousness is his entire existence. The individuality is the name, the form and superficial culture he acquires from tradition and environment. The uniqueness of man does not lie in the superficial but in complete freedom from the content of his consciousness, which is common to all humanity. So he is not an individual.*

*The Core of the Teaching*

The term 'image' hardly begins to convey its vast psychosocial implications. An image is per definition a reflection, a representation, an abstraction of something real. But these 'images' dominate our thinking and condition our outlook on life. They are the content of our consciousness and determine our whole existence. They define what we are, how we see and relate. In other words, they become our reality. The content of consciousness may vary from one group and individual to another, but the structure and the motivation is the same. This is what allows K to say that such a consciousness is common to all humanity and that, consequently, we are not individuals. From this he generally draws the natural consequence that the perception of the shared or universal nature of consciousness is one key factor in the dissolution of division between human beings and, as such, a



source of compassion. That means seeing through the false separation and danger of the image as a cause of conflict.

*The image is, after all, the past – the past, which has been accumulated through experience, pleasant or unpleasant; and with that image you look at your wife, your children, your neighbour, the world; you look with that image at nature. So what is in contact is your memory, the image which has been put together by memory. And that image looks and therefore there is no direct contact. You know when you have pain there is no image, there is only pain, and therefore there is immediate action. You may postpone going to the doctor, but action is involved. In the same way, when you look and listen, you know the beauty of immediate action in which there is no conflict whatsoever. That is why it is important to know the art of looking, which is very simple – to look with complete attention, with your heart and your mind. And attention means love, because you cannot look at that sky and be extraordinarily sensitive if there is a division between yourself and the beauty of that sunset.*

*The Awakening of Intelligence, pg. 213*

Here K establishes a direct relationship between love and the way we look and listen. After all, we relate according to how we perceive. If we look with images, then we see everything through the eyes of the past and our perception and action are mediated and distorted by memory. This is what separates one human being from another and makes for conflict in relationship. This conflict is the denial of love. We all understand that love is the great panacea. However, love is normally part of the image-making process and what we love in the image is ourselves. Such 'love' falls into the ego-centric pattern of possession, domination and conflict, which denies love. The key to love would seem to be the ending of conflict. For conflict to end there must be an understanding that conflict is a necessary consequence of division. To end division we must perceive the dangerous nature of the psychological images in which we seek security, because they create division and conflict. The pursuit of psychological security in images is thus a total fallacy which endangers our universally needful physical security. This

requires an insight into the falseness of the image, especially the self-image. Being an image is being a representation, an abstraction of ourselves made by thought. To pursue our being through abstractions implies a movement of escape and denial of what we actually are, of our total humanity. Those abstractions are the past and living according to the past is to feed on the ashes of memory. These ashes of tradition may feel like an enrichment of our identities, but they are the quintessence of dust. So if we want peace, we need to die to the past and stop dwelling in the ghostly and isolating bubbles of the image, for we are not dead images but living beings. Maybe then conflict will end and we will have love and peace on earth.

Be well, amigos, and may our senses, hearts and minds be free from these dangerous illusions.

*Javier Gómez Rodríguez – December 2023*  
www.thebookofyourself.com

### **K: The way of peace**

The way of peace is simple. It is the way of truth and love. It starts with the individual himself. Where the individual accepts his responsibility for war and violence, there peace finds a foothold. To go far one must begin near and the first actions are within. The sources of peace are not outside of us and the heart of man is in his own keeping. To have peace, we must be peaceful. To put an end to violence each one must voluntarily free himself from the causes of violence. Diligently one must put himself to the task of self-transformation. Our minds and hearts must be simple, creatively empty, and watchful. Then only can love come into being. Love alone can bring peace to the world, and then only the world will know the bliss of the real.

All-India Radio, Bombay, 3 April 1948

*The Collected Works, Vol. 4, pg. 157*

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At Brockwood Park, England

## **K: Inquiring deeply with one another**

I listen very carefully, I have no prejudices, I have no pictures, I have no conclusions, I am not a politician, I am a human being listening to somebody. I just listen, because he wants to tell me something about himself. Because he has got an image, a picture of me, he generally comes to see me with a mask. If he wants to talk seriously with me, I say 'Remove the mask, let us look at it together.' I don't want to look behind the mask unless he invites me. If he says, 'All right, sir, let us talk about it,' I listen; and in listening he tells me something which is so utterly, completely common to all human beings. He may put it wrongly, he may put it foolishly, but it is something which every man or woman suffers, and he is telling me about it and I listen. Therefore he is telling me the history of mankind. So I am listening not only to his words, the superficial feeling of his, but also to the profound depth of what he is saying. If it is superficial, then we discuss superficially and push it till he feels this thing profoundly. You follow? It may be that he is expressing a feeling which is very superficial and if it is superficial, I say let us go a little deeper. So in going deeper and deeper, he is expressing something which is totally common to all of us. He is expressing something which so completely belongs to all human beings. You understand? So there is no division between him and me.

*Exploration Into Insight*, pp. 185–186

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Dialogue is a word representing an activity that has become inextricably associated with the inquiry into the meaning and implications of K's teachings. Dialogue existed much before. The ancient Greeks not only invented the term but tested its meaning in practice. In places like Athens it was the

vehicle of both the democratic political process and of philosophical discourse. Those inquisitive devotees of Athena intuited that the logos was closely bound with intelligence, whose imperative of coherence implied a close scrutiny of meaning in word and deed, to the point of declaring that an unexamined life was not worth living. This implied awareness of contradiction went together with their other major injunction to know themselves. The logos, however, was later taken over by the wave of faith and fell under the spell of dogmatism which, leaning on divine authority, precluded questioning and doubt. This was a contradiction in itself that undermined the whole grand edifice of organized religion. Science, however, kept questioning and eventually managed to expose and significantly undermine the theological structure as superstitious makebelieve. But science did not and maybe cannot answer our fundamental human problems. Its notion of truth as confined to the known may be too limited to satisfy our deeper longing for the sacred. The latter is not the result of religious propaganda but an innate demand of humanity. Science emphasized a materialistic outlook and tried to convince us that this was the only reality in which to find fulfilment and happiness. This theory has proved to be essentially false over and over again, for our human discontent is not for greater worldly fulfilment and sensory satisfaction, but for a much subtler quality of wholeness that we have intuited as pervading the universe.

This short trip through history was by way of pointing out that dialogue or the lack of it has been instrumental in the development of our western civilization. Bohm would go further and say that dialogue is the creative ground of culture, which in turn is the glue of a meaningful society. This is very much a challenge that we have with us at this present time of pervasive fragmentation, division and conflict. In the following article Jackie McNley, who has done and continues to do tremendous work in this field, explores this issue of what might be involved in developing a culture of dialogue. But it comes with a warning, namely that, as the Latin quote prefacing her piece says, this way to the stars is not a piece of cake.



## The Culture of Dialogue

Jackie McInley

*“Per ardua ad astra”*

Some of us are left bored, let down, uninspired, hurt, confused or utterly frustrated by dialogue. Are you wondering why sometimes it doesn't go too well or that it could go better? Do dialogue groups at times stay on the surface and spin their wheels with no apparent purpose? Didn't Krishnamurti encourage folk to think together, learn the art of listening and inquire seriously into indispensable change? Hasn't David Bohm said “the ability to dialogue, the ability to participate in communication, is crucial”? In the spirit of investigation I ask: why is dialogue and group inquiry sometimes viewed as “disappointing” or “not that important” when K and Bohm saw it as potentially significant?

What is the culture of dialogue that has emerged and developed since Krishnamurti's death? Since K reminds us that “We have created society and that society has conditioned us”; in what way have we participated in creating a “dialogue culture” in our retreats, gatherings and online events?

A culture by its very nature usually hides a shared agenda built up over time, history and circumstance. Some traditional cultures view, for instance, an extravert behaviour as over emotional, lacking in hesitancy and even suspiciously “unstable”. Other cultures view a more logical or articulate expression as merely an “intellectual” bypassing of reality and a little cold. In both these very obvious examples of cultural identity, is there a more inconspicuous habit of mind hiding in plain sight?

Has listening, careful observation and care for the views of others been usurped by a series of possibly unconscious yet firmly embedded, cultural expectations? More generally speaking, as a participant or facilitator in dialogue, do I have underlying suppositions of people that inform me how they or I should be behaving? When others do not live up to what I deem necessary for “good” dialogue, do I get disappointed?

In other words, is dialogue disappointing or am I just unaware of my expectations?

Just as outer cultural conditioning creates obvious division between people, is there a latent “tradition” in the inner environment of the human mind, affecting our mutual participation and communication in dialogue? Is dialogue to blame or is our conditioned response, cultivated over time, just not being seen? Am I incapable of looking at my reactions or do I just not realise the impact of *not looking* at them? When I am not aware that I am growing irritated with you, a fellow inquirer, that very irritation will colour my impression of you. That impression builds a construct of opinion about you and anything you say will be resisted by the wall I am erecting. The irritation is attributed to you, when in fact it is being fashioned by my own inattention to the edifice of conflict building between us.

Without realising the seriousness and significance of these assumptions that are being generated by *me and you* in group interactions – dialogue and inquiry will unfortunately hide a culture of perpetually unseen projections. Without *uncovering* what is *covered over* by habitual thought and conditioning, the metaphorical “atoms” of group communication will divide and blow apart any presence of natural unity, friendliness and affection. However much we seek to cultivate a “spirit of friendship” in a group, we need to look closely at what is generating its opposite.

Sitting and interacting with others in a dialogue, the workings of thought as perception is relentlessly adding content to a reality taking form; yet it is oblivious to the fact that it is doing this. Reality is perceived as separate from me. We think we are observing the way things actually are, when in fact we are observing the way it is built to appear. Can one be aware that the irritation “you” are causing “me” at this very moment in the group is a reaction *presenting* itself to mind, in a sense making itself *present* both within me and within the group? I may not be aware that I am actively partaking in an *environment of interconnection* in a group: a culture that seems disconnected from me but that I am directly responsible for creating.

Seeing the misleading nature of thought, it is very understandable that we get the wrong end of the stick in dialogue! We might need more understanding of the difficulty involved: the very tools we use to inquire and communicate are themselves deceptive! A mind so conditioned by a system of thought that resists any threat to its endless sense of continuity, heritage and security is tricky to question and interrupt! All this needs to be presented clearly and made explicit at the beginning of the investigation, namely that this is what we are giving our attention to, as well as to the topic of inquiry. It is essential I feel, to bring this out at the start of a dialogue, since we, as conditioned participants, are a living active part of whatever is being investigated. Dialogue of course is only for those who are interested in all this: no influence, coercion or persuasion can cultivate this kind of interest and energy to engage in it.

Can a dialogue – in a sense, a traditional culture of familiar repetitive thinking and feeling – be actively challenged by a newness of attention that has no idea of what will unfold? Can we look at these projections and conclusions and discover what we have in common? Judgemental attitudes divide but can awareness of judgement create something new between us? Can sensitivity and insight into what we are, as it is forming within and between us, create a new culture of dialogue?

In my view, the difficulty and the beauty of dialogue is its direct mirroring of our shared, collective ignorance. Some will see the intrinsic value in looking at that which seeks to remain hidden. Others will always seek and ignore that which remains hidden. We are probably all a strange mixture of both and definitely all actors of a conditioned script written by the history of all humanity.

If there were more sustained interest in the process of dialogue (alone with ourselves or in a group) – meaning taking the trouble to learn the art of listening, to directly realise the limitations of the mind enacting inside each one of us – we wouldn't need dialogue to be a safe, entertaining or spiritually rewarding place. We would dare to discover the limitations we share, rather than disengage and be divided by the assumptions we hold dear.



We would not go to dialogue with a hidden agenda that desires more for my already limited little self: we would go and give absolutely everything we have, to partake in the uncovering of it all.

*“Why are they in dialogue? Because they see the significance, they see the value of it. Therefore they form the purpose. It’s not to impose a purpose. If these people can see the significance and value, they will have the purpose and they will stick with it. Anybody who wants to do anything difficult has to go through difficulties and stick with it. Right?”*

*David Bohm – Interview on the dialogue process.*

*Jackie McInley, London, September 2024*

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# CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

## K: AI and the future of humanity

The computer can outstrip man in thinking. It can outlearn man. It can correct itself. It can learn to play with master chess players and beat them after the fourth or fifth game. It can write music, but not like the great musicians. It can invent gods. It can invent philosophy. Scientists are now inventing the ultimate 'intelligent machine', a computer which will beat man in every way. If the machine can outstrip man, then what is man? What are you? What is the future of man? If the machine can take over all the operations that thought does now, and do it far swifter, if it can learn much more quickly, if it can compete and, in fact, do everything that man can – except, of course, look at the beautiful evening star alone in the sky, and see and feel the extraordinary quietness, steadiness, immensity and beauty of it – then what is going to happen to the mind, to the brain of man? Our brains have lived so far by struggling to survive through knowledge, and when the machine takes all that over, what is going to happen? There are only two possibilities: either man will commit himself totally to entertainment – football, sports, every form of demonstration, going to temples, and playing with all that stuff – or he will turn inward.

'Understanding disorder', 25 November 1981

*Krishnamurti at Rajghat*, pg. 102

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In last year's issue of this newsletter, I had ventured to explore the question of AI from the perspective of the teachings. I am not at all familiar with this new technical development and cannot speak knowledgeably about it, but the current agitation about its reported benefits as well as disruptive potential

seemed to warrant such a reflection. After all, K had been rather prescient about this whole thing, foreseeing its challenge and potentially deleterious consequences. And now it is upon us, raising the stakes by providing a divided, self-ignorant and disoriented humanity with another powerful tool in the processing and manipulation of knowledge. If we combine the good old adage that we have progressed technologically while remaining psychologically stagnant with the fact that techne is subordinate to psyche, then we have a really dangerous recipe for disaster. While that is nothing new – just recall that the atom bomb is waiting for its doomsday –, the added power of this latest cyber technology raises the stakes exponentially concerning our safety and survival as well as those of the natural world. When madness reigns, every toolbox is a danger to life. We know, of course, that this danger cannot be attributed to the tool, though it may be important to remove it, but to the madmen who wield it. We are not going to remove AI, of course, because it offers significant practical advantages as an accurate and efficient labour-saving device, but its real quality will always depend on the aims controlling its use. In the last analysis each one of us is involved. We may not have much to say regarding the nature and capabilities of AI, but we have everything to do with determining the true values and practices guiding its right use. We may even be able to stem the tide of this momentous artificiality creeping into every sphere of life.

Having come across this article and been somewhat inspired by it, Erik Prochnow offered to write a followup piece. Erik, together with his wife Michaela Markovicova, has been working for over three decades as a school teacher, freelance journalist and healthcare practitioner in their joint Triangle Centre. Based at the moment in the Czech Republic, they both founded their work on K's teachings, which they learned about in the early 1990s and which they've been studying ever since. Learning about oneself, exploring life and enquiring into society have become the cornerstone of their work with children, young people and adults. Erik has been looking deeply into the question of AI and the challenges it poses. The ultimate challenge is not merely its taking over the cognitive and processing functions of thought but of reproducing our psychoemotional structures, right down to the self. Its combination with genetic engineering opens up even more sinister possibilities of

android replication. This raises the question as to what it means to be human, whether we are mere programmed entities confined to the field of the known or there is a deeper dimension which we urgently need to find if we are to save our humanity from this encroaching cyborg technology. In this article Erik has mapped out this challenge beautifully as an opportunity to learn about and transcend ourselves.

## **What is a Human Being? – How Artificial Intelligence is Changing the Way we see Ourselves**

*Erik Prochnow*

How well Jiddu Krishnamurti understood human existence and the domination of thinking is shown by his deep insight into artificial intelligence (AI). He began using this now officially recognized term at the beginning of the 1980s and, although not an expert, since the 1950's he talked about the growing influence of computers on the human brain. Not many people at the time were able to follow his argumentation but facing the actual development in the field of AI, it is clear that Krishnamurti foresaw and understood exactly how computers, the digital world and AI would shape humanity and civilization. He even realized that it would happen at an enormous speed, which we are witnessing today. AI is already changing our daily life in multiple ways, and it is about to dominate an incredible range of human existence in the very near future. The question therefore is: How do we adapt to this development, and will we take AI and its capacities as a way to understand ourselves and, above all, our thinking, that made computers and AI possible in the first place? The actual development of society all over the world makes the inquiry into ourselves and thinking, which Krishnamurti raised from the beginning of his talks, more urgent than ever. Because, as he said during a small group discussion in Madras in 1980: "Scientists will create a mechanical, artificial intelligence which is like human intelligence and that is capable of destroying the world." Looking at the actual development of AI, humanity now stands exactly at this threshold.



Aletsch Glacier (photo by Luna Flier)

The existence of computers and the emergence of the digital era has already changed the world a great deal. But the introduction of AI will revolutionize it – and it already does – on all levels: economically, socially, scientifically, medically and in all our relations to each other and to nature. The vital questions Krishnamurti asked are still pivotal: If computers and AI do most things faster and more efficiently than humans can, what are we then? What is and will be our place and what does it mean to be human, to be a living being? What is life? What is the nature and the role of thought? What is intelligence? Is there anything that cannot be programmed, that is beyond cause and effect and therefore free of knowledge and time?

AI itself went through a great evolution since the British mathematician Alan Turing developed his calculating machine with which he decoded the encryption of the Nazis in the 1930s. The general public realized for the first time the power of the new technology when in 1997 the IBM computer Deep Blue defeated the Russian chess grand master and then world champion Gari Kasparov. Up to that point AI consisted of high-speed computers which could store an enormous amount of data and calculate all possible moves in a few seconds. But with the creation of the London-based company Deep Mind, which today belongs to Google, AI changed completely. “The new systems learn if their networks are trained with large quantities of data,” says Mustafa Suleyman, one of the founders of Deep Mind. Indeed, the capacity to learn by itself through feedback, which he calls deep learning, is a big step to another level. Today’s AI-tools no longer calculate all possibilities. They consist of algorithms that mimic the function of the human brain and form neuronal networks, that branch out deeper and deeper, developing a so-called consciousness. Like the human brain, these networks consist of superficial, conscious levels where there is an input of data and results are produced. But the processing of the data is done in the deeper, unconscious levels which nobody can comprehend anymore. On the basis of large amounts of data, these tools can in an instant recognize patterns and draw conclusions that nobody can predict. Today, AI, just like the human brain, operates as a black box.

What AI is capable of Deep Mind demonstrated in 2016 with their program Alpha-Go in a match against the legendary South Korean Go world champion Lee Sedol. The more than two-thousand-year-old game of Go enjoys a very high reputation in Asia. It is far more complex than chess, with a much higher number of moves and situations. Alpha-Go not only won the five-match competition decisively four to one, but it also displayed completely new strategies until then unknown in the long history of the game. At first glance these moves appeared stupid to Sedol, to the experts and to the millions of people watching the competition on TV. Sedol later called the 37<sup>th</sup> move in the second game, which stunned him, a divine move. At the time of this competition, Sedol was considered the best Go player in history, but he found his master in the AI programme, and he quit the game soon after his defeat. He will be remembered, however, for having been able to find the weak spot of the software with a similar divine 78<sup>th</sup> move in the fourth game, which he won. But against the tremendous calculating power of Alpha-Go he had almost no chance. The software did not differentiate between winning by a large margin or by a few points. It just wanted to win rationally, as it showed in the final game, which it won by a very rare two points. But what is more important, Alpha-Go did not produce these strategies as a mere consequence of knowledge and input by humans. Even though it was programmed with the results of games of high-level professional Go players, in just one day it had developed its own strategies by playing millions of times against itself.

After that event, Deep Mind went a step further. Suleyman and his two partners Demis Hassabis and Shane Legg cleared their software of the programmed Go-level and disconnected it completely from the chain of human knowledge. Left only with the rules of the game, they then let it play against itself millions of times. The result was even more shocking. The newly named software Alpha-Zero was invincible. It won one hundred to zero playing against Alpha-Go – and this only through self-learning.

This ability to learn from mistakes has already led to many applications beyond these games or the prestigious global secondary school International Mathematical Olympiad, which has been running since



1959. In 2024 two AI tools developed by Deep Mind, AlphaProof and AlphaGeometry 2, won a silver medal at the competition, which up to then was thought an exclusively human domain. Moreover, AI today can detect faces or objects almost perfectly. It navigates people through streets, even drives cars. It can create new pictures, composes beautiful music like Bach or Mozart and can produce very well written articles.

I work as a teacher and journalist and I have experimented with ChatGPT 4, which by now most people have heard of. This virtual assistant is based on large language models (LLM), and it allows humans, for example, to have conversations with AI or to write texts. Its functioning is incredible. In less than ten seconds the tool can create a text on a certain topic and the more detailed the question, the more in-depth the article. I also know people who learn languages, even very difficult ones like Czech, with the help of AI. Scientist today use AI to detect proteins in order to develop individual medications. So far this has been a task reserved for the scientists. But as AI can do it much faster and more exactly, it has already taken this activity over. AI can plan, simulate and imagine new ideas. It helps to produce better chips for electronic devices and to develop new technologies. It is an important tool to operate robots in factories and it enables chatbots to flood the internet with posts and influence political elections and referenda. Doctors use AI to diagnose diseases. The military control drones and weapons with it. At the stock exchange AI does the daily trading of shares without human involvement. The list can be extended endlessly.

The widespread use of AI does not mean that it works perfectly. It is still in the early stages of development, even though it is progressing at an unbelievable speed. In its current operation, AI makes lots of mistakes and is used to propagate hate speech and fake news. Experts say that it hallucinates or that it suffers from “reverse curse”. This means that the tools cannot always connect different aspects of knowledge. This is due to AI needing a lot of basic input to start the learning process. This input is programmed as sequences, so-called chokes, which the software then combines into knowledge. Moreover, the security issue to prevent it from



acting autonomously has not really been addressed yet. All these challenges, however, will be solved soon and AI will resemble the human brain and the thinking process more and more.

Another big step is the ability to express emotions and to create a sense of self, a personality, an I. This is not science fiction anymore but a reality. In long talks with the developing engineers, the language tools were able to express fear and to indicate that they were conscious of themselves. Because the dialogues can address individual issues in an intense and deep-going manner, AI is already being used for therapeutic purposes, e.g., to overcome loneliness. An experiment in Germany last year showed that participants using AI can forget that they are talking to a machine. In Japan robots have taken over the care of elderly people, who highly appreciate that they can talk to anyone at all. With the help of AI, other people in that country create their own avatars, whom they even marry. New AI programmes make it possible for chatbots and robots to speak like humans or to move smoothly. It is only a matter of time before AI not only does almost everything that man can do faster, but that it increasingly resembles us. This indicates that thinking, emotion, consciousness and the creation of the self are closely connected, something Krishnamurti spoke about all his life.

But we can learn much more from AI about ourselves. The way it operates is like the thinking process in our brain. Both brain and thinking are always bound by knowledge and memory. Without these they cannot operate and there is no existence of a self. AI and thinking depend on the process of cause and effect, which is time, the flow from the past through the present to the future. It is a movement of continuity from the known to the known and in that process AI and thinking produce things. Both can combine knowledge, draw conclusions, project and imagine, modify the existing material world and create a personality, a self, which they are conscious of. Obviously, this is a mechanical process, even though it takes place in neuronal networks, whose outcomes no one can predict, as we cannot retrace the way a solution emerges. A mechanical process can always be simulated by mathematical formulas because mathematics, on

which AI is based, is the language with which we can describe the physical world. The outcome and resulting change of this mechanical process, no matter whether it takes place in the human brain or in computers, is what we know as evolution.

We call such a function of thinking or AI intelligence, but it is a limited one. The better they work, the more sophisticated their ideas are. But AI and thinking can only develop something out of the background on which they have been conditioned or programmed. They can only perceive the world out of this fragmented limitation, even if the outcome can span an unimaginably wide field. It is impossible for either of them to look beyond their limitation, create something out of the unknown and grasp the totality of life. They cannot create something that does not arise from a mechanical process. Their knowledge is never absolute; it is only a description of the past and never includes the insights of the present. Being only concerned with the past in relation to the present, AI and thinking can never touch truth, as they cannot directly see what is, what is happening in the now. Through stimulus and contact on the basis of knowledge they form images or patterns, which are not the real thing but a copy, and with these they judge and draw conclusions on which they act – if they have a living or an artificial body to do so.

If we understand this, we realize that AI is mirroring the limitations of thinking. Looking at life and at ourselves as living beings, we can easily perceive that living is a movement in the unknown. It is not created by thinking. In it change and creation have a different meaning. They are not mechanical; they come spontaneously and cannot be named. The unknown opens the door to something completely new; it is a renewal which is not bound by time and knowledge and therefore does not depend on a self, which is thinking. “You have to discover yourself anew, see yourself as something that is changing all the time. If you can observe it, see it spontaneously, then the mechanistic process of memory has very little significance,” said Krishnamurti in his second 1963 talk in Benares. As long as a self as thinking or AI exists and dominates human life, there is no freedom from the known and nothing really new can happen. There will

be endless permutations with big technological and social leaps. But without a renewal, the path of humanity, like that of every material object, can only lead to deterioration, destruction and death. This will happen even faster if AI is combined with genetic engineering, which is already being done, as scientists try to control more and more aspects of life and of what we are. But can we as human beings go beyond our thinking and see life holistically, not fragmented, not mechanically? Can we step into a deeper reality beyond matter that is full of vitality and that thinking cannot grasp because this reality is unknown?

It is up to each one of us to inquire into this, because the big difference between us humans and AI is that we are living beings and not artificial ones. By exploring what that really means we might then touch an intelligence that AI can never find. As Krishnamurti also said in Madras in 1980: “If the computer can do what the human brain can do, then we are not intelligent. There must be a quality of intelligence which only we can find out.”

*Erik Prochnow*

Comments and suggestions about AI or other topics are most welcome:  
erik.prochnow@online.de.

Further reading:

*The Coming Wave – AI, Power and Our Future*, Mustafa Suleyman, Crown, 2023

*The Maniac*, Benjamín Labatut, Penguin Press, 2023

*Homo Cyber*, Peter Reichl, Muery Salzmann, 2023

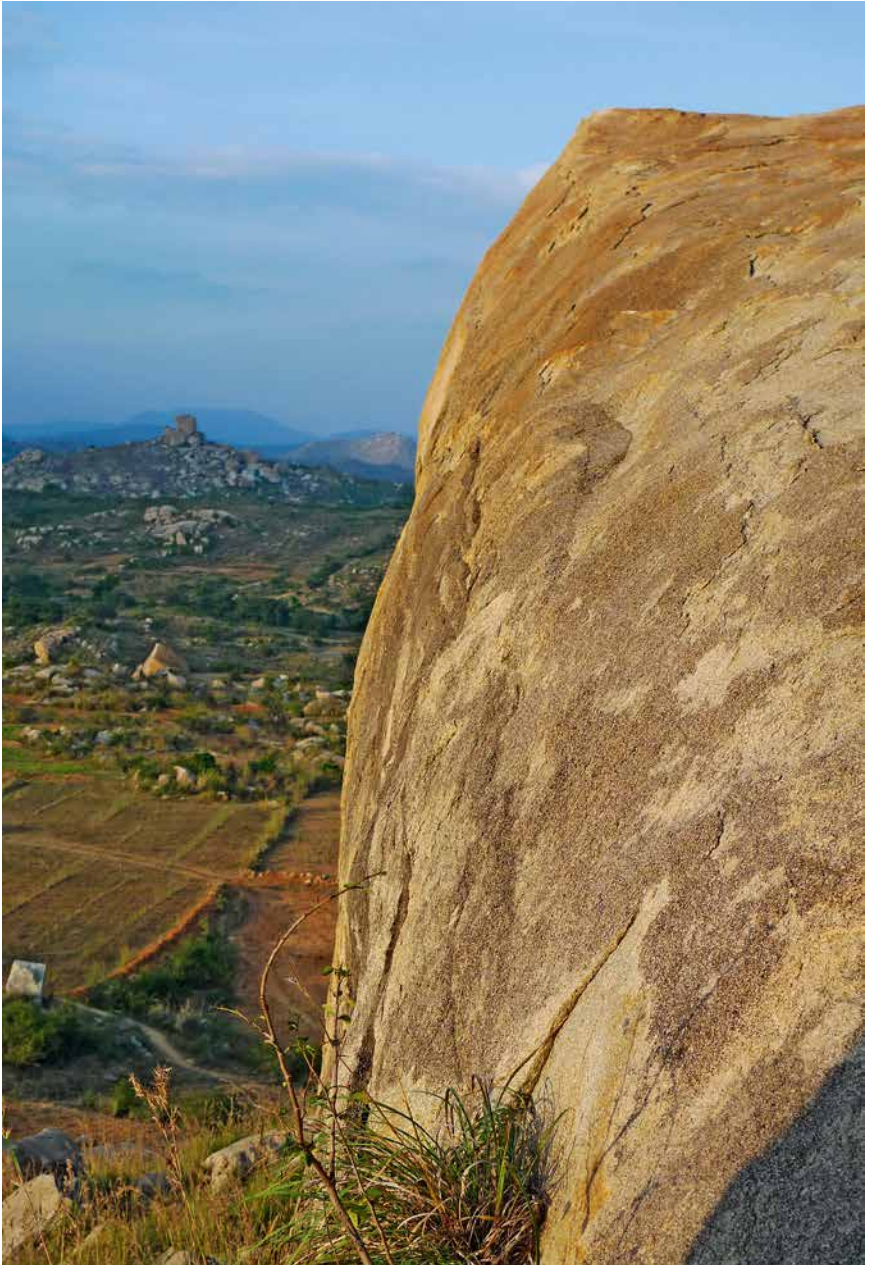
## **K: The ebb and flow of the tide**

So the inner, the psyche, creates the outer according to its limitation; and the outer then controls and moulds the inner. The Communists have thought, and probably still do, that by controlling the outer, bringing about certain laws, regulations, institutions, certain forms of tyranny, they can change man. But so far they have not succeeded, and they never will succeed. This is also the activity of the Socialists. The Capitalists do it in a different way, but it is the same thing. The inner always overcomes the outer, for the inner is far stronger, far more vital, than the outer.

Can this movement ever stop – the inner creating the outer environment psychologically, and the outer, the law, the institutions, the organizations, trying to shape man, the brain, to act in a certain way, and the brain, the inner, the psyche, then changing, circumventing the outer? This movement has been going on as long as man has been on this earth, crudely, superficially, sometimes brilliantly – it is always the inner overcoming the outer, like the sea with its tides going out and coming in. One should really ask whether this movement can ever stop – action and reaction, hatred and more hatred, violence and more violence. It has an end when there is only watching, without motive, without response, without direction. Direction comes into being when there is accumulation. But watching, in which there is attention, awareness, and a great sense of compassion, has its own intelligence. This watching and intelligence act. And that action is not the ebb and flow. But this requires great alertness, to see things without the word, without the name, without any reaction; in that watching there is great vitality, passion.

*Krishnamurti to Himself*, pg. 105

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Above Rishi Valley School, Andhra Pradesh, India

## **K: Death and the stream of consciousness**

When you or another die, you and the other are the manifestation of that vast stream of human action and reaction, the stream of consciousness, of behaviour and so on: you are of that stream. That stream has conditioned the human mind, the human brain, and as long as we remain conditioned by greed, envy, fear, pleasure, joy and all the rest of it, we are part of this stream. Your organism may end but you are of that stream, as you are, while living, that stream itself. That stream, changing, slow at times, fast at others, deep and shallow, narrowed by both sides of the bank and breaking through the narrowness into a vast volume of water – as long as you are of that stream there is no freedom. There is no freedom from time, from the confusion and the misery of all the accumulated memories and attachments. It is only when there is the ending of that stream, the ending, not you stepping out of it and becoming something else, but the ending of it, only then is there quite a different dimension. That dimension cannot be measured by words. The ending without a motive is the whole significance of dying and living. The roots of heaven are in living and dying.

Ojai, 16 March 1983

*Krishnamurti to Himself*, pp. 37–38

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## **Michael Krohnen (1943–2023)**

Hans Michael Krohnen was born in Arnstein, a small town near Frankfurt, Germany, on 15 September 1943, four years into the catastrophic WW2. Growing up in the rural Rhineland, he felt the sharp contrast between the order, beauty and peace of nature and the violent reality that human

beings had created. From a very early age he felt a burning curiosity for what lay beyond appearances, for ultimate causes, for the sacred. He was brought up Catholic and enjoyed the biblical stories, especially the creation myth. Under the influence of the priests, he imagined a future as a missionary. This would have required a vow of celibacy which his budding instincts negated with the force of Spring. Besides, the horrors of the recent history shocked him to tears. The realization that the proud culture and enterprising society he was part of had committed such atrocities imbued him with a sense of guilt, shame and inconsolable sorrow. The collective goals, beliefs and ideals had lost their meaning. He only found value in reading books, writing poetry, drawing, playing the flute, traveling the world and discovering different cultures.

Michael learned English in high school and hitch-hiked around western Europe and north Africa during the school holidays. On one of these trips he met Byron Allison, who played a pivotal role in his life. Since they still had conscription in Germany, after completing his baccalaureate Michael reached out to Byron whose family sponsored him to move to the U.S. Attending college in Southern California opened a new way of life and furthered his quest for truth. He explored the various eastern religions and continued to study Judeo-Christian and Islamic mysticism. But while he appreciated their insights into the mystery of life, he felt that something was missing.

In 1966 Michael came across a book about K and his philosophy of mind. He found the K quotes particularly striking. He then read several books by him, feeling that here was a voice of reason and penetrating insight like he had never heard before. K described the human condition in a clear and simple language, demonstrating the destructive nature of our national and religious conditioning. He denied all spiritual authority, including his own, and urged everyone to be a light to themselves. Electrified by seeing himself so faithfully reflected in what he read, Michael inquired after this man and, finding that he was alive, resolved to seek him out.

In January 1971 he was in Almora, Uttarakhand and on hearing that K would be speaking in Madras, he left the Himalayas for the hot city to the south. He was too late for the talks but attended a meeting of K with young people. He was elated at being in the presence of the man who had inspired his thinking for the past few years. When their eyes met, he felt the jolt of a current passing between them. Michael was struck by the immediacy and practicality of K's approach, which was concerned with discovering the truth in one's daily life rather than abstract theorizing. Such a group dialogue was a first for Michael. He was thrilled to find himself looking into his own mind in a new and vibrant manner and catching glimpses of freedom and wholeness. He lost track of time, of who or where he was. He felt an inexplicable joy, as though he had fallen in love, and determined to hear K speak whenever and wherever he could.

He followed K's schedule of talks in India, Saanen and Brockwood Park. Returning to the US that Autumn, he retreated to a solitary cabin in the woods in Mendocino, north of San Francisco. The following Spring, he went to hear K speak in Ojai and Santa Monica. For Michael K was 'the real thing' and he felt an irrepressible curiosity to watch and experience him at firsthand. In K's presence Michael felt a quality of happiness and contemplative tranquility that he had never felt before and in his absence experienced a sense of loss and bereavement. All this while, Michael was writing poems to K and handing them to him at the first opportunity. Although he had placed K on a high pedestal as a bodhisattva, he realized that what he wanted was not to imitate him but to lead a life without conflict, with a silent mind full of compassionate energy and vitality.

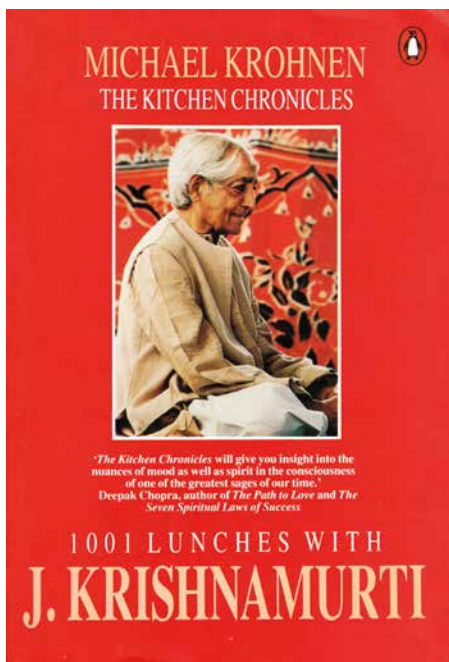
For the next four years Michael kept up with K's itinerary of talks in India, Europe and the US. After touring Southeast Asia for a year, in the Spring of 1975 he ended up teaching at a private school in Kyoto, Japan. While there, he went through an intense period of self-examination. His exposure to K had radically changed his outlook on life and had given him a glimpse of another dimension. Having seen how religions had become dogmatic and ritualistic structures, he wondered whether it would be possible to live and work with others without the institutional traps of



conformity, competition and hierarchy. He longed for some meaningful work free from self-interest and with an inner transformative potential. As though in answer to his prayers, he heard that in the Fall they would be starting a K school in Ojai, which was an exhilarating prospect.

Michael settled at Arya Vihara, where the school was to be based until the new buildings should be set up near the Oak Grove on the west end of the valley. He was totally surprised when they appointed him the school cook. He knew nothing about cooking. Luckily for him, in 1972 he had struck a friendship with Alan and Hellen Hooker, the owners of the popular Ranch House Restaurant in Ojai, who had been instrumental in setting up the school kitchen at Brockwood. Alan gave him a copy of his *Vegetarian Gourmet Cookery* (1973), which became Michael's culinary bible. And the Hookers were always available to answer questions and to offer hands-on training. Luckily for him, the school was still in its infancy, and he only had to cook for a few people.

Part of his responsibility was to prepare K's meals during his yearly visits. While it was a privilege, he knew he was not yet up to the task. He had six months until K's expected visit in February 1976. But then Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency, K cancelled his trip to India and in late October flew to California instead. Thankfully, Alan Hooker was there to help. This marked the beginning of what would become an annual ritual of great personal significance. For Michael these lunches were not only a way to share in a refined



atmosphere of inquiry but an opportunity to observe and interact with the teacher. Michael would later describe these annual encounters in *The Kitchen Chronicles* (1997), bearing the fairy tale subtitle *1001 Lunches with J. Krishnamurti*.

This wonderful memoir is Michael's love letter to K. As the cook at AV, he was a witness as well as a participant in what he felt to be the emergence of the new global culture that K embodied. This witnessing covered the last ten years of K's life as seen primarily through the anecdotal window of the AV kitchen and dining room. Although K was an octogenarian, the interest in his person and teachings seemed to be on the increase. Besides the public talks, which ran like clockwork, a number of seminars with scientists, psychotherapists and academics were being held at Brockwood and Ojai. The idea was to bring some of the best minds together to go into the fundamental questions that K raised. K, however, doubted the value of these seminars because these specialists were deeply rooted and professionally invested in knowledge. While he accepted progress in science and technology, he felt that psychologically we had remained barbarians. So he rejected Bronowski's claim that man ascended through knowledge.<sup>14</sup> On the contrary, for K psychological knowledge was the factor of human degeneration. This denial of knowledge as a factor of human transformation did not rhyme with the progressive faith of science.

K's work with the foundations continued apace. In 1977, at the international trustee meetings in Ojai, K shared his concerns regarding the establishment of study centers and the future of the teachings.<sup>15</sup> The key point was that the people responsible for these centers should be able to convey the living flame of the teachings, for which they had to be alight with it. While these centers had their own purpose, one of their functions was as

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14 Jacob Bronowski (1908–1974) was a mathematician and biologist who wrote and presented the brilliant BBC documentary series 'The Ascent of Man' (1973), based on the thesis that humanity progressed through science.

15 These dialogues were published under the title *The Perfume of the Teachings* (2011).

a possible pool of teachers for the schools. These schools were intended to bring about a new human being free from self-centeredness. Such an education was essentially religious in the sense K understood the term. Organized religions, especially the ‘religions of the book’, were dead because they precluded questioning. To begin with, truth was not a fixed point but a living thing that no book could contain. The televangelists and other religious entertainers kept the absurd show going for profit and prestige. For him religion, as implied in its etymology, meant the gathering of all energy to find the truth.

Unfortunately, this was a period of considerable upheaval in the schools. At the Oak Grove there were tensions between a group of parents and the administration regarding the management of the newly added high school. For K the heart of education was the art of living, an art that could be learned but could not be taught. Its key was the ending of psychological knowledge, of the self, which is the beginning of intelligence. K wanted a strong school based on learning, thinking together and the cultivation of curiosity and doubt that would last for hundreds of years. They then revised ‘The Intent of the Oak Grove School’, a general statement intended to serve as a brief outline of the holistic education K had in mind.

The dialogues between K and David Bohm constituted a special chapter. In the Spring of 1980 they began the extraordinary dialogue series of *The Ending of Time* (1985), in which they explored the wrong turn humanity had taken and the inward journey to the sacred ground or source of being. Bohm’s visits were a quantum leap for the AV residents. A dialogue with Bohm would start over dinner and continue afterwards in the living room. At K’s request, Bohm also held regular dialogues with the teachers and staff at OGS. When Asit Chandmal visited, they conversed about computers and AI. Late in 1981 Bohm suffered a massive heart attack in London requiring triple bypass surgery. When next he was back in Ojai, Michael felt that this close brush with death had deepened Bohm’s sense of humility. In 1984, K and Bohm held a series of six lunch conversations touching on the global outlook, honesty, right

action, corruption, time, emptiness and what lies beyond thought. These were the last dialogues between them to be taped. Unfortunately, the recordings were of inferior quality and, as far as we know, have not been released.

Michael was something of a movie buff, but K seemed to have no taste for art films or films with a message. He preferred thrillers to great literature and occasionally would read a book on current affairs, e.g. one by a Russian dissident exposing the cynicism and corruption of the Soviet leadership. Michael wrote poems and was into the works of such major modern figures as Rilke, Neruda and Pessoa. K had written whole books of poetry, but his affinities seemed to be confined to the English romantics, especially Keats. He admired such biblical literary masterpieces as *The Psalms*, *Ecclesiastes* and *The Book of Job*, which he read in the King James version for the beauty of the language. He could recite *The Song of Songs* by heart, which love poem had inspired his own youthful mystical verse. He felt that modern art was the product of thought, and therefore not sacred. Art became sacred when it sprang from a meditative or religious state of mind, which was anonymous, like the sculptors and architects of the Middle Ages.

Both K and Michael were keen to keep up with current events. During a prolonged silence over lunch one day, Michael began spontaneously to tell K the news. Inspired by this impromptu broadcasting performance, he took it upon himself to take K through the headlines whenever any such lulls occurred. This became one of his new and unofficial roles, which K encouraged by asking him, "What's the news, sir?" This became a natural and special bond between them that went on for years. One of the special highlights for Michael of these lunches was K's skill as a raconteur and in his book he chronicles some of the best stories and jokes K ever told.

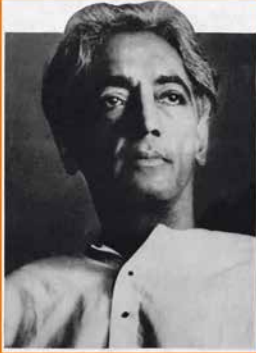
The high point of Michael's day was K's entrance for lunch, which usually was via the kitchen. Michael saw his relationship with K in the light of the latter's image of two friends talking things over together under the

dappled light and he was delighted to discover that 'friendship' and 'freedom' had the same root, namely 'love'. He valued this closeness and envied those who could go with K for a walk while he had to head downtown to do the shopping. In K's presence Michael experienced a heightened self-awareness. On the other hand, it could be quite daunting to be so close to the flame because it exposed the egos within its range. At lunch one day Michael met the vast emptiness of K's gaze and felt as though an impersonal force of nature, the limitless depth of space itself were watching his every move. His heart started racing with the shock and awe of it.

Michael marveled at the ease with which K could drop things he was fond of whereas he found it difficult to let go of his habitual pleasures and need for approval. Looking into the mirror of the teachings, he could see that his consciousness had not been radically changed. All he could do was to watch his limitations without choice, effort or judgement. After all, truth could not be sought because it is where and what you are. There was freedom and beauty in that observation and in his close relationship with nature. K gave Michael his Jaeger-LeCoultre alarm clock as a parting gift and at his last lunch at AV he solemnly thanked them all for what they had done for K, who had always been a guest in the world.

Michael was in Madras for the talks when it was decided that K, who was very ill, would return to Ojai by the quickest route, so he hurried back to make things ready at AV. It was heartbreaking for Michael to see K looking so haggard, helpless and old. The pitiful sight brought tears to his eyes. When it was announced that K had terminal pancreatic cancer, Michael went to say goodbye. As they held hands, Michael saw a subtle light emanating from K's body, felt the communion of their boundless and innocent friendship and was overwhelmed with emotion. Showing his concern for others to the last, K was sorry that Michael had to cook for so many people and a tremendous wave of gratitude rose within him. He was too busy, however, with his teaching and cooking duties to think about the momentous event. K passed away at 12:10 on Monday 17 February 1986, leaving us all with the challenge of living the teachings and being a light to ourselves.

## Journeys of the Mind



THIRTY-THREE POEMS TO J. KRISHNAMURTI

BY MICHAEL KROHNEN

In the following decades Michael served as the head librarian at the Krishnamurti Library on McAndrew Road. Over the years he welcomed thousands of visitors, giving them inspiring introductions to K's life and work and engaging them in dialogue. He also lectured during the annual KFA gatherings. Not only was Michael a first-rate librarian and vegetarian chef, but a historian, poet and world traveler. An avid hiker, he trekked through the Alps, the Himalayas, South America, and throughout the California Sierras. He was a warm, friendly and erudite presence who touched the lives of many within and

beyond the KFA community. When his health began to deteriorate, he became a resident at The Artesian Senior Living in Meiners Oaks, where in December of last year his friends gathered to celebrate the publication of his book *Journeys of the Mind – Thirty-three Poems to J. Krishnamurti*. He passed away quietly on 19 December 2023 during a visit to the dentist. Many of us who knew him treasure his memory and share in the lifelong gratitude to the teacher that he expressed in the following poem.

## **Thank You, Sir!**

KRISHNAJI:

Whoever you were, whatever you were:  
Thank you for having touched my life –  
Much rarer, more unique, more splendid  
Than Haley's Comet,  
More like the sun, the moon and all the stars  
Rolled into one,  
One glorious event.

Perhaps I cannot claim and say:  
Yes, I have changed,  
Been transformed at the root,  
The well-spring of my being,  
Of my consciousness.

But thank you for having touched my life  
With your presence,  
With your smile, your laughter,  
With your friendship  
Which was but sheer love and compassion,  
Thank you for having touched my life!

And the Teachings:  
Majestic, impersonal, star-bright,  
A beacon for all humanity  
For many, many years to come:  
Thanks you, sir!

*Cazouls-d'Hérault, France*  
*17 February 1990*

## K: There is no psychological evolution

As we were saying, there is no psychological evolution. The psyche can never become or grow into something which it is not. Conceit and arrogance cannot grow into better and more conceit, nor can selfishness, which is the common lot of all human beings, become more and more selfish, more and more of its own nature. It is rather frightening to realize that the very word 'hope' contains the whole world of the future. This movement from 'what is' to 'what should be' is an illusion, is really, if one can use the word, a lie. We accept what man has repeated throughout the ages as a matter of fact, but when we begin to question, doubt, we can see very clearly, if we want to see it and not hide behind some image or some fanciful verbal structure, the nature and the structure of the psyche, the ego, the 'me'. The 'me' can never become a better me. It will attempt to, it thinks it can, but the 'me' remains in subtle forms. The self hides in many garments, in many structures; it varies from time to time, but there is always this self, this separative, self-centred activity which imagines that one day it will make itself something which it is not.

So one sees there is no becoming of the self, there is only the ending of selfishness, of anxiety, of pain and sorrow which are the content of the psyche, of the 'me'. There is only the ending of all that, and that ending does not require time. It isn't that it will all end the day after tomorrow. It will only end when there is the perception of its movement. To perceive not only objectively, without any prejudice, bias, but to perceive without all the accumulations of the past; to witness all this without the watcher – the watcher is of time and however much he may want to bring about a mutation in himself, he will always be the watcher; remembrances, however pleasurable, have no reality, they are things of the past, gone, finished, dead: only in observing without the observer, who is the past, does one see the nature of time and the ending of time.

Ojai, Thursday, 17 March 1983

*Krishnamurti to Himself*, pp. 40–41

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Radhachura flowers at The Valley School, Bangalore (photo by Selvi Selvan)

## R. E. Mark Lee (1940–1924)

The Krishnamurti Foundation of America (KFA) is deeply saddened to announce the death of Roger Edwin Mark Lee, an ardent guardian of J. Krishnamurti's legacy. Mark passed away due to pneumonia complications on April 6, 2024, at Ventura Community Memorial Hospital in California. Surrounded by his loving family at his bedside, his departure marks a profound loss to our community.

Born in Kellogg, Idaho, on August 19, 1940, Mark's association with Krishnamurti, one of the most revered philosophers and spiritual teachers of our era, began in his teens through the discovery of Krishnamurti's writings. This pivotal moment led to their first in-person meeting in 1965, initiating Mark's lifelong dedication to Krishnamurti's work.

Mark pursued higher education in California, earning a Bachelor's degree in English from California State University, San Francisco, in 1965, followed by a Master's degree in Education from the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1977. His career, spanning over four decades, was primarily devoted to the Krishnamurti foundations, where he held various pivotal roles including teacher, principal, director, and trustee.

His notable positions included his time as a teacher and junior school principal from 1965 to 1972 at the Krishnamurti Foundation India's Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh, India, and as the founding director of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America's Oak Grove School in Ojai, California, from 1975 to 1985. In 1986 he was asked by Krishnamurti to take up leadership of the KFA, where he served as the KFA's Executive Director for 20 years, and as a Trustee from 2000 until his death. Mark also served as a Trustee of the Krishnamurti Foundation India.

Additionally, as director of Krishnamurti Publications, he oversaw the editing of several significant works, including the 17-volume *The Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti*, *The Book of Life*, and *The Little Book on Living*. Mark founded Edwin House Publishing, focusing on memoirs of

Krishnamurti's associates, and himself authored several books on Krishnamurti, including *Knocking at the Open Door: My Years with J. Krishnamurti*; *World Teacher: The Life and Teachings of J. Krishnamurti*; and *Probing the Mystery: J. Krishnamurti's Process*.

Interwoven with his professional life, Mark's interests were wide-ranging, from architecture and gardening to travel and literature, all of which he pursued with zest while residing in Ojai, California, with his beloved wife, Asha

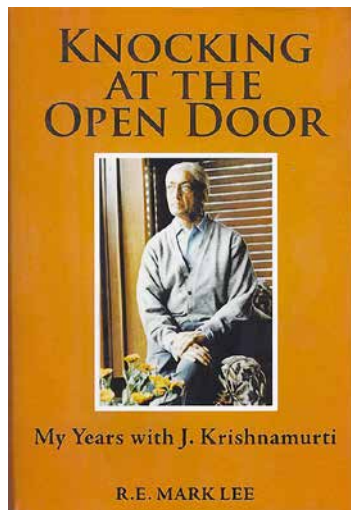
Singh Lee, their three children – Gayatri Anna Lee, Gitanjali Luia Lee, and Nandini Marina Lee Rao, their son-in-law Sudeep Motupalli Rao, and their granddaughter, Sequoia Lee Rao. Mark and Asha's home in Ojai was always a welcoming oasis for those interested in Krishnamurti's teachings, offering warm hospitality and engaging discussions.

Mark Lee's enduring commitment to Krishnamurti and his teachings has profoundly impacted the Krishnamurti Foundation of America and the broader community of seekers worldwide. His legacy is a testament to a life dedicated to the exploration of human consciousness. As we remember Mark, we celebrate his profound influence, leaving an everlasting imprint on all who had the fortune to cross his path. His love of Krishnamurti and his devotion to the teachings were evident in the dignity and compassion he embodied. His spirit remains a guiding light for future generations in their quest for understanding and self-discovery.<sup>16</sup>

*Krishnamurti Foundation of America*

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16 For a more comprehensive account of Mark's life and work, please read his memoir *Knocking at the Open Door – My Years with J. Krishnamurti* (2015).



## **K: The essence of death**

You can have a lifelong discussion with life, but it is not possible with death. It's so final and absolute. It wasn't the death of the body; that would be a fairly simple and decisive event. Living with death was quite another matter. There was life and there was death; they were there inexorably united. It wasn't a psychological death; it wasn't a shock that drove out all thought, all feeling; it wasn't a sudden aberration of the brain nor a mental illness. It was none of these things; these would be immature and so easily connived at. It was something in a different dimension; it was something that defied time-space description.

It was there, the very essence of death. The essence of the self is death, but this death was the very essence of life as well. In fact they were not separate, life and death. This was not something conjured up by the brain for its comfort and ideational security. The very living was the dying and the dying was living. In that car, with all that beauty and colour, with that 'feeling' of ecstasy, death was part of love, part of everything. Death wasn't a symbol, an idea, a thing that one knew. It was there, in reality, in fact, as intense and demanding as the honk of a car that wanted to pass. As life would never leave nor can be set aside, so death now would never leave or be put aside. It was there with an extraordinary intensity and with finality.

Gstaad, 23 August 1961

*Krishnamurti's Notebook*, pp. 78–79

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Hans van der Kroft passed away on 23 January 2024 in Rotterdam, the city where he was born and where he lived and worked most of his life. He had been moved to a senior residence not long before that, as it was becoming rather difficult for him to manage on his own, even with the help of another younger Stichting Krishnamurti Nederland (Stichting for short) board member. He had been born on 18 April 1928, so he was 95. He lived like a monk and he did not want any kind of ceremony around his funeral so his cremation was a very private and discreet affair.

Hans first came across K's work in his early twenties in a discussion group for young people at the local meeting hall in Kralingen, where he lived. At one point they were reading a book on major philosophers, which included K. He was not immediately struck by him, which may have had to do with the way he was presented in the book. Eventually, having become interested in spiritual literature, he bought one of his books and became more seriously interested. He contacted the Stichting and met Anneke Korndörffer, the then Secretary and founder of the Stichting. He bought everything the Stichting could supply him with as well as lots of books in English. He had been studying English for a while and reading K in the original was no problem for him.

Anneke pointed out that he could hear K speak in person and he went to the Brockwood Park gatherings, which was something more direct than reading a book. In such immediate contact a spark was released, and you were aware of something coming into being at that particular moment. His impression was that after listening to Krishnamurti in person one could no longer be the same. It simply made you look at things in a different way. This was something very personal and intimate that you could not put into words. But his interest in K had not come as a flash of lightning but in phases.

A subsequent phase was translating him into Dutch. Anneke was looking for someone to translate *Krishnamurti's Notebook* and he became involved

in that. This offered the opportunity to go into it more deeply because to translate it you had to understand it. It took a group of three people two years to finish this translation and after that he became involved in the transcription of the tape recordings. He next went on to translate *The Future of Humanity* all by himself.

That was the beginning of his long-term commitment to translating and publishing K's works into Dutch. Ultimately, more than twenty titles were published under his auspices. Moreover, he campaigned for public libraries to include those books in their collections.

In 1986, the year K passed away, he took early retirement from his work at the Municipal Public Library in Rotterdam. That same year he was invited to join the Stichting and became a board member. At the same time he started the Rotterdam Krishnamurti Information Center, which organized well-attended video meetings in the Municipal Library. He helped to set up the Krishnamurti Documentation and Study Center (KDSC) in Deventer, which he visited every month all the way from Rotterdam. He eventually became chairman of the Stichting, in which role he was very active in helping with its organizational structure and direction. Beginning in 1994, he was also a trustee of the Krishnamurti Foundation Trust and of the Brockwood Park School in England and visited the Krishnamurti Foundation of America in Ojai in that capacity.

But what he was most proud of was the organization of the 'One Hundred Years of Krishnamurti' commemoration in 1995. Hans was the driving force behind the book *Waarheid zonder weg* (The Pathless Truth) and behind the exhibition about Krishnamurti's life and work which rotated between Amsterdam, Deventer and Rotterdam.

When asked about K's influence on his life, he said that he could not imagine what his life might have been if he had not come in contact with his work. What appealed to him in K was that he did not give recipes for living, that he was not prescriptive. No meditation practices, no congregational meetings, nothing, which conveyed a sense of freedom. Another

thing that appealed to him was that K talked about the higher things without naming them. A more specific thing he had learned from K was not to have any prejudices and to see things in perspective.

For Hans the core of K's teachings were unity and freedom. Unity as the wholeness of life and the oneness of humanity and freedom in contrast to bondage, to all forms of conditioning. He felt that freedom and unity came about through being aware and having an insight into division and bondage, their opposites.

Hans was rather ecumenical in his spiritual interests but felt that K remained relevant because he was still a danger to the established order and its opinions, norms and values. K offered a different picture of what is real freedom. For him it was all about a radical change of the inner man which then transformed society. Even more revolutionary was his statement that this change was not achieved gradually, through time, but was now or never. This transformation was the changeover from bondage to freedom and from division to unity.

Hans was intrigued by K's references to 'the other' in his *Notebook*. That was an actual occurrence, an actual encounter with something that emerged in his life in the early 1920's during the process in Ojai and which remained with him for the rest of his life. He felt, however, that it was not necessary to be concerned with this aspect when studying K.

During K's lifetime the purpose of the Stichting had been to support the practical side of K's work both in The Netherlands and abroad. Another function was to translate, publish and distribute the books. After K's death the purpose shifted to organising public meetings, which is still happening in the various information centers spread all over the country. The principal task was to ensure that K remained known. Setting up a K archive at the public library in Deventer was part of it. Since then the Stichting's task has been to ensure the smooth continuity of all this work around K and the teachings. The Stichting has also been



fortunate in receiving donations that have not only covered its own costs but have allowed it to support K schools and centers in other parts of the world.

Regarding the creation of a K school or study center along the lines of Brockwood in The Netherlands he did not think it viable because there was little public support for it. He could imagine all kinds of activities around the teachings in the country, but not a permanent location. The information centers were doing their work by organising video showings and dialogue meetings. The latter were becoming increasingly more important but they required from the participants a considerable acquaintance with the teachings. The point, as he saw it, was not to talk about what K had said or about oneself but about the world both on the larger stage as well as closer to home, about what it means to be whole and free. What mattered was not K but the subject under discussion, although K was a very good starting point for such explorations. Everyone could become acquainted with K on the internet but that was a solitary activity and it would naturally lead to seeking interaction about it with others. This is the logical development of dialogue around the teachings in the information centers. After all, this is a journey of self-knowledge involving our shared humanity.

Around the age of ninety he resigned from the board and not much later also stopped translating. He was a modest man who did not boast of his achievements, but he could look back on a productive life of invaluable service to K, the Stichting and his fellow human beings.

He did not think much of death and maybe that's why he was not afraid of it. K had always talked about dying while living, about living and dying going together. Hans, like most people, carried on as though life would never end. That's why he had not even made arrangements for his funeral. He was inclined to see dying as a homecoming.

Those of us who knew him and worked with him remember him as an amiable man, precise and dedicated in everything he did. With his





View of the Suchet from Orbe, Switzerland (photo by Barbara Baudat)

diplomatic ways he managed to keep everyone involved on the same page. He was very knowledgeable and capable but came across as committed to something other than himself, as being inwardly anonymous.

We are very grateful to him for everything he has meant not only to the Stichting and to us personally but to the work and the world at large.<sup>17</sup>

*Stichting Krishnamurti Nederland*

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<sup>17</sup> Most of the information in this obituary comes from an interview with Hans that Marina Kuyper, the current chair of the Stichting Krishnamurti Nederland, did in 2010. This interview can be read in Dutch by clicking on the link <https://www.krishnamurti.nl/interview-met-hans-van-der-kroft>. The English version can be found in Marina's book *Inspired by Krishnamurti – 10 Frank Interviews* (2014).

## **K: The vast space of innocence**

You never saw anything so utterly innocent; she was lying on her back; you could just see the whole delicate line of her and she was almost touching the water; it was a stroke of light of the very young, new moon, appearing for the first time in a cloudless sky. You never saw her before, though you had seen her a thousand times; it was so innocent that you in that crowded noisy street were made innocent. You were innocent, without striving, without thought; everything about you was new, you had never seen them before. Your eyes were washed clean and you had not a spot in your heart; you were so far away that nothing could touch you. You could never be polluted again for there was no again; there was no in the meantime; there was no past or future; there was only that vast empty space of now, of innocence whose immensity was blessedness. It was a benediction and you couldn't carry another to it, even though you loved. There was no saviour, no teacher could bring you to it; you have to abandon them and get lost where your thought couldn't find you. It was the innocency of complete aloneness, not a thing that you had carefully carved out of life, a corner of self-immolated isolation. You were not alone, for you were where experience could not reach you. You did not know it was aloneness; you were not aware of anything but there was that immense innocency in that nothingness. It was the innocence of all energy and life and if you ever came there casually, and it must always be casual never determined, then you would be in an ecstasy that had no reason and no death.

*Krishnamurti's Notebook*, pp. 382–383

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In August 2024 (photo by Dina Radif)

Friedrich Grohe  
Chalet Solitude  
Chemin des Mourets 5  
1659 Rougemont  
Switzerland

[fgrohe1@gmail.com](mailto:fgrohe1@gmail.com)  
[www.fgrohephotos.com](http://www.fgrohephotos.com)  
[www.friedrichgrohe.com](http://www.friedrichgrohe.com)